



## The FDH Top 50 NFL Players of the 2000s Decade

1 Tom Brady	26 Shaun Alexander
2 Peyton Manning	27 Antonio Gates
3 LaDainian Tomlinson	28 Richard Seymour
4 Randy Moss	29 Brian Dawkins
5 Brett Favre	30 Chad Ochocinco
6 Champ Bailey	31 Clinton Portis
7 Marvin Harrison	32 Julius Peppers
8 Ray Lewis	33 Olin Kreutz
9 Brian Urlacher	34 Ronde Barber
10 Terrell Owens	35 Priest Holmes
11 Walter Jones	36 DeMarcus Ware
12 Donovan McNabb	37 Larry Allen
13 Jason Taylor	38 Larry Fitzgerald
14 Michael Strahan	39 Jamal Lewis
15 Tony Gonzalez	40 Drew Brees
16 Derrick Brooks	41 Albert Haynesworth
17 Orlando Pace	42 Reggie Wayne
18 Jonathan Ogden	43 Edgerrin James
19 Kurt Warner	44 Will Shields
20 Troy Polumalu	45 John Lynch
21 Ed Reed	46 Shawne Merriman
22 Ben Roethlisberger	47 Zach Thomas
23 Steve Hutchinson	48 Plaxico Burress
24 Torry Holt	49 Jeff Saturday
25 Alan Faneca	50 Tedy Bruschi

### Welcome to Our Look Back at the 2000s and Ahead to the 2010s

**By Rick Morris**  
**FDH Managing Partner**

We welcome you to *Dissecting The Decades: The FDH Lounge Looks Back and Ahead at the First 20 Years of the New Millennium*, the first of our FDH eBooks to verge far beyond the realms of fantasy sports and sports in general. As is the case with our FDH Lounge Multimedia Magazine (at [TheFDHLounge.com](http://TheFDHLounge.com)) and on our FDH LOUNGE weekly web TV show (Wednesdays, 7-10 PM EST on [SportsTalkNetwork.com](http://SportsTalkNetwork.com)), we verge into several additional areas, including music, movies, pop culture, politics, geopolitics and general news. We also worked with many of our fellow members of The 21st Century Media Alliance and we are grateful for their contributions.

We are very confident that you will find our coverage of the last decade and our look ahead to the next decade to be interesting, whether or not you agree with every assessment or prediction that is made. We pride ourselves on delivering a wide variety of smart content without ever taking ourselves too seriously. It is a formula that has worked very well for us, and we anticipate strongly that you will find this labor of love to be entertaining and thought-provoking.

## The FDH Top 50 Projected NFL Players of the 2010s Decade

1 Adrian Peterson	26 Darius White
2 Larry Fitzgerald	27 Johnathan Joseph
3 Darrelle Revis	28 Justin Tuck
4 Chris Johnson	29 Dallas Clark
5 Calvin Johnson	30 Knowshon Moreno
6 Andre Johnson	31 Joe Thomas
7 Ndamukong Suh	32 Anquan Boldin
8 James Harrison	33 Matt Schaub
9 Eric Berry	34 Dominique Rogers-Cromartie
10 Patrick Willis	35 Dwight Freeney
11 Philip Rivers	36 Aaron Rodgers
12 Curtis Lofton	37 DeMarcus Ware
13 Colt McCoy	38 Maurice Jones-Drew
14 Taylor Mays	39 Jimmy Clausen
15 Jerod Mayo	40 Peyton Manning
16 Ben Roethlisberger	41 Troy Polumalu
17 Matt Ryan	42 Tom Brady
18 Dez Bryant	43 Jermaine Gresham
19 Eli Manning	44 Gerald McCoy
20 Sam Bradford	45 Ed Reed
21 Ray Rice	46 Greg Jennings
22 Joe Flacco	47 Darren McFadden
23 Steve Smith (Giants)	48 Brandon Marshall
24 Jahvid Best	49 Nnamdi Asomugha
25 Matt Stafford	50 Vince Young

# The FDH Top 50 MLB Players of the 2000s Decade

- |                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Albert Pujols     | 26 Chase Utley         |
| 2 Alex Rodriguez    | 27 David Ortiz         |
| 3 Barry Bonds       | 28 Tim Hudson          |
| 4 Manny Ramirez     | 29 Miguel Cabrera      |
| 5 Randy Johnson     | 30 Gary Sheffield      |
| 6 Mariano Rivera    | 31 Bobby Abreu         |
| 7 Vladimir Guerrero | 32 Joe Mauer           |
| 8 Ichiro            | 33 Jimmy Rollins       |
| 9 Johan Santana     | 34 Ivan Rodriguez      |
| 10 Derek Jeter      | 35 Derek Lee           |
| 11 Roy Halladay     | 36 Torii Hunter        |
| 12 Roy Oswalt       | 37 Josh Beckett        |
| 13 Curt Schilling   | 38 Mark Teixeira       |
| 14 Pedro Martinez   | 39 Carlos Lee          |
| 15 Jeff Kent        | 40 Aramis Ramirez      |
| 16 Roger Clemens    | 41 Francisco Rodriguez |
| 17 John Smoltz      | 42 Carl Crawford       |
| 18 Jim Thome        | 43 Mark Buehrle        |
| 19 Trevor Hoffman   | 44 Victor Martinez     |
| 20 Carlos Beltran   | 45 Andy Pettitte       |
| 21 Miguel Tejada    | 46 Brandon Webb        |
| 22 Alfonso Soriano  | 47 Johnny Damon        |
| 23 Jorge Posada     | 48 Justin Morneau      |
| 24 Lance Berkman    | 49 Jake Peavy          |
| 25 Chipper Jones    | 50 Carlos Delgado      |

# The FDH Top 50 Projected MLB Players of the 2010s Decade

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Hanley Ramirez     | 26 Jay Bruce         |
| 2 Felix Hernandez    | 27 Andrew McCutcheon |
| 3 Tim Lincecum       | 28 Adam Wainwright   |
| 4 Ryan Braun         | 20 Justin Verlander  |
| 5 Chase Utley        | 30 Grady Sizemore    |
| 6 Evan Longoria      | 31 Robinson Cano     |
| 7 Albert Pujols      | 32 Andre Ethier      |
| 8 Zack Grienke       | 33 Ryan Howard       |
| 9 Clayton Kershaw    | 34 Justin Morneau    |
| 10 Jonathan Papelbon | 35 Pablo Sandoval    |
| 11 Joe Mauer         | 36 Nick Markakis     |
| 12 David Wright      | 37 Brian McCann      |
| 13 Troy Tulowitzki   | 38 Matt Cain         |
| 14 Stephen Strasburg | 39 Chris Tillman     |
| 15 David Price       | 40 Matt LaPorta      |
| 16 Matt Wieters      | 41 Rick Porcello     |
| 17 Matt Kemp         | 42 Buster Posey      |
| 18 Prince Fielder    | 43 Jake Peavy        |
| 19 Carlos Gonzalez   | 44 Mark Reynolds     |
| 20 Johan Santana     | 45 Matt Holliday     |
| 21 Justin Upton      | 46 Jon Lester        |
| 22 Miguel Cabrera    | 47 Joey Votto        |
| 23 Carl Crawford     | 48 Adam Jones        |
| 24 Yovani Gallardo   | 49 Carlos Santana    |
| 25 Ryan Zimmerman    | 50 Cole Hamels       |

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# The FDH NBA All-Decade Roster for the 2000s

## FIRST TEAM

C Shaquille O'Neal  
F Tim Duncan  
F LeBron James  
G Kobe Bryant  
G Dwyane Wade

## SECOND TEAM

C Dwight Howard  
F Kevin Garnett  
F Dirk Nowitzki  
G Steve Nash  
G Chauncey Billups

## THIRD TEAM

C Yao Ming  
F Tracy McGrady  
F Paul Pierce  
G Jason Kidd  
G Chris Paul

## HONORABLE MENTION

Ray Allen, Carmelo Anthony, Ron Artest, Chris Bosh, Vince Carter, Richard Hamilton, Allen Iverson, Tony Parker, Rasheed Wallace, Deron Williams

# The FDH NBA Projected All-Decade Roster for the 2010s

## FIRST TEAM

C Dwight Howard  
F LeBron James  
F Blake Griffin  
G Chris Paul  
G John Wall

## SECOND TEAM

C Al Jefferson  
F Kevin Durant  
F Chris Bosh  
G Brandon Jennings  
G Dwyane Wade

## THIRD TEAM

C Brook Lopez  
F Carmelo Anthony  
F LaMarcus Aldridge  
G Deron Williams  
G Brandon Roy

## HONORABLE MENTION

Michael Beasley, Kobe Bryant, Rudy Gay, Danny Granger, Devin Harris, Andre Iguodala, Joe Johnson, Kevin Martin, OJ Mayo, Derrick Rose

## THE FDH LOUNGE MULTIMEDIA MAGAZINE:

### Nothing is off-topic

Among the 1,000+ topics thus far: Afghanistan ... tunnels under Las Vegas ... Flava Flav ... Tiger Woods ... the comeback of the KGB ... Glenn Beck ... Michael Jackson ... Mark Shapiro & Larry Dolan ... Sarah Palin ... LeBron James ... Ron Paul ... a Hamas boy band ... David Letterman ... Ohio State/ Michigan ... movie reviews ... NFL Sunday Ticket ... Harry Kalas ... Tea Parties ... waterboarding ... Roid-ger Clemens ... NHL Winter Classic ... NFL Draft profiles ... Hillary Clinton ... all-star selections ... music reviews ... hottest female cartoon characters ... Stone Temple Pilots reunion ... Bill Belichick ... Bill Clinton ... Jason Kidd ... John Edwards ... Chris Berman ... Chris Benoit ... Pao Gasol ... Berkeley city council hippies ... Bobby Knight ... Shaquille O'Neal ... Pistol Pete Maravich ... the Super Bowl ... Super Tuesday ... Israel ... open-wheel racing ... TV show reviews ... Looney Toons ... Barack Obama ... Grammy Awards ... Captain Lou Albano ... NBA All-Star Weekend ... Charles Barkley ... George W. Bush ... the Daytona 500 ... old-school pro wrestling ... Dennis Kucinich ... Iran ... Academy Awards ... Kosovo ... NBA trading deadline ... Bobby Jindal ... Mad Men ... rating the greatest quarterbacks ... Floyd Mayweather ... geopolitics roundup ... timewasting video clips ... imagining Michael Scott of "The Office" moderating a presidential debate ... rating baseball's best players by position ... [TheFDHLounge.com](http://TheFDHLounge.com)

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## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones' Statistical Formula: NBA Team of the 2000s

<b>Point Guards</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>Reb</b>	<b>Ast</b>	<b>Pts x 3</b>	<b>Reb x 1.5</b>	<b>Ast x 2</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Stat Rank</b>	<b>Non Stat Rank</b>	<b>Results</b>
Chris Paul	19.5	3.9	10.4	34.1	5.9	20.8	60.8	1	3	First Team
Gilbert Arenas	22.7	4.2	5.9	39.7	6.3	11.8	57.8	2	5	Second Team
Steve Nash	16.9	3.3	9.7	29.5	4.9	19.4	53.8	3	1	Third Team
Baron Davis	18.7	4.1	7.7	32.7	6.2	15.4	53.3	4	7	Honorable Mention
Andre Miller	14.4	4.2	7.3	25.2	6.3	15.8	47.3	5	8	
Tony Parker	16.7	3.1	6.2	29.2	4.7	12.4	46.3	6	4	
Chauncey Billups	15.6	3.8	6.6	27.3	5.7	13.2	46.2	7	6	
Jason Kidd	12.8	6.9	9.2	14.6	10.4	18.4	43.4	8	2	

<b>Shooting Guards</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>Reb</b>	<b>Ast</b>	<b>Pts x 3</b>	<b>Reb x 1.5</b>	<b>Ast x 2</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Stat Rank</b>	<b>Non Stat Rank</b>	<b>Results</b>
Allen Iverson	29.6	4.3	7.9	88.8	5.2	11.9	105.9	1	2	First Team
Kobe Bryant	28.5	5.7	5.2	85.5	6.8	8.9	101.2	2	1	Second Team
Dwyane Wade	25.3	5.5	6.1	75.9	6.6	9.2	91.7	3	3	Third Team
Vince Carter	22.3	5.1	4.2	66.9	6.1	6.3	79.3	4	4	Honorable Mention
Ray Allen	21.7	4.3	3.9	65.1	5.2	5.9	76.2	5	5	
Joe Johnson	17.3	5.3	4.4	51.9	6.4	6.6	64.9	6	6	
Richard Hamilton	17.3	3.1	3.2	51.9	3.7	4.8	60.4	7	7	
Manu Ginobili	14.7	4.1	3.6	44.1	4.9	5.4	54.4	8	8	

<b>Small Forwards</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>Reb</b>	<b>Ast</b>	<b>Pts x 3</b>	<b>Reb x 1.5</b>	<b>Ast x 2</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Stat Rank</b>	<b>Non Stat Rank</b>	<b>Results</b>
Lebron James	27.6	7.1	6.8	82.8	10.6	8.8	102.2	1	1	First Team
Carmelo Anthony	24.5	6.1	3.1	73.5	9.2	4.1	86.8	2	2	Second Team
Tracy McGrady	21.8	4.8	4.4	65.4	7.2	5.7	78.3	3	3	Third Team
Paul Pierce	20.6	5.5	3.8	61.8	8.2	5.1	75.1	4	4	Honorable Mention
Shawn Marion	18.6	10.6	2.3	55.8	15.9	2.9	74.6	5	5	
Ron Artest	19.1	5.9	3.5	57.3	8.9	4.6	70.8	6	7	
Richard Jefferson	17.6	5.2	2.9	52.8	7.8	3.8	64.4	7	8	
Rashard Lewis	16.8	6.7	1.7	50.4	10.1	2.2	62.7	8	6	

<b>Power Forwards</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>Reb</b>	<b>Ast</b>	<b>Pts x 3</b>	<b>Reb x 1.5</b>	<b>Ast x 2</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Stat Rank</b>	<b>Non Stat Rank</b>	<b>Results</b>
Dirk Nowitzki	22.4	8.2	2.6	67.2	16.4	1.3	84.9	1	3	First Team
Amar'e Stoudemire	21.1	8.9	1.4	63.3	17.8	0.7	81.8	2	4	Second Team
Chris Bosh	19.8	9.3	2.1	59.4	18.6	1.1	79.1	3	5	Third Team
Tim Duncan	18.8	10.4	2.9	56.4	20.8	1.5	78.7	4	1	Honorable Mention
Kevin Garnett	18.5	10.4	3.9	55.5	20.8	1.9	78.2	5	2	
Carlos Boozer	17.1	10.1	2.4	51.3	20.2	1.2	72.7	6	7	
Elton Brand	16.6	7.7	2.1	49.8	15.4	1.1	66.3	7	6	
David West	15.4	7.2	1.7	46.2	14.4	0.8	61.4	8	8	

<b>Centers</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>Reb</b>	<b>Ast</b>	<b>Pts x 3</b>	<b>Reb x 1.5</b>	<b>Ast x 2</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Stat Rank</b>	<b>Non Stat Rank</b>	<b>Results</b>
Dwight Howard	17.3	12.5	1.4	43.3	25.1	0.7	69.1	1	2	First Team
Shaquille O'Neal	19.2	9.4	2.2	48.1	18.8	1.1	68.1	2	1	Second Team
Yao Ming	19.1	9.3	1.6	47.8	18.6	0.8	67.2	3	3	Third Team
Jermaine O'Neal	17.8	8.6	2.1	44.5	17.2	1.1	62.8	4	4	Honorable Mention
Zydrunas Ilgauskus	12.3	6.9	1.1	30.8	13.8	0.5	45.1	5	5	
Marcus Camby	8.9	9.7	2.1	22.3	19.4	1.1	42.8	6	7	
Nene Hilario	12.5	5.2	1.3	31.3	10.4	0.6	42.3	7	6	

## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones' NBA Team of the 2000s

### First Team

PG-Chris Paul  
SG-Allen Iverson  
SF-LeBron James  
PF-Dirk Nowitzki  
C-Dwight Howard

### Second Team

PG-Gilbert Arenas  
SG-Kobe Bryant  
SF-Carmelo Anthony  
PF-Amar'e Stoudemire  
C-Shaquille O'Neal

### Third Team

PG-Steve Nash  
SG-Dwyane Wade  
SF-Tracy McGrady  
PF-Tim Duncan\*  
C-Yao Ming

### Honorable Mention

PG-Baron Davis  
SG-Vince Carter  
SF-Paul Pierce  
PF-Kevin Garnett\*  
C-Jermaine O'Neal

\*=Refusal to put Chris Bosh over Tim Duncan and Kevin Garnett from an "All-Decade" standpoint.

NOTE: These designations are the same as the ones on the "Non-Stat"

## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones' Projected NBA Team of the 2010s

### First Team

PG-Chris Paul  
SG-Dwyane Wade  
SF-LeBron James  
PF-Chris Bosh  
C-Dwight Howard

### Second Team

PG-John Wall  
SG-Kevin Durant  
SF-Carmelo Anthony  
PF-Amar'e Stoudemire  
C-Andrew Bynum

### Third Team

PG-Deron Williams  
SG-OJ Mayo  
SF-Blake Griffin  
PF-Josh Smith  
C-Hasheem Thabeet

### Honorable Mention

PG-Brandon Jennings  
SG-JR Smith  
SF-Wesley Johnson  
PF-Paul Millsap  
C-LaMarcus Aldridge

### Other Important Players

Jhonny Flynn-PG  
Tyreke Evans-PG/SG  
Derrick Rose-PG  
Rudy Gay-SF  
Brook Lopez-PF  
Kevin Love-PF  
Evan Turner-SG

## The FDH Lounge

In The FDH Lounge, nothing is off-topic. Don't believe us? Check out this partial roster of guests: Kenny Albert, Bob Barker (TWICE!), Brutus Beefcake, The San Diego Chicken, Chip Caray, Liz Claman, Jim Cornette, JJ Dillon, Bret Hart, Missy Hyatt, Al Jaffee, Dhani Jones, Will Leitch, Tommy Lasorda, Ben Lyons, Craig Newmark from Craigslist, The Phillie Phanatic, Jeremy Schaap, Jayson Stark, George "The Animal" Steele and Tom Wilson. Random enough for you?

The FDH Lounge covers more topics than any other program on the air today. Among others: Sports, Politics, Geopolitics, TV/Music/Movies, Pop Culture/Fun Web Stuff and Sports Entertainment.

The FDH Lounge airs live every Wednesday night from 7-10 PM EDT on Sports TalkNetwork.com.

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info**

## The FDH NHL All-Decade Roster for the 2000s

### FIRST TEAM

F Jaromir Jagr  
F Joe Sakic  
F Pavel Datsyuk  
D Nicklas Lidstrom  
D Scott Niedermayer  
G Martin Brodeur

### SECOND TEAM

F Henrik Zetterberg  
F Joe Thornton  
F Vincent Lecavalier  
D Chris Pronger  
D Zdeno Chara  
G Dominik Hasek

### THIRD TEAM

F Alex Ovechkin  
F Sid Crosby  
F Evgeni Malkin  
D Brian Rafalski  
D Brian Leetch  
G J-S Giguere

### HONORABLE MENTION

Peter Forsberg, Brett Hull,  
Mike Modano, Patrick Roy,  
Scott Stevens, Martin St. Louis,  
Mats Sundin

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## The FDH NHL Projected All-Decade Roster for the 2010s

### FIRST TEAM

F Alex Ovechkin  
F Evgeni Malkin  
F Sid Crosby  
D Mike Green  
D Dion Pheneuf  
G Mark-Andre Fleury

### SECOND TEAM

F Steven Stamkos  
F Alexander Semin  
F Bobby Ryan  
D Zdeno Chara  
D Nicklas Kronwall  
G Roberto Luongo

### THIRD TEAM

F Henrik Zetterberg  
F Ryan Getzlaf  
F John Tavares  
D Victor Hedman  
D Jay Bouwmeester  
G Henrik Lundqvist

### HONORABLE MENTION

Pavel Datsyuk, Patrick Kane,  
Ryan Miller, Zach Parise,  
Eric Staal, Jonathan Toews,  
Cam Ward

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# Top 5 NFL Storylines of the 2000s Decade

**1 The New England-Indianapolis-Pittsburgh troika lights up the league.** Some decades, like the 1990s, feature a main two-team rivalry (Cowboys-49ers). Others, like the 1970s (Steelers-Raiders-Dolphins) and 1980s (49ers-Giants-Redskins), had three-team rivalries at their core. This decade was of the latter variety, as the lead teams in the dominant AFC were at the center of the league's biggest stories, from quarterback play to coaching transitions to Super Bowls.

**2 A new sheriff in town.** Upon taking over as NFL commissioner in the fall of 2006, Roger Goodell quickly made it clear that the cautious, lawyerly days of Paul Tagliabue at the helm were over. These days, players think twice before snorting lines off of hookers' bellies in public and Goodell is the main reason for that.

**3 Fantasy goes mainstream.** Ten years ago, football had already become the main fantasy sport in America, but it was still not omnipresent. These days, aided by the fact that NFL broadcast networks are heavily invested in fantasy football via their websites, the hobby is heavily exposed on a regular basis and is one of the prime areas for growth as the game enters the 2010s.

**4 The gap between rich and poor teams grows greatly.** While the league's "hard" salary cap is held up as a model for stability for other sports, in reality the smaller-market teams have been unable or unwilling to spend near the maximum level. The Jerry Jones/Daniel Snyder wing of the league is happy with the status quo. The Ralph Wilson/Mike Brown wing maintains that they are struggling to keep pace. Meanwhile, labor peace has been fraying as players anticipate that they will be asked for big "give-backs" in the next Collective Bargaining Agreement after seeing the salary cap keep shooting up wildly during the decade. This is a story that will become much bigger in the next ten years as it moves towards critical mass.

**5 Running backs fade in individual importance.** Around the middle of the decade, the league began transitioning from a model where successful teams had one main running back to more of a "2/3, 1/3" style. Backup halfbacks were commonly being used in very significant roles. As part of this trend, scat-backs became lead running backs on several teams, as franchises became more willing to gamble on explosiveness so long as they had another option to be able to "move the chains."

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## Top 5 Projected Storylines for the 2010s

**1 Labor strife looms.** The NFL's Collective Bargaining Agreement expires at the end of the 2010 season and unless revisions can be made before then, the 2010 campaign will be played without a salary cap — greatly exacerbating the economic tensions. Owners in the medium and smaller markets are seeking massive concessions from the players and large-market owners are basically happy with the status quo. The league's biggest crisis since the 1987 strike and "scab games" is on the horizon.

**2 A tremendous era for quarterbacks will continue.** At decade's end, great passers like Brett Favre are still going strong while new prodigies such as Matt Ryan and Joe Flacco are quickly progressing. With more supremely promising quarterbacks entering the league in the next year, the golden age at the position progresses.

**3 The "wildcat" and spread offenses portend more innovation.** From Mike Martz to Tony Sparano, coaches spent the last decade frantically trying to build a better mousetrap in very different ways. It is almost impossible to fathom the wrinkles yet to come, but the cycle of innovation and counter-innovation will continue unabated.

**4 Franchise issues will complicate matters.** Eventually, somebody will be playing in Los Angeles. With markets like Minnesota and Jacksonville dealing with various stadium and attendance issues, the league looks to be greatly bloodied in the court of public opinion before everything is settled.

**5 Globalization picks up steam.** From games in London to the quest for more foreign talent to maximization of overseas revenue streams, the NFL is becoming more global all the time.



# Top 5 MLB Storylines of the 2000s Decade

**1 Roids, roids and more roids.** The game's sellout to pharmaceutical enhancement that began in the late 1980s saw the bill finally come due as one of the original perpetrators, Jose Canseco, dropped a dime on his colleagues. By decade's end, reputations were ruined, records were devalued and nobody still knew what to make of it. The players, owners and Bud Selig will forever be tainted by their roles in one of the game's darkest chapters.

**2 The gap between rich and poor teams grows — and becomes a handy excuse as well.** Only the most economically successful teams were fielding consistent winners in this decade. But the Larry Dolans of the world also used the game's uneven playing field as an excuse to go absolute "bargain basement" and slash payrolls shamelessly. Greater revenue sharing will be necessary for the game to be more competitive on the American sports landscape in the next decade — along with safeguards to keep small-market phonies from continuing to pocket the money.

**3 The Moneyball book demonstrates the need for small-market franchises to "build a better mousetrap."** Billy Beane was not successful in landing the Oakland As among the elite in this decade, but he moved them further up the ladder than many other franchises of comparable size. Unfortunately for the underdogs in the game, Theo Epstein followed key aspects of Beane's model and married them to large-market capabilities in Boston. Truly, the exploitation of inefficiencies in the marketplace is central to success like never before.

**4 Historic futility ends — and endures.** The Red Sox and White Sox had suffered through most of the 20th century without a World Series title, but each broke through this decade. The Cubs and Indians each had runs of similar futility, but both flamed out spectacularly this decade when they had their chance to end the dry spell. Some long-suffering fanbases were just luckier than others.

**5 The new era of ballparks crests.** The wave of "nouveau retro" ballparks that launched with Camden Yards in 1992 wound down towards decade's end as the overwhelming majority of teams in the game had since moved into new locales. At one time thought of as a leveling effect that would help even smaller-market teams to tap into corporate revenue streams, the parks proved to be just a fig leaf over the game's enduring imbalance between the rich and poor.

**Small-market superstars who "moved up" this decade:** Carlos Beltran, Josh Beckett, AJ Burnett, Johnny Damon, Jason Giambi, Vladimir Guerrero, Cliff Lee, Derek Lee, Aramis Ramirez, Manny Ramirez, Alex Rodriguez, CC Sabathia, Jim Thome

**The next wave of small-market superstars:** Ryan Braun, Carl Crawford, Prince Fielder, Yovani Gallardo, Zack Greinke, Josh Johnson, Tim Lincecum, Evan Longoria, Nick Markakis, Joe Mauer, Justin Morneau, Hunter Pence, Hanley Ramirez, Mark Reynolds, Troy Tulowitzki, Justin Upton

## Top 5 Projected Storylines for the 2010s

**1 Labor strife is coming back.** Sadly, the labor peace of the 2000s, which began when the players and owners quickly papered over their differences in the aftermath of 9/11, is almost certain to be viewed as a historical anomaly. As in other sports, big-market owners are for all intents and purposes allied with the players, which makes for a three-way dynamic that poses immense threats to clarity and eventual resolution.

**2 Performance-enhancing drugs are still part of the landscape.** While players, owners and presumably the media are content to view the steroid issue as a messy matter in the rear-view mirror, the reality is that designer steroids and human growth hormones cannot be detected by present testing. The statistical "alarm bells" of the 1990s and early 2000s are not presently ringing, but the issue remains completely unresolved.

**3 Digital rights must help to level the playing field.** The most tangible long-range step that MLB has taken to level the economic playing field involves the collective bargaining of the game's digital entities. As digital and mobile coverage of baseball increases, these far-sighted moves will help the have-nots greatly.

**4 Franchise stability will continue.** With most teams playing in parks built in the past two decades, few opportunities to move are on the horizon. Also, few opportunities to relocate are beckoning.

**5 Small markets enter another cycle of trying to keep their stars.** Many of the game's smaller teams (see sidebar) had to move their best players in recent years. The first half of this decade will put the game to the test once again, as many of the best young players are now suiting up for franchises who will be hard-pressed to pay them market-rate salaries under present conditions.

# Top 5 NBA Storylines of the 2000s Decade

**1 The Shaq'n'Kobe Show dominates the league's spotlight.** They won three championships together and then one apiece on their own. Both on the court and off, these two occupied headlines and attention like few other players in the history of the league.

**2 The Draft Class of '03 delivers one of the greatest talent infusions in history.** While Darko got buried right off the bat by a petulant coach who resented having him on his roster, LeBron, 'Melo, Bosh, Wade and others quickly made the #2 overall pick a huge afterthought. A game already on the way back from the depths of the post-Jordan era got a huge shot in the arm from these all-world talents.

**3 The "Spurs Way" leads the way.** Just as New England was regarded as the model franchise for the NFL in this decade, the Spurs were held up as the ideal in the NBA. With three titles in the 2000s and another one in 1999, the model created by "Coach Pop" was imitated widely across the Association.

**4 Fundamentals return, hand-checks depart.** Shamed by the superiority demonstrated by Europeans in terms of fundamentals, American players bounced back in terms of the basics as this decade progressed. As that welcome change was materializing, the league also banned the use of hand-checks on defense, thus opening up the game even more for the truly explosive players.

**5 Great point guards populate the league.** With older players like Chauncey Billups, Steve Nash and Jason Kidd continuing their play alongside stallions like Chris Paul, Deron Williams, Derrick Rose, the league is seeing point guard play at a historic high level.

# Top 5 Projected Storylines for the 2010s

**1 The 2010 free agent class will make history.** Top names from the world-class 2003 NBA Draft class will take their place alongside other superstars to form one of the greatest free agency classes in the history of professional sports. The destiny of multiple franchises throughout the next decade hangs in the balance.

**2 Labor strife will hit the sport again.** Much like in the NFL, labor peace has been possible largely because the owners have kept the players in line with their demands. Much like in the NFL, the days of being able to assume the status quo in this regard are over. And much like in the NFL, a difficult overall economic picture in the country will make it impossible for parties on all sides to be satisfied, either before or after what seems like an inevitable shutdown.

**3 International influence will continue to mushroom.** In the 2000s, the game made great strides towards David Stern's global vision with the invasion of superstars and huge interest being shown in the game in key financial targets such as China. Accelerating this trend is Stern's second-biggest goal in the next decade, trailing only behind resolution of labor issues.

**4 Will the super-good/super-bad trend continue?** Towards the end of the 2000s, teams such as the Lakers, Celtics, Spurs and Cavaliers pilaged the weaker teams in the league, who were content to compile lottery picks and salary cap space. In a sense, the game mirrored baseball and the corrosive effects of the lack of competitive balance there. This trend is not healthy for the league.

**5 The era of the "super point guards" will continue.** Even as older greats fade from the scene, younger players like John Wall, Derrick Rose, Brandon Jennings and Rajon Rondo will continue to light up the league. Playmaking and quarter-backing from this key spot will be at a high level.

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# Top 5 NHL Storylines of the 2000s Decade

**1 Labor issues erase an entire season.** Trumping the MLB strike of 1994 that wiped out the World Series, the NHL lost an entire season a decade later. When the lockout was over, the players union had been broken and a hard salary cap was instituted to ostensibly level the playing field between larger and smaller markets.

**2 The crackdown on obstruction greatly helps the product.** When the league returned from the shutdown in the fall of 2005, they did so with a rulebook that had been fine-tuned to eliminate much of the neutral-zone clutching and grabbing that had been the artistic bane of the game for over a decade. The upgrade to the game's style of play was long overdue and a necessary component to drawing more fans in the elusive American sports landscape.

**3 Gary Bettman gains his poster children for the league.** Between 2005 and 2006, Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and Alexander Ovechkin invaded the league and served notice that they would be the dominant offensive players over the next 15 years. The NHL, searching for replacements for Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux, rejoiced audibly.

**4 Ideally, the product would be visible.** After the lockout, the NHL departed ESPN for the significantly lower visibility of Versus. Also, NBC took over the network component of the NHL contract and has televised fewer games than ABC used to have. The product on the ice is much better than it was at the outset of the 2000s, but the cliché about a tree falling in the forest applies here.

**5 The Sun Belt expansion continues to be a fitful project.** Gary Bettman was convinced that expanding the NHL to every corner of the United States in the 1990s would significantly raise the profile of the game. It has not, although in fairness TV and labor issues have worked against that effort. But with Phoenix looking like the first of what might be a few teams to move back north, the league will have to come to grips with abandoning the uncompromising commitment to every newer market.

# Top 5 Projected Storylines for the 2010s

**1 Another bloody shutdown looms.** The only major American professional sport to suffer a strike or lockout in the 2000s may well be the most likely one to suffer another one in the next decade. The players made huge concessions, but small-market owners now do not regard them as being even remotely sufficient. Much less than a decade after the "labor war to end all labor wars," another eruption of hostilities seems inevitable.

**2 The young wave of stars, especially forwards, continues.** Following a decade with some of the thinnest superstar forward play in the history of the game, a new wave of scorers continues to emerge. Along with great young defensemen and goalies, the league will have plenty of dominant young faces to market.

**3 Franchise location controversies will rage on for years to come.** Some of the newer NHL markets do not appear sustainable over the long haul. With only six out of 30 teams north of the border, Canada is still woefully underserved. Resolution of this matter in the obvious manner cannot be resisted by the league forever.

**4 Can the Original Six resurgence continue?** The greatest sub-brand in professional sports had only the Red Wings representing for most of the decade, but the Rangers, Bruins, Canadiens and Blackhawks bounced back later in the decade. Their continued presence at the NHL's forefront is vital to the league's hopes for greater acquisition of interest in America.

**5 The American TV deals must improve.** The league simply must be available on a regular basis in more American households. Period.

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## Top 5 NCAA Storylines of the 2000s Decade

**1 Return to glory for several traditional powers on the hardwood and gridiron.** USC, LSU, Texas, Oklahoma and Ohio State bounced back from hard times in the 1990s to capture national championships in football, while Kansas, North Carolina and UCLA reasserted themselves on the court. Granted, there were other major programs who had tough times in the decade (such as Notre Dame and Michigan in football and Kentucky in basketball), but by and large both sports saw comebacks by the programs that provide so much of the lifeblood for big-time interest and attention in the sports world.

**2 With apologies to Skid Row, NBA and NCAA start singing “19 and life.”** The NBA was suffering from an invasion of raw high school kids who smelled money, but weren’t yet ready for the pro game. The NCAA was suffering from a fatal lack of star power once the most talented kids were skipping straight to the NBA. The solution? The NBA instituted a rule in 2006 mandating that aspiring pros be at least 19 years old before being allowed to petition for draft entry. The result? Restoration of star power at the NCAA level with the “super frosh” coming in for at least one year and a higher level of play with more polished rookies in the NBA.

**3 The BCS endures and adjusts.** While proponents of a playoff system have been left to grind their molars in frustration, the Bowl Championship Series has continued to be the mechanism used to determine the national title. The tweaking of criteria came into play, as did the addition of the extra BCS National Championship Game in 2007 (which potentially opened the door to a yet-to-materialize “plus-one” hybrid between the current system and a full-blown playoff), but the BCS is guaranteed to exist through at least the 2014 system.

**4 TV rights deals continue to escalate, with new conference-owned channels now in the mix.** Networks have been paying ever-increasing fees for the rights to televise games, but they have recently had another competitor in the mix: the conferences themselves! The Big Ten, Mountain West and other conferences decided to do on a smaller scale what ESPN has done — putting college sports of all shapes and sizes on television — and as a result, these “house channels” have made an already interesting TV sports industry that much more fascinating.

**5 Mutant super-conferences roam the landscape.** The trend of conference consolidation which began in the early 1990s reached its logical point of existence, as the SEC and Big 12 strode mightily towards the forefront in college football and the Big East and ACC did the same on the courts. With a plethora of highly-anticipated regular-season and tournament/playoff matchups that other conferences cannot replicate, these entities have taken a dominant place in their respective sports.

## Top 5 Projected Storylines for the 2010s

**1 TV and digital rights will get more interesting and potentially muddled as technology develops further.** The news in 2009 that the SEC was looking into restrictions on liveblogging and Tweeting from the stands was notable in the sense that the conference was said to be looking into the future: a time when technology allows the average fan to stream a game presentation over the Internet or mobile devices in such a manner that the TV entities paying rights fees suffer tangible damages. Paranoia or justified fear? The answer to this question will shape the way we watch sports in the next decade and beyond.

**2 What will happen when the BCS comes up for renewal in 2014?** Playoff supporters never have had and likely never will have enough support within the NCAA for revolutionary change, but could this be the opportunity for the “plus-one” that could co-opt playoff fever once and for all? Only the Big Ten, Pac 10 and the Rose Bowl are remaining in firm opposition.

**3 How will a horrible economy affect college sports?** With signs that the late-’00s economic downturn could last well into the next decade, the NCAA will join other sports leagues and associations in navigating difficult turf in terms of sponsorships, ticket sales and TV deals.

**4 One-and-done hoops complications.** The 19-and-over rule that has kept would-be college freshmen out of the NBA since 2006 has injected more star power back into the college game, but Brandon Jennings proved in 2008-09 that Europe is a viable alternative. If he is a trendsetter, the college game will again suffer from a lack of marketable players with big-time NBA upside.

**5 Perennial issues regarding payment of players and Title IX will continue to be discussed.** As the NCAA mines new ways to monetize the two main revenue-producing sports on a regular basis, pressure to cut the players into the pie will only grow. And as more non-revenue sports end up on the chopping block due to budget crises in higher education, the “Title IX reform movement” will pick up steam if the perception that men’s sports are suffering due to quota requirements reach critical mass.

## Top 5 Motorsports Storylines of the 2000s Decade

**1 NASCAR takes the wheel.** Owing to greater exposure on TV, rising sponsorship levels and the self-destruction of the open-wheel Powers That Be, NASCAR moved firmly into the top spot in American motorsports in this decade. The stock car circuit opened the decade in prime position to take advantage of these looming possibilities and they were able to do exactly that.

**2 The passing of Dale Earnhardt rocks NASCAR.** At the very end of the 2001 Daytona 500, the very first race in NASCAR's unprecedented new TV deal, their greatest icon crashed into the wall and perished. The sport was left to face their new period of supremely increased visibility without him and they also adopted strict new safety rules as a result of this and other severe accidents.

**3 Matt Kenseth ushers in the era of the playoffs.** Stung by the boring, paint-by-numbers path that Kenseth took to the 2003 NASCAR points championship, the governing body ushered in The Chase, a 10-race playoff to end the season with the entrants and seeding determined by the first 26 races. The change radically altered the traditional path to a NASCAR season title and did result in increased visibility for the sport during the fall months which are traditionally dominated by football, hoops, hockey and October baseball. Additionally, the structure was adopted for use by the NHRA and PGA.

**4 Open-wheel racing reunites under one American banner, way too late to reverse horrific, self-inflicted damage.** With the iconic Indianapolis 500 anchoring their circuit, open-wheel racing reigned supreme in America for decades before the 1995-96 schism that split the sport into two rival camps. Before long, both circuits were looking up at NASCAR and as the decade progressed, they even started losing top drivers to the stock car world. After years of teasing a resolution, a reunion under one banner finally happened in 2008, but the sport remained at least several years away from regaining their former prominence.

**5 Formula 1 and NHRA struggle to gain a foothold in America.** The F1 circuit succeeded in landing a race on a reconfigured road-style track at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway as their latest attempt to build a base in the US, but it was no more successful than past attempts to conquer the New World. Meanwhile, the NHRA was tracking along a nice path of growth, including a great TV deal on ESPN2, but the late-decade recession hit the drag racing league very hard. Many elite drivers like Dave Connolly were unable to obtain regular sponsorship deals in 2009, thus depriving the sport of credibility since they could no longer claim that the best of the best were out on the tracks.

## Top 5 Projected Storylines for the 2010s

**1 NASCAR will try to hold off the IRL and work through the difficulties of the automakers.** Although open-wheel racing has deep roots in this country and the Indianapolis 500 is one of the nation's most revered sporting events, NASCAR probably won't feel any heat from them until at least the middle of the decade given all of the ground ceded to them over the last 15 years. The finances of the Big Three automakers may cause more problems. A circuit that had a tough time selling Toyota participation to large swaths of their fanbase may have to live with more foreign participation if the US car companies continue to tank.

**2 Jimmie Johnson chases racing immortality.** The first several years of JJ's career have been arguably the greatest ever seen in stock car racing, if not the wider motorsports world. He's no marketer's dream — he's far too bland for that — but he represents unmitigated greatness and NASCAR will gladly promote his continued pursuit of it.

**3 Will the "Danica effect" permanently change how female drivers are promoted?** Before Danica Patrick became prominent this decade, female racers were still, quaintly enough, marketed for their abilities rather than their sex appeal. The NHRA took note and utilized similar tactics in pushing Ashley Force (while also noting her excellence as a driver, though). Women will have more opportunities if this promotional path succeeds — well, some of them, anyway.

**4 NHRA must regain credibility.** Bad economy or not, the NHRA must attract enough sponsors to once again field all of the top racers in their different divisions — or lose their reputation as the definitive home of the best drag racing.

**5 Formula 1 will again try to invade America — will next time finally be "the time?"** For decades, Formula 1 has tried without success to crack the US market. In 2010, the first US-based F1 team will start competition, surely the first step towards the next F1 attempt to gain a substantial following in America, one of the few large countries not already enamored of this brand of racing.

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## Top 5 Individual Sports Storylines of the 2000s Decade

**1 Tiger.** The sports world expected Tiger to dominate the decade and he did not disappoint as he was still approaching his prime. The years were marked with insane hot streaks and some occasional droughts (by his standards) and he did suffer injuries to his leg, but all in all, he dominated the individual sports scene in pretty much the fashion one might have expected back in 2000. Actually, there were few really big surprises in his career except for the late-decade leg injuries and sex scandal.

**2 Roger Federer dominates the courts.** Pete Sampras' record of 14 Grand Slam titles in the modern era did not even last a decade, as Roger Federer (eventually) won on every type of surface to set the new record in 2009. Unlike dominant players of the past, he did not have one or two main rivals who consistently challenged him during his time on top (some losses later in the decade to Rafael Nadal notwithstanding), so the question about whether he was the most transcendent player ever or merely somebody who beat up on weaker fields of players remains unanswered.

**3 The Williams sisters capture the lion's share of attention in women's tennis.** Venus and Serena both won a great many tournaments, including major events, but were also noticed for off-court activities, periods of injury-related absence and other issues. They had their highs and lows, but no other figures in women's tennis were able to compete with them throughout the entire decade for the spotlight.

**4 The FedEx Cup alters the PGA schedule.** Following in the footsteps of NASCAR with their "Chase" championship, the PGA instituted the FedEx Cup, a big-money title designed to encourage greater participation in tour events leading up to it. Those results were largely unsuccessful, as the tour continued to have only about 8-10 events with a full, star-studded field in addition to the majors, and Tiger Woods proved that you could win the four-week playoff even while skipping the first week. But it did bring one more area of attention to the tour and helped focus at least a bit of attention back on the entirety of a season as opposed to merely the results of the four majors. Also, the Tour Championship was raised in esteem as it earned big attention as the final event of the Cup.

**5 The Nikolay Davydenko scandal demonstrates once again how vulnerable sports are to match-fixing.** Under extraordinarily suspicious circumstances, Davydenko, one of the world's top tennis players, forfeited a match in an obscure tournament after taking a huge lead on August 2, 2007 — when big money was immediately wagered against him (most casinos allow betting on a tennis match in progress). The ATP cleared him of wrongdoing after a prolonged investigation, but notice was served about the sport's vulnerability to outcome-rigging.

## Top 5 Projected Storylines for the 2010s

**1 Tiger.** At one point, the pursuit of Jack Nicklaus' record of 18 major titles figured to be Tiger's biggest challenge of the next decade. Those were more innocent days. His ability — or lack thereof — to deal with the myriad scandals now surrounding him will define the "back nine" of his career.

**2 Among the new top faces in tennis, will there be any Americans?** The excitement that surrounded Melanie Oudin's underdog run to the 2009 US Open quarterfinals underscored the hunger for a new generation of American stars to materialize. The longtime underachievement of Andy Roddick has only fed this appetite. Quite simply, the game will be limited in its appeal in the crucial US market without multiple stars coming along in the mold of John McEnroe, Jimmy Connors, Chris Evert and the Williams sisters.

**3 The economy better improve at some point!** Economists who warn of a prolonged severe recession of the sort that Japan endured in the 1990s might as well be warning leaders of these sports that they are doomed to stagnation due to faltering sponsorship opportunities. External economic forces will loom huge in the 2010s.

**4 Will the fantasy industry be a greater part of monetizing these sports?** Team sports remain mostly responsible for propping up the US fantasy industry, but golf, tennis and other individual sports have significant potential for growth. The PGA has started to tap into this notion to a small extent. These sports need every edge they can get in an increasingly crowded marketplace and a greater embrace of the concept of fantasy "pools" would do nothing but help.

**5 Big Olympic opportunities are coming.** While the awarding of the 2016 Olympics to a South American country for the first time attracted big attention, the Olympic movement has more special potential for attention this decade. Tennis will be contested on the Wimbledon courts in 2012, pro golfers will be debuting at Rio in 2016 and hockey will have NHL players for the first time in Canada in 2010.

## Top 5 International Sports Storylines of the 2000s Decade

**1 Olympic scandals of all shapes and sizes erupt.** The Olympics were battered by various negative stories this decade: doping scandals, a figure skating judging fiasco and bribery allegations surrounding the 2002 Salt Lake City Games. The intensely insular and secretive world of the IOC ultimately proved resistant to efforts for greater transparency.

**2 Ryder Cup intrigue.** When the Europeans broke the longtime American stranglehold on the Cup in 1985, a new era of intense back-and-forth competition was underway. But the celebrated 1999 US win at Brookline seemed to mark the last high moment in American golf, as the Europeans bounced back to humiliate their vastly-superior-on-paper opponents in the next three consecutive competitions. The 2008 American team reemerged on top at Valhalla, though, indicating that the series will remain competitive and compelling for a long time to come.

**3 The “Redeem Team” ends a shocking US drought in international basketball.** The narrow wins tallied by the Americans en route to the 2000 Olympic gold medal foreshadowed a brutal decade, in which the USA came up short in the 2002 and 2006 World Championships and 2004 Olympics. While the rest of the world had closed the talent gap somewhat, ultimately no single country was even remotely as talented on paper as the Americans, leading to great national frustration. But the 2008 squad, led by fundamentally sound players who were also in their talented primes, reasserted the national will, methodically working their way back to the gold medal.

**4 The fastest men in the world.** Two individual athletes — both at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing — stood out like no others. Michael Phelps came in with the burden of expectations that he would surpass Mark Spitz’s mark of seven gold medals in swimming. He did so, albeit by the narrowest of margins in one of his races. Meanwhile, Usain Bolt set world records in the 100 and 200 m events. Both of these brash athletes earned their share of detractors, but nobody could doubt the transcendence of their moments on the world stage that summer.

**5 The 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics come to America at a crucial time.** Mere months after the first attack waged on American soil since the War of 1812, the Winter Olympics returned to the USA. The shadow of 9/11 (and the anthrax attacks) loomed, never more so than when the flag from Ground Zero was presented at the Opening Ceremonies, but the Games achieved exactly what Olympic idealists would expect under the circumstances: help sooth the American sense of trauma after a nightmarish autumn.

## Top 5 Projected Storylines for the 2010s

**1 The World Cup and Olympics travel to uncharted waters.** With the World Cup in Africa in 2010 (South Africa) and in South America (Brazil) four years later — and the Summer Olympics in Rio in 2016 — Africa and South America will achieve their first ever “home-field advantages” on the world sports scene. The success or failure of their efforts to host these games will tell a great deal about whether untraditional countries will continue to be given opportunities of this magnitude.

**2 Scandal mitigation efforts must continue for the Olympics.** The bidding for the 2016 Summer Olympics reminded the world yet again about the opaque processes that govern every aspect of business for the IOC. The poobahs of international sport can get away with their insularity so long as doping scandals and bribery attempts are kept at bay.

**3 The Olympics move further still from the amateur days.** With pros having been officially allowed in the Olympics since ‘92 (Soviet bloc days notwithstanding), the movement will embrace professionals with greater fervor than ever in the ‘10s: Vancouver will host the most heated tournament yet with the NHL stars in 2010, tennis’ biggest starts will play at Wimbledon for a gold medal in 2012, top golfers will compete for the first time in 2016 and soccer-mad Brazil will embrace that event the same year.

**4 Ryder Cup intrigue.** While the USA always fields a better and deeper team on paper, the Euros generally play with more cohesion — keeping this event as one of the most unpredictable and heated in all of sports.

**5 War-zone Olympics in 2014?** Russia invaded Georgia in 2008 and will host the 2014 Summer Games in Sochi — a mere 15-minute drive from that country’s border. A renewal of hostilities could be disastrous.

## Top 5 Combat Sports Storylines of the 2000s Decade

**1 UFC regulations pay off big-time.** Back in the dying days of the last century when “ultimate fighting” was taboo and politicians were decrying “human cockfighting,” it would be hard to fathom the level of success that the UFC now enjoys. By embracing common-sense regulations that removed unnecessary physical risks, MMA grew wildly, blowing past boxing as the top combat sport in America and relegating pro wrestling to #2 in the PPV world.

**2 Tyson/Lewis in ‘02 closes the era of compelling heavyweight boxing, at least for a generation.** Throughout history, the heavyweight division has been the engine of interest in professional boxing and a series of larger-than-life figures kept the continuum moving forward by maintaining the fascination of the American people. The last member of this lineage was Mike Tyson, who was a shell of his former self after being released from prison in 1995. The last truly relevant moment of his career came in 2002, when he fought Lennox Lewis for the world title that he had last held six years earlier. A large disadvantage in size and reach proved to be fatal to Tyson’s chances and the thoroughly boring manner that Lewis used to dispatch him foreshadowed the public’s loss of interest in heavyweight boxing from that point forward.

**3 Kimbo!** Sure, he subsequently got exposed as not being on the level of the top MMA fighters in the world, but the underground legend that was created by his streetfights on YouTube penetrated the mainstream in a manner that few “real” ultimate fighters had been able to achieve. As the first man to headline an MMA fight on prime-time network television, Kimbo Slice achieved a lasting legacy even as his (inevitable?) comedown was looming.

**4 “Golden Boy” and “Money May” help prop up a struggling sport.** At a time when the heavyweight division was dying on the vine, a handsome and charismatic Hispanic boxer who fought in various middleweight divisions became the highest-earning boxer in the history of the sport. Oscar De La Hoya carried over his late-’90s momentum to be at the center of some of the decade’s (few) compelling fights. One of his opponents, Floyd Mayweather, used his peerless skills and obnoxious mouth to become one of the few other legitimate drawing cards remaining in the sport.

**5 UFC/Pride merger prompts Dana White’s “AFL/NFL merger” comparison.** UFC’s 2007 acquisition of Pride made possible some “dream fights” that had been heretofore impossible to schedule. The continued free agent status of elite heavyweight Fedor Emelianenko demonstrated that the consolidation wasn’t a cure-all for the business, as did the rise of Strikeforce, but more “dream fights” are certainly possible these days.

## Top 5 Projected Storylines for the 2010s

**1 Brock Lesnar moves MMA closer to the pro wrestling face/heel dynamic.** In a fairly subtle manner, the mixed martial arts world has been moving for years in the direction of adopting an emphasis on marketing over-the-top personalities like pro wrestling has been doing. Sensitive about comparisons to that worked business, the UFC has been careful about going too far in that direction — but their most visible fighter going into the next decade carries much of his background with him. Heavyweight champ Brock Lesnar, a former WWE titleholder, regularly conducts himself in the brash manner of a pro wrestling villain. Will his act become more standard in the UFC circles? Traditional fans may become alienated if it does. Also: will he heal? He got very sick in late ‘09. As the top heavyweight draw and aforementioned top heat-seeking personality, the sport needs him back

**2 Fedor!** The iconic heavyweight had some close calls in his November 2009 prime-time fight on CBS, indicating yet again that the window will not be open forever for the UFC to acquire some of his prime years. A deal has to be made at some point, because Brock v Fedor would easily be the biggest fight in the history of the business. And if Lesnar has to vacate the title for health reasons? Then UFC needs him even more.

**3 Will boxing’s heavyweight division rise from the ashes?** Historically, the American public has been hard-pressed to care about much boxing action outside of the heavyweight level. With that division at an all-time low, the entire sport’s health hangs in the balance.

**4 Manny Pacquiao.** “Pac Man” has achieved wide acclaim as the best pound-for-pound boxer in the world, but a light welterweight from the Philippines will have a hard time rallying the American public to show a renewed interest in boxing. He will need an unprecedented interest in substance over style on the part of the US public to help carry the sport. But he does have the substantial selling point of compelling greatness on side, as the first fighter ever to capture titles in seven weight divisions.

**5 Network TV for boxing?** MMA has made several appearances on CBS prime-time, but boxing shows no signs of getting such a platform back. It is no coincidence that the sport at its healthiest when it had this front-and-center exposure. It needs it desperately.



## Top 5 Sports Entertainment Storylines of the 2000s

**1 WWE botches their victory in the Monday Night Wars.** When the WWE's "reward" for achieving near-monopoly status in the pro wrestling industry was a sharp decline in TV ratings and pay-per-view buyrates, company head Vince McMahon must have been thinking that circumstances didn't materialize as he anticipated! The turnover in the creative team that started with the shocking late 1999 defections of Vince Russo and Ed Ferrara culminated with a controversial regime led by Vince's daughter (and HHH's future wife) Stephanie. To say that their efforts were less successful than those notched during the boom period would be a huge understatement. The company spent much of the decade bemoaning the cyclical nature of the industry — conveniently overlooking the fact that missteps can create that kind of self-fulfilling prophecy.

**2 The Benoit family tragedy compels the new "PG" direction of WWE.** When pro wrestling suffered its most shocking and public of all tragedies in 2007, the company had no way of knowing that the scandal would be relatively easily contained in the long run. After all, having one of its most highly-regarded stars kill his family and then himself (and be exposed as a rampant steroid abuser) was as horrible on a PR level as it was on a human level. As such, the company left behind its half-decade of halfway-perpetuating the "Attitude Era" and embraced a retro '80s, family-friendly direction. Have they completely lived up to it in the time since then? Of course not. But it does represent the company's most radical change of direction in over a decade.

**3 The brand extension helps somewhat on a business level, while causing frustration for fans.** After swallowing up WCW and ECW in 2001, the WWE didn't want to run the same stars on every TV show and every tour. After the notion of a separate WCW brand under the corporate heading proved to be an idea at least two years too late, the company divided their wrestlers under the heading of their two main TV shows, Raw and Smackdown in 2002. Four years later, a third ECW brand was added to the mix. The separation of wrestlers has been very inconsistently enforced during the decade, as the company has not been shy about hotshotting cross-brand matchups and storylines regardless of how much sense they make or do not make in the long run. However, the company remains wedded to the concept because they like the idea of running separate tours — both domestically and internationally — with separate world champions headlining the events. The brand split is here to stay.

**4 The industry's turn-of-the-decade dynamic returns quickly and endures for most of the decade.** By 2000, the then-WWF had reduced WCW to a feeble and distant second place in the industry, with ECW still as an even more distant third place. WWE absorbed these companies the next year, but by 2002 TNA was created and essentially took WCW's place in the business. Ring of Honor began the same year and became the promotion of choice for hardcore fans in the same way that ECW did. As such, there's an unprecedented staleness in the industry with three companies occupying the same roles for the better part of a decade. Think about it: when the territories started going by the wayside in the 1980s, the NWA essentially morphed into WCW and then ECW came about in the '90s. But the Monday Night Wars infused the business with intrigue as the major promotions traded places on top. Those days seem like so long ago.

**5 Few new main-event stars are created.** The WWE tried (at times) to create new stars, but had little success. Brock Lesnar decided he wanted out after getting his mega-push. Chris Benoit and Eddy Guerrero clearly weren't envisioned as long-term answers — and both died before they could get further opportunities. JBL had a bad back. Batista was injury-prone. Only John Cena, Randy Orton and Edge emerged from the mid-decade period as constant main-event players and only CM Punk got to that point in the latter years of the 2000s. In TNA, AJ Styles and Samoa Joe were two of the few who broke through the glass ceiling to any extent. Aspiring wrestlers were left with fewer places to cut their teeth and once they did advance, industry politics often cut them off at the pass. The future of the business was not helped by this.

## Top 5 Projected Storylines of the 2010s

**1 Hulk Hogan goes to TNA.** The industry's foremost political player took complete control of the distant #2 company late in 2009, spurring Bret Hart's return to WWE. The company that has long been unable to put a dent in the WWE's operations will either electrify the business with a second wrestling war — or end up out of business when Panda Energy pulls the plug.

**2 Raw and Smackdown identities finally diverge with Raw "guest hosts."** Despite speculation to the contrary at the time of the brand split, Raw and Smackdown did not have many discernable difference during the 2000s (aside from Smackdown having a bit more hardcore wrestling content). But with Raw using (mostly celebrity) guest hosts for their programming in '09, they have taken the "sports entertainment" concept further than ever before.

**3 The star-making machine must be revived.** If people won't pay to watch certain stars in the main event, the business cannot thrive. Since top matchups can be easily burned out these days (see HHH/Orton and Cena/Orton in 2009 alone), the need to replenish the top shelf is dire.

**4 The quest for overseas markets.** Both WWE and TNA are frantically trying to tap into the overseas fanbase, not least of which because those fans haven't been jaded by bad booking. This will probably lead to less domestic touring and further removal from the days in which wrestling was primarily a live event.

**5 Technological change is coming.** The day may be coming when a promotion can go national only through the 'Net and without TV. At that point, the business will never be the same.

## Top 5 Sports Media Storylines of the 2000s Decade

**1 It's ESPN's world and we're just living in it.** A hubristic venture into designing their own cell phones aside, ESPN became the biggest heavy-weight in the sports media world in this decade — even swallowing up the vaunted ABC Sports brand in the process! With the Internet, mobile platforms and a print magazine augmenting their ever-increasing army of networks, the onetime underdog entity stuck its tentacles into every imaginable corner of sports media.

**2 The 24-7 sports media culture finally becomes a full reality.** Cable TV moved America towards the era of nonstop news cycles in the 1990s, but it took the maturation of the Internet's capacity to move stories for the dynamic to reach full force in the '00s. As the blogosphere started to assert itself around 2003, the final piece of the puzzle was coming into play as sports stories were now capable of reaching the full saturation point at very early moments.

**3 Team/conference/league channels.** With college conferences like the Big Ten joining the Big Four professional sports leagues in starting up their own cable channels, the sports media universe became that much more fragmented. A trend that was barely in its infancy in 2000 grew exponentially through the decade.

**4 Independent media reasserts itself through the Internet.** While major media consolidation continued unabated throughout the last ten years, a leveling effect was provided through the democratic possibilities furnished by the Internet. Bloggers came to provide a counterweight to the 800-pound gorillas like ESPN and even caused them some heartburn when internal scandals were made public. Internet broadcasting was another avenue for bypassing the power of traditional media. New Media did not reach its full potential in this decade, but it grew to the point where no large media outlet could squelch all voices of discontent.

**5 Rights fees continue to escalate.** The recession at the start of the decade did little to stop the continuing cycle of increasing rights fees for televising sporting events and leagues. The Great Recession at the tail end of the decade came too late to affect the renewal of most existing deals. Even with the continued mining of new revenue streams, this decade set a standard for continued upward movement in this area that will be hard to sustain indefinitely, absent unexpected developments.

## Top 5 Projected Storylines for the 2010s

**1 ESPN will be on offense and defense simultaneously.** The goliath institution known as ESPN began posing another severe challenge to local newspapers and their struggling websites in 2009 when it began building market-specific sub-sites. Market by market, there is a good chance that ESPN will become the dominant local brand of choice in the next ten years. However, they will have to fend off the collective efforts of countless New Media outlets to provide non-traditional coverage in newer and better ways — and renewed competition from NBC Sports under the new Comcast banner. Technology could well be both a friend and foe to ESPN in the 2010s.

**2 What forms will technology take?** Will we be watching the Super Bowl and World Series on smart phones eventually? Will outlets as yet unimagined come along to take advantage of the continued merging of TV and Internet to offer coverage in ways we cannot yet even conceive? The chances are great that upgrades in technology will render 2020 sports world completely unimaginable from what we see now.

**3 Can rights fees stay sustainable?** College institutions and pro sports teams and athletes are used to receiving ever-increasing barrels of money. In the worst global economy in 80 years, the gravy train of TV money and advertising dollars will be hard-pressed to allow that “standard of living” to continue to cycle upwards. Why are conferences like the SEC freaking out about fans Tweeting from the stands? Because they fear the day is coming when fans can produce an entire multimedia spectacle from the stands — thus undermining the networks who pay handsome fees for exclusivity.

**4 Independent sports media will approach maturation.** The trend of consolidating New Media sports outlets that was started by the pioneer site Most Valuable Network ([www.mvn.com](http://www.mvn.com)) will have far-reaching ramifications. The invention of the blogging platform early in the 2000s democratized sports media in ways that could not have been fathomed even a decade earlier. Now the entities created in these ten years are growing and taking on new forms and other new and promising creations are popping up all the time. As technology continues to make the world “flatter” in terms of making relatively obscure outlets available to the masses, nature will thwart the would-be monopolists of the world.

**5 Synergy will continue to grow.** Sports networks have been setting up ever-closer associations with their websites for the entire last decade, but the trend is spreading to include mobile platforms and even newspapers in markets where the local daily is owned by such a parent company. Cross-promotion of different outlets, already at staggering heights, will only continue to explode over the next ten years.

## Most Impactful Sports Entertainment Stars of the Recent Past

1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
1 Bruno Sammartino 2 Harley Race 3 Nick Bockwinkel 4 Verne Gagne 5 Jack Brisco 6 Dusty Rhodes 7 Dory Funk, Jr. 8 Superstar Billy Graham 9 Andre the Giant 10 Bob Backlund	1 Hulk Hogan 2 Ric Flair 3 Roddy Piper 4 Dusty Rhodes 5 Randy Savage 6 Andre the Giant 7 Ted Dibiase 8 Bob Backlund 9 Harley Race 10 Nick Bockwinkel	1 Steve Austin 2 Hulk Hogan 3 The Rock 4 Bret Hart 5 Sting 6 Shawn Michaels 7 The Undertaker 8 Ric Flair 9 Kevin Nash 10 Goldberg	1 Triple H 2 John Cena 3 The Undertaker 4 The Rock 5 Steve Austin 6 Shawn Michaels 7 Kurt Angle 8 Chris Jericho 9 Edge 10 Randy Orton
<b>HONORABLE MENTION</b> Abdullah the Butcher Ric Flair Terry Funk Ivan Koloff Jerry Lawler Peter Maivia Mil Mascaras Wahoo McDaniel Pedro Morales Tommy Rich The Sheik Stan Stasiak Ricky Steamboat George "The Animal" Steele Johnny Valentine	<b>HONORABLE MENTION</b> Tully Blanchard Bruiser Brody Junkyard Dog Ronnie Garvin Curt Hennig Jerry Lawler Lex Luger Paul Orndorff Iron Sheik Sgt. Slaughter Jimmy Snuka Ricky Steamboat Magnum TA Kerry von Erich The Ultimate Warrior	<b>HONORABLE MENTION</b> Shane Douglas Scott Hall Triple H Lex Luger Roddy Piper Raven Sabu Randy Savage Scott Steiner Tazz The Big Show Vader Rob Van Dam The Ultimate Warrior Yokozuna	<b>HONORABLE MENTION</b> Batista Bryan Danielson Ric Flair Eddy Guerrero Jeff Hardy Hulk Hogan Jeff Jarrett JBL Samoa Joe Brock Lesnar Rey Mysterio The Big Show Sting Booker T Rob Van Dam

### Rankings over the past few decades

With the territorial age of professional wrestling lasting through the late 1980s and the "modern age" having started slightly before that time, we are comparing wrestlers across these decades.

Points were assigned for each decade as follows:

- 1st Place: 30 points
- 2nd Place: 28 points
- 3rd Place: 26 points
- 4th Place: 24 points
- 5th Place: 22 points
- 6th Place: 18 points
- 7th Place: 16 points
- 8th Place: 14 points
- 9th Place: 12 points
- 10th Place: 10 points
- Honorable Mention: 5 points

#### NOTES

^ Ric Flair was the only wrestler to accrue points across every decade.

^ Verne Gagne and Bruno Sammartino would have rated much higher had these rankings also taken the 1960s in account; both would have been very near to the top.

- 1 Hulk Hogan (63)
- 2T Steve Austin (52)
- 2T Ric Flair (52)
- 4 The Rock (50)
- 5T Dusty Rhodes (42)
- 5T The Undertaker (42)
- 7 Harley Race (40)
- 8T Nick Bockwinkel (36)
- 8T Shawn Michaels (36)
- 10 Triple H (35)
- 11 Sting (32)
- 12 Roddy Piper (31)
- 13T Andre the Giant (30)
- 13T Bruno Sammartino (30)
- 15 John Cena (28)
- 16 Randy Savage (27)
- 17T Bob Backlund (24)
- 17T Verne Gagne (24)
- 17T Bret Hart (24)
- 20 Jack Brisco (22)
- 21T Kurt Angle (16)
- 21T Ted Dibiase (16)
- 21T Dory Funk, Jr. (16)
- 24 Goldberg (15)
- 25T Superstar Billy Graham (14)
- 25T Chris Jericho (14)

# Pro Wrestling Insider

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# Roundtable on the NFL in the 2000s and Expected Developments in the 2010s

Viewers of THE FDH LOUNGE program (Wednesdays, 7-10 PM EST on [SportsTalkNetwork.com](http://SportsTalkNetwork.com)) know that the ultimate football meeting of the minds occurs anytime FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones and “TheScout” Ken Becks from 1stDownScouting.com are sharing observations. So when it came time for us to look back and look ahead at the first twenty years of gridiron developments in the 21st century, we did not have to look far for our participants. FDH Managing Partner Rick Morris moderated this discussion.

**Rick:** From a schematic standpoint, what have been some of the more important and long-lasting developments in the pro game over the past decade? The spread offense? The Wildcat? The Cover-2? Or something else altogether?

**TheScout:** I believe that the Wildcat formation is a style of offense that will stay around for some time to come. The bottom line is that it maximizes the number of playmakers you can have out on the field at one time. Normally the player who lines up at QB in the Wildcat formation is one of your more talented athletes on your team, period. And when I say talented, that doesn't necessarily mean the most athletic.

The player receiving the direct snap has to possess a high football IQ when it comes to split-second decision making and the ability to make defenders miss in tight areas and those players do not grow on trees. As time has moved along, with the success of NFL teams like the Dolphins running The Wildcat and committing a major portion of offense around it, now teams are starting to select players specifically to run The Wildcat.

Players such as Dolphins QB Pat White and Raiders RB Darren McFadden were drafted by their teams in hopes of featuring them in their form of the the Wildcat. And these players were selected high in the draft to let you know that these NFL teams are committed to this so-called gimmick offensive formation.

And with more and more teams employing some form of the Wildcat in their offense, collegiate players are becoming more and more adept at coming right in and running the show from the Wildcat version for their NFL team.

So in closing, with a larger amount of draft-ready players from the collegiate level (and high-selected prospects) ready to step right in and help the production of their team's offense with the Wildcat at the NFL level, there seems to be no end of players being drafted for this new style of offense -- as long as defenses stay behind.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 21)

## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones Top 50 2010 NFL Draft Prospects Version 1.0

Player	School	Pos	Range
1 Ndamukong Suh	Nebraska	DT	Top 3
"A Boy Named Suh": The best and safest player in the draft. Pencil him in as a starter the moment he shakes Goodell's hand.			
2 Jimmy Clausen	Notre Dame	QB	Top 3
The best of the Clausen clan; however he could be Peyton or he could be Eli.			
3 Jake Locker	Washington	QB	Top 5
GMs are in love with his size and measurables. His stats aren't epic, but he could be a better pro than collegiate player			
4 Russell Okung	Oklahoma St	OT	Top 10
Wire-to-wire the best left tackle in the country in 2010. Still remains to be seen where he'll rank in the NFL but a safe pick in the top 5.			
5 Eric Berry	Tennessee	S	Top 10
Berry leapfrogged Mays for the best S in this draft. Depends on style. Berry is more Polamalu than Ed Reed.			

# Roundtable on the NFL in the 2000s and Expected Developments in the 2010s

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*"Unlike the others, [The Cover-2] has shown staying power ... A team must have the players to run [the Spread and Wildcat]."*

**Jason:** Even though the Wildcat and Spread might seem like the first answers for most people, I believe as far as the overall decade is considered, it is the Cover-2. For a while, there were only a few teams that used the Cover-2 and they did so as a base defensive coverage. Now, probably more than 70% of the teams in the NFL include the Cover-2 in some way. Some use it as a base defense, while others use it as a wrinkle. Unlike the others, it has shown staying power. Both the Spread and the Wildcat are talent-based schemes. A team must have the players to run those sets. Granted, it seems like most teams have tried the Wildcat ... some with more success than others. With the Spread, think of the Bengals team from about five years ago: Carson Palmer, Rudi Johnson, Chad "Johnson," T.J. Houshmandzadeh, and Chris Henry. That was a team that was able to establish a threat of no less than four skill-position players at any time. Jacksonville couldn't run an effective Spread if they wanted to. The other interesting concept is that of *tweeners*. On defense, we already have the FS/SS, or the DE/OLB or DT/DE. I think we can add a new one on offense. Take Reggie Bush ... that's right, I said Reggie Bush. As a featured back, he could be thought of as a draft day bust. He can't run between the tackles and he doesn't block all that well. But on the edge, and as an intermediate-route receiver, Bush is very well-suited. Imagine a time when teams don't draft a featured back and a change-of-pace back as we have seen all this decade ... or a featured back and a RB/WR ... or a third-down back with great speed on the outside and a sort of manufactured slot receiver. There is a great example of this, ironically, coming out of Southern Cal. His name is Joe McKnight. As a traditional RB, he is lacking. Great big-play potential, but not a 4-5 yards-per-carry, over-20-carries-a-game kind of guy. As I do not have him grading out in the top half of the first round, he could be a steal for teams who already have a featured back. Imagine him on a team like St. Louis or Atlanta. Both teams have a crushing featured back, a between-the-tackles kind of guy. Now imagine Joe McKnight on a team like the Falcons. Matt Ryan at QB, Michael Turner at featured back (20-25 carries), Roddy White, Tony Gonzalez, Michael Jenkins, and Joe McKnight (five rushes and 5-8 receptions). McKnight could get about 1500 yards from scrimmage in that office and in so doing, add a wrinkle that would benefit that team on 3<sup>rd</sup> down conversions and red-zone efficiency. Or have him go to Miami and see if they can make the Wildcat work as a base offense. Just a thought.

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## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones Top 50 2010 NFL Draft Prospects Version 1.0

Player	School	Pos	Range
6 Gerald McCoy	Oklahoma	DT	Top 10
With the emergence of the 3-4's popularity, McCoy is the best 4-3 DT for the majority of teams that still run it.			
7 Dez Bryant	Oklahoma St	WR	Top 10
Best WR in the draft by a wide margin. Off-field issues could drop him, but not out of top 10-15. Immediate starter on a marginal team.			
8 Taylor Mays	USC	FS/SS	Top 10
2nd to Berry by very little. Mays is more of a thumper S and very productive against the run.			
9 Jahvid Best	California	RB	Top 15
Best in a RB-weak draft. Quick/shifty/fast. Combine fans will love him. Q: is he more like Reggie Bush or Chris Johnson in the NFL?			
10 Carlos Dunlap	Florida	DE	Top 15
Off-field issues may drop him but make no mistake about it, the best 4-3 DE or 3-4 OLB project. Typical Florida DE.			

# Roundtable on the NFL in the 2000s and Expected Developments in the 2010s

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21)

**Rick:** What do you make of the conundrum with the 3-4 over the past decade? The Patriots and Steelers have had major success with it over the last decade, which generally breeds a copycat mentality in the league -- but as we've seen, teams like the Browns have really struggled with it because it's hard to find the right players! Not enough teams in college run it as a base defense, so you're constantly projecting who would fit where in the 3-4 based on their play in the 4-3 or their physical characteristics. How is this being addressed and how should it be addressed?

**TheScout:** I would say the success of the 3-4 defense with the upper-tier defenses in the league does spur on copycats. And if you notice, more and more teams are looking to go to the 3-4 defense. As we speak, the highest-ranked defense in the league belongs to the Green Bay Packers. The Packers just made the move this year to the 3-4, so you can see the success the 3-4 can bring to a team. On the other end of the spectrum, the Cleveland Browns also employed the 3-4 defense for the this season, and they are ranked at the bottom of virtually every defensive statistical category in the league! So why would there be such a disparity between the two NFL defenses statistically?

There are a number of factors that go into why one team may have more success than another, but the most important factor is in who's bringing in the personnel to run the 3-4. The biggest advantage to running a 3-4 is the flexibility and overall athleticism it brings to your defense. With that said, we still have to get back to bringing in personnel to run this defense.

The line of defense in the 3-4 is the D-Line. To find a nose guard to consistently hold up versus the opposing teams O-Line double teams will be difficult to find either at the collegiate or NFL level -- at least one that is not already taken. The nose guard is a demanding and rare breed of player to find. Then you have to find two defensive ends that are both equally efficient versus the run, that provide a good push upfield against the pass, and can still be able to string out plays to their side of the field -- another difficult position to find! And finding four linebackers (along with quality reserves) with the athleticism to perform the various tasks asked of them to run this defense successfully may be the hardest task yet. These players also have to play both the run and pass equally effectively, along with being able to come up at any time to the line of scrimmage and provide a pass rush when asked.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 23)

## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones Top 50 2010 NFL Draft Prospects Version 1.0

Player	School	Pos	Range	
11 Sam Bradford	Oklahoma	QB	Top 15	Best all-around pocket passer with the wins to back it up. Purest passer in the draft, but has very little upside: he is what he is now.
12 Travis Lewis	Oklahoma	OLB	Top 15	Best of a weak class. Played behind two other great defensive players from Oklahoma, could be smoke and mirrors.
13 Joe Haden	Florida	CB	Top 15	Haden is a solid corner; the lack of a shutdown prospect in this draft will elevate his stock.
14 Bruce Campbell	Maryland	OT	Top 20	After Okung, the bottom falls out at LT. Campbell is good and will eventually start, but he's not Joe Thomas or Ryan Clady.
15 C.J. Spiller	Clemson	RB	Top 20	Another one of these shifty quick backs whose ceiling is still in question. Don't fall in love with his combine numbers too much.

# Roundtable on the NFL in the 2000s and Expected Developments in the 2010s

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Since the majority of your colleges teams do not employ the 3-4 defense, if you plan on running the 3-4 defense at the NFL level, the most important position to have locked down in your organization would be the person who is going to bring in the talent! Since the 3-4 defense requires your team to find such unique athletes for this defense, you have to have a talented and outside-the-box thinking personnel staff to be successful!

**Jason:** Two things. One, the Steelers and Patriots were able to do it because in this decade, they've never truly been bad. Getting mid-to-late first round picks with no glaring weaknesses allowed them to experiment or taken measured risks with guys they could develop. With that being said, selecting guys like LaMarr Woodley was just great drafting. Look at last year. The Steelers drafted Evander Hood (my #3 DT). That was not a position of need, but in the short term it creates depth, and long-term, maybe he becomes the next Richard Seymour. The Patriots took a different approach. They knew what kind of players they wanted and focused on just those players. While everyone else was worried about the 4-3 DE combine freak, they were looking only at the cerebral agile and form-tackling OLBs to fit their scheme. Too many teams fail because they see a kid and what they think they can make him into. Kamerion Wimbley is a quality player, but is he Shawne Merriman? Of course not. And the reason is because they thought about it too much. Merriman was just a certifiable badass in every way. Wimbley was more a man without a position at Florida State and still needed to be coached up. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. Vernon Gholston, Aaron Maybin and Robert Ayers were all drafted to be the next freakish DE/OLB (3-4 OLB) to be the cornerstone of a 3-4 defense. None of them have shown that as of today. On the other hand, Richard Seymour, Terrell Suggs, DeMarcus Ware, and Shawne Merriman have in some way lived up to that billing. The difference is scouting. Quality teams make quality picks, even if they have to think outside the box a little. You'll also notice that the large majority of questionable picks or busts at the tweener spot have been at the latter end of the decade, after the good teams' picks have had an opportunity to become studs. It is a copycat league.

**Rick:** What accounts for this "golden age of the QB" that we've been starting to see for the last year or two with the excellent veterans being supplemented by so many promising young ones coming into the league? Is it just a temporary blip upward or are we seeing better development of passers at the youth level in a way that might be lasting?

**TheScout:** There are only a handful of what I consider to be franchise QBs presently in the league!

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 24)

## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones Top 50 2010 NFL Draft Prospects Version 1.0

Player	School	Pos	Range
16 Terrence Cody	Alabama	NT	Top 20
The one and only first-round NT. Any team running the 3-4 that doesn't a 2 gap plug will be willing to reach on him.			
17 Brandon Spikes	Florida	ILB	Top 20
Spikes can play either the ILB or MLB, but stock rising at other positions will drop his.			
18 Greg Hardy	Ole Miss	DE	Top 20
Very solid prospect at 4-3 DE, not freakishly great, but a very solid contributor for any 4-3.			
19 Damian Williams	USC	WR	Top 20
Fits the billing physically, but it is USC, players always look better in USC than they do in the NFL.			
20 Derrick Morgan	Georgia Tech	DE	Top 20
Morgan is a lot like Hardy, very good, not very great.			

# Roundtable on the NFL in the 2000s and Expected Developments in the 2010s

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23)

I believe that the QB position is the most overhyped and overrated position there is at the NFL level, period! The QB position is the only position (regarding athleticism) that has lacked the development & evaluation in this area as EVERY other position has over the years! This has placed the overall QB position as inferior athletically and at a competitive disadvantage on the field.

For this reason (lack of athleticism), you see the NFL continually making specific rules changes to hopefully protect and close the gap for the QBs' lack of athleticism: such as allowing QBs to throw balls away once outside the hashes to avoid being hit (for lack of mobility to avoid defenders) by oncoming defenders. If the game was to be played like it was supposed to be not so long ago, the majority of QBs would be out for the year on IR. When the majority of QBs can't allude DTs that are almost 100 lbs. larger, what does that tell you?

Where does the majority of this athletic gap begin? I would say at the collegiate ranks. For the most part, at the high school level, most teams place their best athletes at QB so these athletes can have the ball in their hands more frequently and have their football IQ take over. Then once these players make their way to the collegiate level, the majority of them are moved to other positions. But why? I can understand that by sheer numbers you need to fill other positions on the team both on offense and defense.

But again, the question I have is why? If the most important position to fill at any level is the QB position, then why wouldn't you place your best athlete with ideal measurables and a good football IQ at the position? Many times, you will find athletes such as WR Calvin Johnson (6-5, 236 lbs., Detroit Lions) and WR Brandon Marshall (6-4, 230 lbs., Denver Broncos) moved from high school QB to collegiate WR. Why?

Wouldn't conventional wisdom tell you that if you can have your cake and eat it too, that you would place your best athletes that fit the prototype dimensions desired from the QB position there? The players above, Calvin Johnson and Brandon Marshall, fit those dimensions in every way. The detractors may say, well, what if the players don't want to play the position? Or what if they may not have the mindset to play the position? Or what if this or what if that? The bottom line is that if a college coach is determined to fill his QB position with the player that best meets the required athletic and intangible skills needed, then he can SHOULD be more than willing to convert a highly-touted high school player (such as a Calvin Johnson or Brandon Marshall) from one position to meet the needs for filling the most important position on the team: QB!

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## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones Top 50 2010 NFL Draft Prospects Version 1.0

Player	School	Pos	Range
21 Trevard Lindley	Kentucky	CB	Top 20
NFL size and speed, his stock could rise or fall based on the combine and workouts.			
22 Reshad Jones	Georgia	FS/SS	Top 20
If you can't have Berry or Mays, Jones is not a bad consolation prize, could get better punch in the first round at a different position.			
23 Colt McCoy	Texas	QB	Top 25
My favorite QB in the class, decent arm strength, good decision-making and mobile. Take Colt, not Tebow, don't believe the hype.			
24 Brandon LaFell	LSU	WR	Top 25
LaFell was projected to be a Top 10 pick his freshman year, as people lose track of LSU, they also did LaFell.			
25 Bryan Bulaga	Iowa	OT	Top 25
If a team is desperate for a LT, this is a good spot. A good teams may trade up and move him to the right side. Good run blocker.			



# Roundtable on the NFL in the 2000s and Expected Developments in the 2010s

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24)

If you were to start to see college coaches placing their highest-recruited athletes at the QB position, eventually this new type of QB prospect would make their way to the NFL level and close the athletic deficiency gap now existent between the QB and every other position at the NFL level. Imagine a QB like Calvin Johnson at 6-5, 236 lbs, running a 4.3/40! A player like this is much more valuable behind center running your offense than he would be as a great talent relegated to limited targets, and at a position (WR) ultimately dependent on the success of his QB!

So getting back to the subject, as long as the majority of QB prospects coming out of the college ranks continues to be deficient athletically (which immediately places that NFL team drafting him at an obvious athletic competitive disadvantage on the field), coupled with the fact that past history will tell you drafting a QB out of college takes a 2-3 years process before that QB can make his way behind center and feel comfortable, these two factors alone should drop a QBs value during the NFL draft significantly!

Since we have established the athletic deficiency the QB position frequently brings to your NFL team, and also established that more often than not this is a developmental position over a 2-3 year period (at the expense of the team's success till that QB matures, if ever), then with these major pitfalls to overcome at the position, why are QBs ever taken at the top of the draft? It makes more sense to take a QB in the 2nd or 3rd round that you can develop in your offensive system that is based on a strong O-Line & running game until that drafted QB develops as a passer.

Example: the drafting of QB Mark Sanchez by the Jets with the 5th overall selection (along with the big cap # and compensation given to move up to select him) was bad value. The Jets are not realistically going to win a Super Bowl for at least 2-3 years because of drafting Sanchez. Instead, they could have drafted someone like Texas A&M QB Stephen McGee in the 4th round (saving a tremendous cap figure, with less pressure on player and team). In 2-3 years, if Sanchez is better, his success will most likely not be enough to overcome the compensation given for him -- not to mention the numerous draft selections accumulated moving out of the 5th overall pick to help the on-field success and development of the 4th round selection of QB Stephen McGee.

This is a subject I could go on about for as long as there is someone that will listen! Until the draft value of the QB position is dropped for obvious reasons, this type of draft philosophy is the best way to go. Now if only NFL teams will listen to what I have to say. READERS, WHAT IS YOUR OPINION?

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## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones Top 50 2010 NFL Draft Prospects Version 1.0

Player	School	Pos	Range
26 Charles Brown	USC	OT	Top 25
If a team is desperate for a LT, this is a good spot. A good team may want to trade up and move him to the right side. Pass blocks well.			
27 Earl Thomas	Texas	FS	Top 25
Thomas is a diamond in the rough, while everyone else considers Berry/Mays or bust, He could be one of the best values in the draft.			
28 Arrelious Benn	Illinois	WR	1st
Illinois doesn't get the credit for WRs but this guy is the real deal. Like 2009 first round WRs, it may take a few games to figure it out.			
29 Sergio Kindle	Texas	3-4 OLB	1st
One of my favorite players most analysts undervalue. Like his intensity and motor, not all the time, but when he's on he's on.			
30 Jerry Hughes	TCU	3-4 OLB	1st
Like all the other TCU defensive players, Hughes is fast and instinctive. Can play in any system.			

# Roundtable on the NFL in the 2000s and Expected Developments in the 2010s

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**Jason:** This one is fun for me. I hope to not offend any old or traditionalist fans. The new quarterback movement to me is a reflection of evolution. 15 years ago, no team felt good about starting a rookie. It's just not how things were done. Then, Peyton changed all of that and showed that after a terrible rookie season, your young QB just might be better for the wear. Now, after seeing Matt Ryan's success, maybe just maybe a mediocre-to-bad team would benefit more from starting a rookie. Look at Denver a few years ago. Jake Plummer was no golden child in terms of quarterbacking. Throughout that season, the debate raged on. Plummer and this team were not good enough to win a Super Bowl. So why wait, put the kid in and get a jump on the learning curve. Now some people still think that a second-round playoff appearance would've been better, but that's why it's a debate. Also, unlike most people, I believe that players get better with each passing year. Not player A from year to year but, 2010's players are just better than 2000's were and 2000 was better than 1990 and so on. Medical advances, technological advances, and the idea that in most cases today's athletes have been cultivating their craft *SERIOUSLY* since they were in Pop Warner. It would not surprise me in the least if ten years from now, it would be considered the norm to start rookies, especially those picked in the first round. Look, Mark Sanchez is a better option than Kellen Clemens and Matt Stafford is a better option than Daunte Culpepper. That's just the way the game has evolved. A similar question that I think is harder to gage is, why have rookies at RB and WR done so well so quickly? DeSean Jackson, Chris Johnson, Calvin Johnson, and Steve Slaton? Maybe these kids are just better athletes and football players than in past decades?...

**Rick:** In terms of scouting and organizational philosophies, what have been some of the biggest developments we have seen and are seeing now? Are there any approaches to system-building that you really appreciate in particular?

**TheScout:** The best way to go for long-term success is building your team around a great defense and a tough, physical running game that can grind out time of possession to keep your defense off the field as much as possible. Then, add a passing game that is based around a talented WRs corps with specific skills in yards after contact or YAC, and a QB with a talent ceiling above more than becoming just a system QB. A good example of this would Jacksonville QB David Garrard, who, by the way, was drafted in the 4th round out of East Carolina and developed.

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## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones Top 50 2010 NFL Draft Prospects Version 1.0

Player	School	Pos	Range
31 Ricky Sapp	Clemson	3-4 OLB	1st
Ricky Sapp is a nice all-around OLB with the size to play the 3-4, might not be an immediate starter, but will be worth the selection.			
32 Rolando McClain	Alabama	ILB	1st
On a team who's d-line eats up a lot of attention, McClain makes plays. Only will thrive on team with a good d-line.			
33 Jonathan Dwyer	Georgia Tech	RB	1st-2nd
Nice novelty, but there's a reason Navy RBs don't get drafted: product of the triple option. Or could be a poor man's Brandon Jacobs.			
34 Marshawn Gilyard	Cincinnati	WR	1st-2nd
Spark plug of a receiver. Doesn't project to a #1, but could be similar in style to DeSean Jackson in Philly.			
35 Jermaine Gresham	Oklahoma	TE	1st-2nd
The pre-combine #1 TE, but there hasn't been a Winslow/Shockey/Gonzalez type of TE in about 6 years. Don't overvalue him.			

# Roundtable on the NFL in the 2000s and Expected Developments in the 2010s

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**Jason:** Delegation. Back in the day, there were only a few guys that scouted the field. Now you have a President of Player Personnel, GM, Asst GM, and then under them, 200+ people who specialize. I'm sure eventually there will be a guy whose sole job is to scout only weakside defensive ends in the Big 12 Conference who can convert physically to the 3-4. It has gotten so specific that no stone seems to be left unturned. There are even competitive Mexican football teams at major Mexican universities that play American-style football who are drawing attention from NFL scouts. Now, I guarantee you that at least in the preliminary stages, Ozzie Newsome is not going to Mexico City to scout a safety. The process has changed. Even the system-building aspect is specialized. In the last NFL draft, I counted no less than six head coaches that publicly stated, "We have a handful of guys we were looking at. No, we did not scout all of the players." Nowadays, teams want a specific brand of man for their team. Some teams want freakish athletes. Some want smart fundamental players. Some want traditional position players. But clearly the process has changed.

*"I'm sure eventually there will be a guy whose sole job is to scout only weakside defensive ends in the Big 12 Conference who can convert physically to the 3-4."*

**Rick:** To this day, why is it still so hard for many coaches to think outside the box (i.e. passing to set up the run, running out of a spread offense when you've got the defense in a nickel or dime, etc.)? It seems like a basic failure of imagination is such a huge obstacle for so many coaches.

**TheScout:** It is the system itself that provides you this type of unimaginative way of thinking – meaning that most NFL head coaches are promoted from within the NFL ranks. And where do most down-and-out NFL teams look for their new hot head coaching candidate? Most frequently, they look to the winning organizations for their next head coach. When these new head coaches are hired, what do they fall back upon? How they got there in the first place (by being part of a winning staff) and normally embracing the philosophy of the head coach they tutored underneath. In turn, they normally bring in assistants that think and have beliefs similar to theirs. And so the pendulum of predictability continues over and over ...

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## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones Top 50 2010 NFL Draft Prospects Version 1.0

Player	School	Pos	Range
36 Cameron Heyward	Ohio St	3-4 DE	1st-2nd
Lack of options. Unless his Combine results and individual workouts are out of this world, shouldn't go any higher than mid 20s.			
37 Major White	Florida	FS	1st-2nd
Like every year, unless the S in question is a Ed Reed/Polamalu/Dawkins/Sanders, we really don't care until the second round.			
38 Trent Williams	Oklahoma	OT	1st-2nd
Good value at end of the 1st or early 2nd round. Could develop into a quality LT or convert to the right side. No future Hall of Famer.			
39 Dan Williams	Tennessee	DT/NT	1st-2nd
Vols had a down year, but there is only one first-round worthy NT; if there is a 3-4 team in need, he could go much higher than this.			
40 Allen Bailey	Miami	DT	1st-2nd
Like Dan Williams, Bailey will be a good player, but don't reach on tackles at this point.			

# Roundtable on the NFL in the 2000s and Expected Developments in the 2010s

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**Jason:** They're old. I'm not kidding. I bet the vast majority of coaches you're thinking of are over 50. Look at the successful offensive minds. Sean Payton, Mike Tomlin (up until November 2009), Mike Smith, Josh McDaniels, etc. Now sure, some older guys do well enough. But in general, the older guys are a lot less likely to adapt to change, take risks or think outside of the box. Look at Andy Reid. He's almost afraid to run the ball. It's almost like he wants to pass to set up the pass. It sounds silly, but maybe more of them should play Madden. The game is set up to give and react in a realistic fashion. Yet, it allows you to do unconventional things, like playing a 3-4 with three DTs instead of a NT and Des or running a nickel defense every play while spying your MLB on edges or running an entire game out of the shotgun. There is a relative level of creative license that most of the old guard are afraid to flirt with.

**Rick:** Over the last ten years, the Internet and other factors have helped to democratize the media and the football industry. None of us could be doing what we're doing without the Internet and when you add the ability to watch player videos on YouTube, that just takes the sensation to a whole new level. How is the game different for having voices like ours as a part of the discussion these days?

**TheScout:** I am not so sure the voices of persons like ourselves change the opinions of the movers and shakers making the selections for their NFL teams, but I do feel we have influence with the everyday "Joe Fanatic." Like myself, they can never get enough information when it comes to potential players that may come to their NFL team. And developments such as the Internet, Facebook, Twitter, etc. have made both players and persons like ourselves more real and accessible to the regular Joe, and they have made them feel as I do, feel more a part of the process.

**Jason:** Like everything in my life, it's measured with options. Options, options, options. 30 years ago, we liked who we saw. Now we can see everyone. I am now in Denver, but that doesn't stop me from following the Browns or Dolphins or Saints or Vikings. The Internet and other advances in media allow us all to view whoever we want in whatever frequency and depth we want. If you want to, you could watch the game of the out-of-town team or listen to their entire post game press conference, or watch a local weekly recap show on that team, or see interviews with players from that team, or get practice film of that team, etc. Now of course, I can get all of that on the Broncos out here, but what about the Detroit Lions? There is no connection to the Lions in Denver, but the media has allowed that to be the case. We create options for everyone else. Earlier in the month on a FDH Lounge episode, we discussed NBA prospect John Wall. That would have never happened without technological advances. It would have taken the mass populus another six weeks of Sportscenter or accidental Kentucky viewing to get that memo. The same is true for the NFL. In about 3-9 weeks, depending on one's involvement, the prospects will be oozing out of the woodwork. And wow, wait until the combine. It allows people like you and me to say, "you know Tim Tebow, and Colt McCoy, and Dez Bryant, etc. but let me tell you about Ndamukong Suh." Not everyone follows everyone. This allows those of us in the media to even the exposure playing field. There is no longer the excuse, "Well, I never saw him play on TV" – even though the Heisman Trophy voters seem to still lean on that one.

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## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones Top 50 2010 NFL Draft Prospects Version 1.0

Player	School	Pos	Range
41 Jared Odrick	Penn St	3-4 DE	1st-2nd

Very interesting prospect, like his teammate from '08 (Aaron Maybin), a good combine workout could label him "a 3-4 OLB freak."

42 Golden Tate	Notre Dame	WR	1st-2nd
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Again, a DeSean Jackson byproduct. Five years ago, he'd be a second-day kick returner. Success with the little guy will help him.

# Roundtable on the NFL in the 2000s and Expected Developments in the 2010s

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**Rick:** What have been some of the most noteworthy draft picks of the last decade in your mind? This could encompass reaches, values, should-be studs who actually panned out or anything else that comes to mind.

**TheScout:** The fact that a number of QBs have out-performed their low draft status (out-performing so-called franchise selections) over the years with a wide variety of success across the league. Here are a few examples to name a few of the QBs below. I could have expanded on this subject but it could have been an endless one!

1987: Rich Gannon/4th RD/NFL MVP, 4X Pro Bowl, 3X All-Pro  
 1993: Trent Green/8th RD/Super Bowl Champ, 2x Pro Bowl  
 1994: Kurt Warner/Undrafted/Super Bowl MVP & Champ, 2X NFL MVP, 4X Pro Bowl, 2X All-Pro  
 1994: Jeff Garcia/Undrafted/4X Pro Bowl  
 1998: Matt Hasselbeck/6th RD/3X Pro Bowl, 1X All-Pro  
 2000: Tom Brady/6th RD/3X Super Bowl Champ & 2X MVP, 1X NFL MVP, 4X Pro Bowl, 1X All-Pro  
 2000: Marc Bulger/6th RD/2X Pro Bowl, 1X Pro Bowl & 1X NFL MVP  
 2003: Tony Romo/Undrafted/2X Pro Bowl

**Jason:** I'm concentrating only in the first-day picks. I'll graciously leave the deep-rooted analysis to the expert, Ken Becks. No one gets into the late-round guys like him. He could deliver a Top 50 best available undrafted free agents list if we asked him.

## BEST

Jamal Lewis - Hall of Famer, 2000 yds in a season.  
 Michael Vick - Biggest hype ever, most exciting.  
 LaDainian Tomlinson - Best little back ever.  
 Chad Johnson - Best WRs are not in the top of the 1st and can be JUCO transfers.  
 DeMarcus Ware - Studs can come from Troy.  
 Shawn Merriman - B.E.A.S.T., played that way in college, plays that way in the pros.  
 Calvin Johnson - Could be the greatest of all time, if the situation improves.  
 Adrian Peterson - If he's a freak on the field, he's a freak on any field.  
 Chris Johnson - WOW! May be the first legitimate Combine Freak turned NFL Freak.

## VALUE

Steve Hutchinson - Made G more valuable.  
 Casey Hampton - Made NT a key draft pick.  
 Drew Brees - Top five caliber in the second round.  
 Ed Reed - Made the top safety worth a top pick in the future.  
 Terrell Suggs - Created the DE/OLB project first round worthy.  
 Nnamdi Asomugha - First shutdown corner built like a safety.  
 Steven Jackson - Not all Pro Bowl RBs have to come in the top of the 1st round.  
 Mario Williams - Sometimes the safer pick is the better pick.  
 DeAngelo Williams - Not a big football factory? Who cares, the kid can play.  
 28 of the 32 selected in the Second Round in 2008 play significant roles in 2009.

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## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones Top 50 2010 NFL Draft Prospects Version 1.0

Player	School	Pos	Range
43 Rico McCoy	Tennessee	OLB	1st-2nd

I like this kid, but don't reach. Does most things well, but nothing exceptional.

44 Javier Arenas	Alabama	CB	1st-2nd
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Due to other positions riding up the board, guys like Arenas are going to fall, creating great value at the CB position.

# Roundtable on the NFL in the 2000s and Expected Developments in the 2010s

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## REACHES

Joey Harrington - Drafted high off of one season.  
 William Green - Poster child for Combine mistake.  
 Adam Jones - Character now counts for something in the drafting process.  
 Reggie Bush - If he doesn't do it in college, it makes sense that he wouldn't do it in the pros.  
 Jarvis Moss - Florida DEs should come with a warning.  
 Aaron Curry - Solid player, I (and I may have been alone) rated him no better than Derrick Johnson.  
 Alex Mack - Even if he's a Hall of Famer, you don't trade out of the 5th pick to draft a center in the 20s.  
 Matt Leinart - Looks the part, doesn't play the part.

## BUSTS

Courtney Brown - You might say injuries, I say didn't have the instinct.  
 Matt Jones - QBs don't make great WRs.  
 Mike Williams - Out of football for a year, even too heavy to play TE.  
 Jason Campbell - High-profile QBs drop for a reason (with one recent exception).  
 JaMarcus Russell - Biggest draft bust in history. Bet Al wishes he'd taken Calvin Johnson.  
 Darren McFadden - Don't believe the hype.  
 Darius Heyward-Bey - Great speed, can't catch. See a pattern here? The last three busts are Raiders.

**Rick:** Who are some of the most intriguing players in the first draft of the next decade, the 2010 installment?

**TheScout:** I am more intrigued with the lesser-known prospects that I know have the talent to not only make a NFL team's 53-man roster, but make a soon-to-immediate impact despite their likelihood of going later in the draft. One of my sleepers from last year was Kent State QB/WR Julian Edelman. Here are some of The Scout's sleepers to keep an eye on:

QB: Levi Brown, Troy, 6-3, 220, Draft Projected (6th RD)  
 RB: Dimitri Nance, Arizona State, 5-10, 218, Draft Projected (Undrafted)  
 WR: Reyn Willis, East Carolina, 6-3, 220, Draft Projection (Undrafted)  
 TE: Cory Slate, Marshall, 6-4, 227, Draft Projected (6th RD)  
 TE: Jeff Cumberland, Illinois, 6-5, 247, Draft Projected (6th RD)  
 DE: Robert Rose, Ohio State, 6-5, 285, Draft Projection (Undrafted)  
 DT/NG: D'Anthony Smith, Louisiana Tech, 6-2, 300, Draft Projected (5th RD)  
 OLB: Dexter Davis, Arizona State, 6-2, 252, Draft Projected (6th RD)  
 CB: Myron Lewis, Vanderbilt, 6-2, 205, Draft Projected (4th RD)  
 S: Marcellus Bowman, Boston College, 6-2, 225, Draft Projection (Undrafted)

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## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones Top 50 2010 NFL Draft Prospects Version 1.0

Player	School	Pos	Range
45 Tim Tebow	Florida	QB	1st-2nd

Will make a great H-Back and team captain, he just isn't a QB unless there is an NFL team the wants to run the Wildcat all the time.

46 Sean Witherspoon	Missouri	OLB	1st-2nd
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Quality player, may take a season and change to crack the starting lineup. Definitely better as a 4-3 LB.

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# Roundtable on the NFL in the 2000s and Expected Developments in the 2010s

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**Jason:** Here, I'll give you the short list...and it's preliminary, I'm sure it will change:

Ndamukong Suh - Best D-Lineman, maybe in a decade or more.  
 Jimmy Clausen - Prototype QB, but we'll see how that goes.  
 Russell Okung - The Joe Thomas or Jake Long of this draft.  
 Eric Berry - Best S in the draft, could be Polamalu-esque.  
 Dez Bryant - Best WR in the draft, starts yesterday for his NFL team.  
 Taylor Mays - Linebacker at S, could be a beast.  
 Sam Bradford - Prototype, but with new injury history.  
 Joe Haden - Probably the best corner in the draft...probably.  
 CJ Spiller - I don't like him, but I wasn't high on Moreno at this point last year.  
 Terrence Cody - Attention 3-4 teams!!! Only first-day NT.  
 Brandon Spikes - Perceived to be this year's Patrick Willis.  
 Damian Williams - Best WR you don't know by name...but he's from USC.  
 Colt McCoy - Could be the perfect blend between pocket and mobile QB...New generation's Steve Young?  
 Brandon LaFell - Could have been a Top 15 player if he could've come out as a freshman.  
 Earl Thomas - Best S if you can't get Berry or Mays, great value if he goes after the 20<sup>th</sup> pick.  
 Arrelious Benn - Some are calling him the next Marvin Harrison, we'll see.  
 Sergio Kindle - Great 3-4 DE/OLB project.  
 Jonathan Dwyer - Could be a system guy or could be the next Brandon Jacobs.  
 Tim Tebow - GREAT team captain, sub-par NFL QB.  
 Joe McKnight - Ranked somewhere between 10<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> best RB, but how about as a WR?!?!?!?

**Rick:** Name some college underclassmen who already appear to be noteworthy pro prospects down the road.

**TheScout:** Here are a few underclassmen I have my eye on that you will see make their way through the college ranks and into the NFL:

MarQueis Gray, Minnesota, QB, 6-4, 215, Sophomore  
 Dion Lewis, Pittsburgh, RB, 5-8, 195, Freshman  
 Nate Solder, Colorado, OT, 6-9, 305, Sophomore  
 Chris Little, Georgia, OT, 6-6, 360, Freshman  
 Brandon Brooks, Miami (OH), OT, 6-5, 325, Sophomore  
 Tandon Doss, Indiana, WR, 6-3, 197, Sophomore  
 Bradley McDougald, Kansas, WR, 6-2, 195, Freshman  
 Aaron Dobson, Marshall, WR, 6-3, 185, Freshman  
 Dion Sims, Michigan State, TE, 6-5, 268, Freshman  
 Robert Quinn, North Carolina, DE, 6-5, 260, Sophomore  
 Vontaze Burfict, Arizona State, ILB, 6-3, 245, Freshman  
 Tavon Wilson, Illinois, CB, 6-0, 191, Freshman  
 George Iloka, Boise State, FS, 6-3, 199, Sophomore

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## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones Top 50 2010 NFL Draft Prospects Version 1.0

Player	School	Pos	Range
47 Jevan Snead	Ole Miss	QB	2nd

Snead got Heisman pub earlier in the season. I don't see it, needs much work. He'll spend 3+ years as a backup, at least.

48 Joe McKnight	USC	RB/WR	2nd
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Short of Tebow, the best Wildcat player. Imagine what Reggie Bush is for N.O., but 6'0/200.

# Roundtable on the NFL in the 2000s and Expected Developments in the 2010s

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31)

**Jason:** There are plenty of Juniors in the previous list, so this one, while shorter, is specific to guys that are not entering the 2010 Draft, or at least those who don't appear to be as of press time.

QB: Jake Locker, Washington (could've been a top 10 pick this year)

QB: Terrelle Pryor, Ohio State, (decent in college, could be great in the pros)

RB: Jahvid Best, Cal (could go high if he tests out like Chris Johnson did)

RB: Mark Ingram, Alabama (does a little of everything well)

WR: Julio Jones, Alabama (could be the #1 WR taken in '11)

DE: Da'Quan Bowers, Clemson (the next freak of a DE)

**Rick:** Granted, it's harder to project this way with football than with any other sport because of the shorter spans of careers, but if you had to guess, who are some of the football players we are most likely to be discussing as the players of the 2010s ten years down the road?

**TheScout:** That is a hard projection with so many variables. But historically, you would have to look toward the QB, OL, and DL positions for longevity purposes. To select players still at the collegiate or early into their NFL careers still is to difficult to project. But this is a subject I find interesting, and with more prep time wouldn't mind exploring in more depth.

**Jason:** Here's a few by position

QB: Matt Ryan, Philip Rivers, Drew Brees

RB: Steven Jackson, Adrian Peterson, Chris Johnson, Cedric Benson, Ray Rice

WR: Calvin Johnson, Andre Johnson, Brandon Marshall

TE: Brandon Pettigrew, John Carlson

O-Line: Ryan Clady, Joe Thomas

D-Line: Mario Williams, Brian Orakpo

Linebackers: DeMarcus Ware, Shawn Merriman, Patrick Willis, DeMeco Ryans

S: Brandon Meriweather, Reggie Nelson, Eric Berry

CB: Nnamdi Asomugha, Darrelle Revis

Other: Devin Hester, Josh Cribbs

## FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones Top 50 2010 NFL Draft Prospects Version 1.0

Player	School	Pos	Range
49 DeMarco Murray	Oklahoma	RB	2nd-3rd

On the low end, a great complimentary back, in time, he could develop into more than that.

50 Dan LeFevour	Cen Michigan	QB	3rd
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Could be a great QB of the future to be groomed under an established veteran. Strong arm and very mobile.

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## FDH Top 10 Newsmakers of the 2000s Decade

1 **George W. Bush:** He called himself “The Decider” and he certainly decided the course of events more than any other person this decade. Wildly popular in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, he used his standing to steer the nation into a second war in Iraq – and as that conflict soured, so did his popularity. His so-called “compassionate conservatism” led to federal spending that put Democratic presidents to shame and further undermined the Republican brand. Despite toxic unpopularity in the second half of the decade due to the aforementioned factors and the blame he received for the federal part of the response to Hurricane Katrina, he remained singularly influential, although in a backwards way at this point – for it is unlikely that Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Reid and President Obama would have ascended to their present positions without the ability to run against Bush. His role in elevating these powerful figures is the most immediate – and in the minds of his remaining supporters, the most unfortunate – part of his legacy.

2 **Osama bin Laden:** Militant Arab leaders have railed against the West for decades – but only one of them pulled off a signature attack that changed the course of history. Overnight, America was transformed from a sleepy, post-Cold War power that looked inward to a fierce wartime machine. Masters of evil do not distinguish between fame and infamy, so just as Hitler dominated the 1930s and 1940s, so too did bin Laden leave his bloody mark on the first post-Millennial decade.

3 **Dick Cheney:** The most powerful vice president in history might have placed even higher considering his influence on one of history’s most consequential presidents, but ultimately Cheney gets bumped down slightly due to his marginalization in the second half of the final Bush term. Decades in government and the military-industrial complex taught him how to master the hidden levers of power to win policy arguments – and no presidential adviser in history was ever able to match his influence from 2001 to late 2006.

4 **Alan Greenspan:** A man widely credited for the prosperity of the 1990s was also appreciated for assisting the economic growth that was resuming towards the end of his final term in 2005 – until the Wall Street bubble burst three years later. Then, much to his chagrin, his role in propping up the “bubble economics” of the past three decades came under scrutiny. His methods led the Fed to help create “prosperity in our time,” but ultimately helped contribute to the gargantuan mess that Uncle Sam was left to face in 2008-09.

5 **Vladimir Putin:** The new “Russian Bear” did not exactly reignite the Cold War, but did create a “Cool War” of sorts. At the beginning of the decade, he and Bush were engaged in a mutual lovefest and the Russians were pledging their help in the War on Terror after 9/11. By decade’s end, Putin had created a domestic support group modeled on the Hitler Youth, his government had invaded neighboring Georgia after years of menacing former Soviet bloc subordinates, he was thwarting every attempt to reign in North Korean and Iranian nuclear aggression and he was essentially knitting together a global anti-American alliance reminiscent of the Cold War. Even in his role as prime minister rather than president (a clever term limits end-around that barely disguised his authoritarianism), he remains one of the most important figures on the world scene.

6 **Ben Bernanke:** This Greenspan follower took the top Fed job in 2005 never imagining that his scholastic work about the problems leading up to the Great Depression would come in handy. Wrong! Before long, “Helicopter Ben” was in a virtual hovercraft, throwing money at problems in ways clearly never envisioned by the Founding Fathers. Still, his work is credited with helping keep the “Great Recession” from developing into a complete collapse, even while scrutiny has been paid to his role in perpetrating the “Bubble? What bubble?” attitude of Greenspan before the crash of Wall Street.

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## FDH Top 10 Newsmakers of the 2000s Decade

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7 **Hank Paulson**: Treasury Secretaries in Washington routinely help to enact consequential policies, but few ever end up on a list like this one; however, Paulson was in the right place at the right time (or perhaps the wrong place at the wrong time). The TARP bill that he drew up when the financial system was hanging by a thread will be debated for decades, but he deserves some credit for helping to avert a complete systemic collapse.

8 **Howard Dean/Al Gore**: These men collectively set the stage for the power shift in American politics that would manifest itself years later. In 2002, Gore was the first major Democratic figure to oppose the coming Iraq War, although he declined to face Bush in a presidential rematch. Less than a year later, Dean was transforming a long-shot campaign into a powerhouse by beating the same drum against a cautious field of opponents. Technological advances long touted by Gore ended up being exploited by Dean as the Internet became a huge financial moneymaker for a presidential campaign for the first time. In retrospect, it should not have been as surprising as it was at the time when Gore became the first legitimate Democratic heavyweight to endorse Dean for president. And while Dean, like Gore, ultimately was not cut out to win the race, he, like Gore, maintained influence on the outside. While Gore agitated on behalf of his green agenda throughout the decade, winning praise from global elites, Dean took over the Democratic National Committee, consolidated it in a militantly anti-Bush state and put into place a so-called “50-state strategy” that ultimately laid the groundwork for Barack Obama to win in unlikely places in the '08 presidential race. Together, these two men helped shape the reeling Democratic party of 2002 into the powerhouse that dominated 2006 and 2008.

9 **Barack Obama**: In 2008, Obama completed one of the swiftest journeys from national obscurity to the White House in history. Elected to the Senate in 2004, he became a figure of political fascination with a supremely effective keynote speech to the Democratic National Convention earlier that year. And in knocking off a de facto incumbent in terms of political strength in Hillary Clinton in the '08 primaries, Obama accomplished something unprecedented in the modern (post-1960) era of presidential politics. From there, his campaign, which was modeled on the 1968 Robert F. Kennedy movement, survived a Republican challenge which moved from moribund to mortal threat with the addition of the electrifying Sarah Palin to the ticket. In the end, his status as the first black president proved to be no more unlikely than his status as the first non-Southern (and non-avowed moderate) elected Democrat of the modern age. His outstanding 2008 campaign forever changed the way that future organizations will be run and funded.

10 **Hugo Chavez**: Oil makes this madman the most influential Latin American tinpot dictator since the salad days of Fidel Castro. Not content to tweak Uncle Sam in conventional ways, he is now challenging the Monroe Doctrine by welcoming Russian intervention into Latin America and working with Iran to knit together an anti-American – and nuclear-fueled? – alliance. His aspirations to export Marxism and cause American heartburn at every opportunity have catapulted him to a place of great influence, especially now that Bush is gone and a friendlier counterpart in Obama occupies the Oval Office.

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## FDH Projected Top 10 Newsmakers of the 2010s Decade

1 **Barack Obama:** It's no surprise that a US president would occupy the top spot here, especially given George W. Bush's unparalleled influence over the last decade. As the first more or less overtly liberal president elected since LBJ, his agenda would be fascinating even in less tumultuous times. His approach to health care reform, federal jobs stimulus and redefinition of the roles of our allies and foes in the world has defined his first year in office and will have far-reaching consequences into the future. He certainly inherited a rough set of circumstances, but most areas of concern have deteriorated on his watch. As such, his fealty to congressional leaders Reid and Pelosi bears watching. If America has not turned around by the beginning of the 2012 election cycle — and that seems a bit of a stretch — then the country is in for one of the most contentious contests it has ever seen. At the middle of the election that will shape the rest of the decade? A referendum on Obama's first term.

2 **Vladimir Putin:** It is no longer a slam dunk that his chosen short-term successor, Dmitry Medvedev, will slink away silently at the end of his presidential term. Nonetheless, Putin has amassed enough power in the Kremlin over the decades that his return to the top in 2012 still seems likely and his agenda for the aggressive expansion of Russian power will keep him firmly at the center of every issue that matters on the global stage. Iranian nukes? China's economic interactions with the rest of the globe? Oil and other energy issues? Mad Vlad will have Russia's nose in the middle of these matters and more. His attempts in the second term of the Bush Administration to knit together a loose global anti-American alliance foreshadowed a return of sorts to the Cold War. Do not be deceived by the fact that Russia is not attempting to export an ideology to take over the world this time around — their attempts to supplant American influence around the globe are no less committed this time around and Putin dictates this approach singularly.

3 **Hu Jintao:** The world's most tumultuous major power is a fascinating blend of contradictions: quasi-free market economics and repression of dissent, prosperous businesses in urban areas and staggering poverty in rural ones. As president for most of the last decade, Hu has stacked the upper reaches of the country's leadership with his followers, so his policies will live on even if he does not seek a third term. With America's fundamental economic weaknesses stemming from massive debt and China's shrewd-but-unfair trade policies, Beijing will be holding favorable cards in its dealings with D.C. for many years to come and Hu and his successors will be taking full advantage of that.

4 **Mahmoud Ahmadinejad:** So what happens when a determined power outside the mainstream of polite international company decides that they are pursuing a nuclear program at all costs? After decades of pondering this question as a horrific hypothetical, this decade will finally unveil the answer to the question — likely in a way that causes at least some of the bloodshed that most have feared. He survived a challenge to his power with a ruthlessness that called to mind the Tiananmen Square massacre and now seems gravely committed to sticking with the pursuit of nukes. The fact that his religious beliefs are aligned with a wish for global chaos that would bring back the 12th imam cannot cause anyone following the situation to sleep any sounder.

5 **Ben Bernanke:** The most powerful Fed chairman of all time inserted his institution into countless unprecedented areas starting in 2008 in an attempt to keep the "Great Recession" from worsening. While some observers are expecting an exit strategy in the next decade, others are expecting more actions still as the jobless recovery and other economic problems point to a prolonged period of pain if not crisis in the country. Bernanke will not even need to be renominated for a third term in 2013 to keep this level of influence: his actions between now and then will assure him of this spot.

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The FDH Lounge Dot Com: Nothing is Off-Topic

## FDH Projected Top 10 Newsmakers of the 2010s Decade

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6 **Hugo Chavez:** Venezuela's budding alliance with Iran means that this Latin American strongman is not content to be a regional headache for the United States; quite the contrary. His pursuit of nukes in solidarity with Iran is another sign that this volatile leader intends to keep his grip on power at the expense of international stability. Oil will merely be the first and most obvious of his weapons in this respect. He has made it clear that the election of Barack Obama to the US presidency has changed nothing in his view and now he enters the next decade in a strengthened position, free of the pressure applied to him by the Bush Administration. Given his willingness to engage in combat inside or outside of his borders, he may or may not survive the decade in power, but he will have tremendous influence over world events while he is still around.

7 **Sarah Palin:** The wildly successful book sales and tour of late 2009 proved that "Sarah Barracuda" will be the primary face of opposition to President Obama and his ideology for years to come. The size and intensity of her base is such that she will maintain a strong level of influence in US politics even if she runs unsuccessfully for the presidency in 2012. The mushy "compassionate conservatism" of George W. Bush that depressed the Republican base and blurred the domestic distinctions between the major US political parties is dead. In its place lies the fiery populist approach of a woman who has even dared — primarily dared, it might be said — to take on heretics in her own party. After the post-1994 triangulation of Bill Clinton and the aforementioned Bush presidency, the 2010s look to be defined by two radically different approaches: one belonging to Obama and one belonging to Palin.

8 **Nancy Pelosi/George Soros:** Essentially, these two titans represent the "inside game/outside game" supporting the foundation of the Obama presidency. With Obama having more or less outsourced the shaping of legislation to the speaker's office, Pelosi is massively invested in making sure that the president is successful as much as possible and by all means necessary. Soros, the primary moneyed titan working on behalf of the Democratic party for much of the last decade, will foot whatever costs are necessary in terms of lobbying, voter registration and other aspects leading to continued Democratic control of the federal government. Notwithstanding the left-wing tilt of these two leaders, they have not been an albatross to Obama yet, at least in a major way. With the base of the party they represent tugging him left on such issues as Afghanistan, however, their behind-the-scenes control of the federal agenda may become a major campaign issue in 2012.

9 **Al Gore:** The former vice president has been saying for years that the United States is at a tipping point when it comes to global warming and attempts to keep it from permanently scarring the future of the planet. But the movement he represents is itself at a tipping point; the Democrats come into the new decade at a realistic high point in terms of what is achievable in House and Senate seats. If they cannot at least implement cap-and-trade legislation (which, radical though it may be, is actually less onerous than legislation favored by other environmentalists), then the ascendancy and inevitability of the movement over the last two decades will realistically be seen as finished. Gore will also have to navigate the "Climategate" scandal that emerged in late 2009 and the harm done to his movement by the document falsification of key scientists.

10 **Warren Buffett:** The "Oracle of Omaha" has stuck out his neck on several key issues over the past few years, from endorsing "Obamanomics" to decrying derivatives to sounding the warning about foreign control of US assets. Notwithstanding his advanced age, he still retains what is probably the most influential single voice in American Big Business and it will only be magnified as the country navigates rough economic waters in the years to come and searches desperately for answers.

## FDH Top 10 News Stories of the 2000s Decade

1 **9/11**: What is really staggering is to examine the next few stories on this list: the next one or two of them would easily have been the biggest story had they occurred in the 1990s or probably even the 1980s. But 9/11 overshadows everything else, not least of which because the lessons drawn from it helped create the third story on this list, the Iraq War. The first major attack on the homeland since the War of 1812 had been predicted by some authorities for years, but could not have been more shocking and transformative in their impact. Aside from the JFK assassination, there is no other day over the course of the last several decades when Americans saw their entire notion of national life changed right before their very eyes. But while the events of November 1963 radically altered the way that citizens saw the world, 9/11 changed their very thoughts on life itself and the notion of basic security from harm on our own soil

2 **The financial crash/“Great Recession”**: While the economic downturns of the early 1990s and early 2000s were not mild, they did nothing to prepare the country for the crash of 2008. A year that saw unprecedented gas prices in the first half and a Wall Street crash and accompanying federal bailout in the second half caused a crisis of faith in our economic institutions like nothing since the Great Depression. To complicate matters even more, the causes of the downturn — murky malfeasance in various corners of finance and public policy — did not lend themselves to being understood easily by the public, fanning the flames of discontent. The federal rescue of large institutions, while probably necessary in terms of preventing a global crash that would have devastated the world in unprecedented ways, went against every precept of risk and reward in the free market. In 2009, as a new administration attempted to battle the conditions it inherited, it embarked on a deliberate course of drastically running up the federal debt to finance the efforts — thus adding the country’s medium and long-term fiscal health to the mounting list of concerns. The economic stinkbomb that exploded towards the end of the decade profoundly affected the country and the world in ways that are not through being measured.

3 **The Iraq War**: America does not necessarily hate war, but unsuccessful wars are quite another story. The painful history of Korea and Vietnam was relived in excruciating fashion when the United States got bogged down in Iraq from 2003-07 and even the “surge” that allowed a reasonably successful withdrawal did not erase the stench from four years of being bogged down in the desert. The country’s anguish at the loss of blood and treasure and the national humiliation of appearing helpless in the face of terrorists with primitive armaments only grew as the Bush Administration appeared paralyzed. More than any other development, the war destroyed the presidency and paved the way for the country’s radical move to the left in the 2006 midterms and 2008 presidential election.

4 **Hurricane Katrina**: Natural disasters are as old as the republic itself, but for a major metropolitan area to be wiped out in the manner of New Orleans and surrounding Gulf Coast areas — that was completely unprecedented. A nation still failing to process how we had been unable to finish the job in Iraq was now forced to confront the reality of local, state and federal governments coming together in a frightful confluence of incompetence and the death and destruction that ensued. Katrina ruined a great many lives, cost the nation a pretty penny in rebuilding costs and caused one of the longest and most painful lame-duck presidential eras by pairing up with Iraq to all but extinguish the Bush presidency in the fall of 2005.

5 **Technological change**: The first full decade of the Internet as a part of daily life saw many changes, from the ubiquity of video stemming from the creation of YouTube in 2005 to the instant technology of Twitter and similar applications starting from about 2008 forward. In comparing the Iranian election protests of 2009 to the China democracy movement of twenty years earlier, the ability of technology to get word to the outside world stands out as the primary difference. But with the ability of the mullahs to ultimately quash dissent, the limits of present technology were exposed. Ultimately, the decade was spent as what history will probably record as a highly transitional phase of the world’s move to a supremely interconnected society.

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## FDH Top 10 News Stories of the 2000s Decade

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**6 Outlines of anti-American global alliance take shape:** The placid, post-Cold War era of world politics barely lasted a decade before 9/11 changed the dynamic violently. However, developments took an even nastier turn when world powers who chafed at Pax Americana (Russia, China and “Old Europe” during the Iraq War period) and assorted malcontents (Iraq, Venezuela) teamed up to throw sand in the gears of the United States whenever they could. It wasn’t quite the reunion of the Warsaw Pact, but this informal working relationship among those opposed to anything in the interests of America was still jarring nonetheless. One of the key planks in Barack Obama’s presidential platform in 2008 was a stated willingness to make major concessions to reverse this effect. Tangible results toward this end were mixed at best during the first year of his term.

**7 Bush/Gore recount battle:** American politics, mired in one of its nastiest periods since the “Second Civil War” of the 1960s, hit yet another nadir with a development unprecedented in modern times: the entire presidential election hanging in the balance while the state of Florida conducted a recount after the 2000 election. After initially conceding that George W. Bush had won the election, Al Gore then reversed himself when he saw the potential to get the outcome reversed through the judiciary. Along the way, he and his minions made much of his victory in the popular vote, a complete irrelevancy in the American electoral system. Before the case was ultimately adjudicated by the Supreme Court, partisan tempers in the country had reached new heights and citizens everywhere learned the meaning of the not-so-impossible “pregnant chad.”

**8 Mideast war and peace:** The “Second Intifada” broke out shortly after the latest attempt at a Mideast peace process collapsed in the summer of 2000. Years of renewed fighting ensued, with conflicts in Lebanon and Gaza also erupting. The world learned yet again how intractable the issues are that separate the Israelis and Palestinians and with regional powers like Iran willing to do whatever is necessary in terms of deploying terrorists as proxy armies, fuel for the conflict seems sadly to have a never-ending supply.

**9 The election of President Obama:** The media and most voters fixated on Barack Obama’s race as the most surprising barrier to be surmounted in his 2008 election to the presidency. While this was certainly noteworthy, given America’s history with race, perhaps an even more unlikely element floated beneath the surface: his takedown of a political machine. Incumbents are rarely if ever cast aside in presidential primaries and given her standing as First Lady of an administration that had just left office some years earlier, Hillary Clinton was as close as it gets to being an incumbent. However, her read of the political scene proved to be less adept than Obama’s and as such the insurgent defeated the establishment. In the end, this victory proved to be far more hard-fought and unlikely than the manner in which he finished the job against a dispirited Republican operation in the fall.

**10 The re-election of President Bush:** The country endured political whiplash during the first term of George W. Bush: from harsh divisions stemming from 2000 election fallout to almost complete (short-term) unity in the aftermath of 9/11 to a brutal reopening of old wounds once the Iraq War permitted his old critics to show themselves again. The extraordinary circumstances of the first term led to a rare occurrence in presidential politics: incumbents usually are re-elected solidly or not at all, but Bush ended up being retained in a squeaker that exit polls actually incorrectly forecast would go the other way. In so doing, he displayed a survival instinct that would sadly be completely lacking in his second term.

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## FDH Projected Top 10 News Stories of the 2010s Decade

**1 The United States struggles to wash off the bath of red ink:** The staggering debt of the United States, racked up in large part since the 1980s, accelerated dramatically during the Bush Administration and taken to new heights in the Obama Administration, hangs over the head of all attempts by the government to foster prosperity and security. Foreign (and occasionally unfriendly) governments such as China have not been shy about letting America know the extent to which a veto power could subsequently exist over countless aspects of US policy. The reversal of the trajectory of American ascendancy over the past century now seems inevitable and it will touch every major issue on the globe as other, less benevolent, powers seek to fill the void.

**2 President Obama's calculated diplomatic risks:** In earnestly reassuring the globe of America's impeccable intentions at every turn, President Obama is betting that the country will gain more "soft power" than it will lose in respect culled from fear. The administration steadfastly refuses to give even the tiniest shred of credence to the notion that the nation's implacable enemies take heart from the "we'd rather be loved than feared" approach. As such, his turn in this direction is every bit as radical as George W. Bush's doctrine of preemptive war was in its application to Iraq. Jimmy Carter was turfed out of office in 1980 for a plethora of reasons, but the one most vividly remembered was the belief that he had made the country an object of ridicule from a commitment to naïve pacifism. Democratic presidential candidates and administrations have had to confront this legacy ever since, so Obama's gamble is guaranteed to either pay off in spectacular fashion or implode in such a way that he'll be packing for a return to Chi-Town in 2013. There is no third scenario imaginable.

**3 Technology continues its inevitable march:** Developments are coming so fast and furious in technology that it is impossible to state with any conviction what the landscape will resemble in two years, much less ten. But some outlines are already coming into focus. The explosion of popularity of Twitter in 2009 opened the door to unprecedented monitoring of societal conversation in real time. The "legacy institutions" of terrestrial radio and newspapers are in free fall, with local television stations also having incurred huge setbacks as a result of the late-decade recession. These two developments are actually closely related, as a cacophony of common voices is on the way to replacing the old top-down media format in America. The chaos of this process probably means that the next ten years will be a transitional time towards the ultimate destination of technology just as the past ten were.

**4 The American two-party system faces its most severe challenge in at least a century:** The duopoly that controls American politics will have to confront the fact that technology has caught up to it. Think back to what Ross Perot accomplished in 1992 (before his initial meltdown) by harnessing the rage of the American people at their elected class — without benefit of the electorate. Now factor in how the Internet made possible the long-awaited dreams of redefining political organizing in the 2000s. And finally, factor in the GOP's collapse in public opinion over the second half the decade, followed by the fall of the Democrats once the internal contradictions of the party caught up to it when it had full control of the government at long last in 2009. The American people are ripe for a third-party movement to dislodge the moneyed professional political class in two (often scarcely distinguishable) institutions. This decade may launch a notable one — or maybe more than just one.

**5 The emerging anti-American global alliance faces critical defining tests:** The framework of nations opposed to the American national interest will be tested by decisions about how far they will go to thwart the globe's defining power. Will China continue to cynically let North Korea move closer to a full nuclear arsenal? Will Iran be allowed to gather their own nukes until Israel takes matters into their own hands? Key members of this coalition are likely to discover that not everything that causes America heartburn will accrue to their benefit.

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## FDH Projected Top 10 News Stories of the 2010s Decade

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**6 Mideast war and peace:** True lasting peace in the Middle East continues to be a faint illusion, while Iranian madmen build a nuclear program, terrorists continue to train for suicide bombings and Israel digs in its heels as it ponders its own mortality. The decade surely will be no less volatile than any of the recent ones and will be significantly more so if any nukes are involved — whether the detonation of them or the preemptive destruction of any production facilities.

**7 Green policies reach the moment of truth:** With over two decades of momentum since the 1988 drought, including Al Gore's efforts in the 2000s, the environmental movement came into 2009 with an unprecedented level of control over the federal legislative and executive branches. The House did pass the historic cap-and-trade bill in '09, but no progress was made in the Senate. If the greens cannot strike while the iron is hot during their ascendancy in the early part of the 2010s, they will face the perception that the moment will never truly be right to enact their policies. Additionally, the "Climategate" scandal of late 2009 fueled a scientific rebellion that had been brewing away from the "settled science" of recent years. The greens will either use their large measure of political control to enact their far-reaching policies, or fade back into irrelevance as their followers lose faith in the American political process.

**8 Bubble-bursting becomes an economic priority for the first time:** After the dot-com bubble and then the housing bubble inflicted harm on the American economy over the past decade, a renewed emphasis on economic growth by natural means has gripped the nation's policy leaders. With massive federal bailouts and loans having been necessary in 2008-09 as a means of cleaning up the severe mess wrought by the housing collapse, the consequences of artificial growth have been etched on everyone's minds in a manner that will be truly indelible.

**9 Obama's reelection campaign:** Presidential incumbents are rarely turned out of office, but then again, presidents rarely have to deal with the multiplicity of severe circumstances faced by Barack Obama. At any rate, as the most liberal president elected since LBJ in 1964, he has renounced the tendency towards triangulation that Democrats embraced successfully in the 1990s. Coupled with a Republican ticket that is likely to be led by Sarah Palin or somebody like-minded, the country is about to receive a pretty clear left vs. right choice in the 2012 general election with significantly less blurring of the edges than generally occurs. The nation's decision will thus be quite fateful, indeed.

**10 US polarization reaches critical mass:** The fallout from the 2012 presidential election will inevitably lead to a deepening of the cycle of polarization in American politics. As each president gets more delegitimized by his opposition (and at earlier junctures), true progress in governing the country and solving the massive long-term structural problems will be even more elusive.

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# Politics, Geopolitics and the Economy: Our FDH Panel Looks Back and Ahead

At The FDH Lounge, we pride ourselves on our ability to break down any subject, no matter how lighthearted or serious. There is a great deal of fun and sports-oriented content in this publication, but we also wanted to have a discussion about the very serious matters that defined this grim decade and the one that lies ahead. For that, we turned to two close friends in the FDH family: political consultant [Chris Galloway from Red State Strategies](#) and lawyer/entrepreneur/political strategist and columnist [Scott Pullins](#). The panel was moderated by FDH Managing Partner Rick Morris.

**Rick:** First question — which major event of the past decade changed the political landscape the most going forward: 9/11, the Iraq War, Hurricane Katrina or the financial collapse?

**Scott:** Initially, 9/11. We had the changes in the legal system and so on. But long term, IMHO it is the Iraq War, which made it more difficult to respond to Hurricane Katrina and led to the financial collapse. The US was forced into the same situation as the old Soviet Union; we went broke fighting a war we simply could not afford.

**Chris:** I would say individual events like 9/11 are short term in their effect. The financial collapse will last for decades and affect a wide range of issues, like military spending that will make the US vulnerable, the extension of US debt, growing federal government, raised taxes, slowed growth, etc...

*"Barack Obama would have raised tons of money whether or not the Internet existed or not. He would have done it through direct mail or 800 lines or whatever technology was available, because he's the best communicator since Reagan and the country was bogged down with Iraq and Bush fatigue."*

**Rick:** In terms of the application of politics in this past decade, by taking down a quasi-incumbent in Hillary Clinton in '08, Barack Obama took the Howard Dean phenomenon of '04 to the logical next level by proving that the Internet and assorted technological tools could mobilize to take over power. What are the main lessons that can be drawn from this success and does it foreshadow a potential future effective third party (picture what Ross Perot accomplished without any of these tools before he started babbling about Republican sabotage of weddings back in '92)?

**Scott:** Barack Obama would have raised tons of money whether or not the Internet existed or not. He would have done it through direct mail or 800 lines or whatever technology was available, because he's the best communicator since Reagan and the country was bogged down with Iraq and Bush fatigue. I think the candidate was important, the technology wasn't as much. I just don't see a credible third party candidate emerging that could do something similar. If they were credible, they would be running in the primaries. Actually, many of the visible third party candidates, like John Anderson, Pat Buchanan and Ross Perot, were former major party members.

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# Politics, Geopolitics and the Economy: Our FDH Panel Looks Back and Ahead

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**Chris:** Technology is making our Republic closer to a direct democracy in practice. However, even technology cannot change the fact that the energy, ideas and the disgruntled nature of third party efforts are eventually absorbed by the major political parties, with each party absorbing the ideas and initiatives that are closest to their philosophical tendencies. In fact, technology may actually speed up that process and short-circuit the third party growth. Finally, 2008 was about personality - the cult of personality. Without it, even the best technology and manipulation thereof does not make fuel a movement.

**Rick:** Follow-up on third parties: if the grass-roots of either political party got disgruntled enough -- and we've seen how this could happen with both parties in recent years -- don't the tools exist now to take it to the next level? All of a sudden, organizing across 50 states -- especially with the right gazillionaire candidate -- could be set up along the lines of Obama's organization, or could it?

**Chris:** No, because the majority of party followers are relatively disciplined. Yes, people get disgruntled, but it doesn't last. And any new third party is not likely to share all their values either, which will make them equally disenchanting. You can keep trying to push the third party line, but I'm not buying what you're selling, Morris! ;).

**Scott:** My opinion is that most of these movements collapse into in-fighting, Ross Perot's old party did, the Tea Partiers are already suing each other over money and lists, and sales of trinkets. The personalities of those that are drawn to these movements aren't good at the long term. The only success I believe is possible with 3rd parties is the New York State fusion example. Folks can run on multiple lines.

*"The big soft chewy center of the political middle has no real belief system other than what former Ohio Governor Rhodes used to stress: it's all about the wallet (to paraphrase badly)!"*

**Rick:** In terms of a viable political philosophy for the country going forward, am I just being a homer for my own ideology by saying that the paleocon approach is the one that could really get traction? It differs from the neocon philosophy that has swallowed the conservative movement whole on issues of common-sense non-interventionism, respect for the borders and concern for national sovereignty in international matters, fair trade and keeping the focus on small business instead of Big Business — and it aligns with standard conservatism in many other areas. To me, it is a philosophy that many people share, whether they realize it or not.

**Scott:** Yes it is, as long as those beliefs can be rolled into one of the major parties. The problem I see is money. Big, big businesses make money on open immigration, business with China etc., and they have lobbyists, trade associations, and PACs etc. Big government, big business, big labor, big media are all slow, steady, and patient institutions. The average fed-up Tea Partier isn't; they have other jobs, kids to raise, bills to pay.

**Chris:** Rick, you're overthinking. The big soft chewy center of the political middle has no real belief system other than what former Ohio Governor Rhodes used to stress: it's all about the wallet (to paraphrase badly)!

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# Politics, Geopolitics and the Economy: Our FDH Panel Looks Back and Ahead

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 42)

**Rick:** In terms of how this economic crisis is affecting how we as a country go forward, Chris and I have discussed how the government is warping the incentives of the free market by applying the "Cash for Clunkers" motif to everything under the sun. What are some of the other profound lasting effects of this great crisis moving forward?

**Scott:** Hyper, hyper-inflation. There is one and only one way out of this mess. Print more money, hyper-inflate and pay off the debt in over inflated dollars. This country has never really seen hyper inflation, not even in the depression.

*"It might be time for American economists to really study the history and economics of Third World nations, because the US is going to have to deal with those very painful issues for the next decade."*

**Chris:** The expansion of government into every aspect of our lives. Health care isn't a part of the crisis, but it come to be seen as such in time because of the timing. Eventually, the big problem will be inflation and what it will eventually take to get it under control. Chances are good that we are going to see Brazilian-like inflation like we saw in the '80s and '90s down there. It might be time for American economists to really study the history and economics of Third World nations, because the US is going to have to deal with those very painful issues for the next decade.

**Rick:** Well, let's follow up Scott's point for a second. Another of our FDH Lounge Dignitaries, Jeff Maslanich, has been warning about destruction of the currency for years, perhaps to the point where it is irretrievable and we have to move to an "Amero" or something where we basically start from scratch. Is a complete reboot fathomable to either of you?

**Scott:** Not if it's not based on anything more than the dollar is now. The price of the dollar floats based upon the confidence of investors from around the world. Changing the name doesn't do anything to stem this loss of confidence. We've got the Chinese and the Russians lecturing us publicly to rein in our governmental spending. Maybe it's time to listen.

**Chris:** No. More fathomable will be engaging in the hard choices required to fix what ails the US, like slashing spending, rolling back big government programs and getting back to basics. There will have to be a deep-seeded changes. You can't just change currency names, it's not like trading a player and putting them in different laundry. Are you suggesting we return to the gold standard?

**Scott:** A return to the gold standard would help boost some investor confidence, but it has to be more than that. But I don't believe a return to the gold standard will happen, and I don't believe that government programs will be rolled back.

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# Politics, Geopolitics and the Economy: Our FDH Panel Looks Back and Ahead

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**Rick:** On the world stage, Americans got burned out in recent years by the hyper-interventionism of the Bush Administration. Now, there are signs that the radically opposite approach being pursued by the Obama Administration which seems to suggest that “America is just another country” may be falling out of favor. What do you think the American people are going to demand in terms of foreign policy this decade?

**Scott:** I don't necessarily buy your premises. Osama Bin Laden's folks flew the planes into the towers, Americans supported going to get him and many believed that Iraq was part of that. It turns out they probably weren't and we haven't gotten Bin Laden. Americans aren't occupiers, but nonetheless we've gotten bogged down again in another war.

**Chris:** Duh, Walmart. No seriously, historically America has favored isolationism and I think we will see a retraction in that direction, but not completely — because the world is smaller and more dangerous than ever, so we cannot afford to withdraw from the world stage. With Iran, Russia, China, we need to stay engaged.

**Scott:** Americans want our country to have a role on the world stage, but that doesn't always mean it should be the lead role or the financier of every production.

*"I think we've got to start asking ourselves what happens in a scenario of a double-dip recession, hyper-inflation, another terrorist attack, Mexico financial collapse, pandemic, etc. Does the U.S. break up into regional states? Will the federal government collapse? I don't know, but I'm worried."*

**Rick:** Last question: are there any other political, geopolitical or economic trends you see on the horizon over the next decade?

**Scott:** I think we've got to start asking ourselves what happens in a scenario of a double-dip recession, hyper-inflation, another terrorist attack, Mexico financial collapse, pandemic, etc. Does the U.S. break up into regional states? Will the federal government collapse? I don't know, but I'm worried.

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# Politics, Geopolitics and the Economy: Our FDH Panel Looks Back and Ahead

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Sorry, I'm a lawyer, we think a lot about worst-case scenarios. :).

*"Are there big changes at the Federal level or do the forces of change begin to pull apart the Union? I think unlikely, but still possible. "*

**Chris:** Economically: the continued shift to Asia as the financial center, be it production or finance. Politically: the totalitarian hunter-gatherer state that Russia will become, Mexico becoming very shaky politically and economically. What is the future of the US? Are there big changes at the Federal level or do the forces of change begin to pull apart the Union? I think unlikely, but still possible. We must be careful to keep perspective. This is not the first or last crisis or series of crises our nation will face. Remember 1812? The White House was burned to the ground? Was there a worse crisis than the Civil War? We survived. This too shall pass.

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## Looking Ahead To The Next 10 Years of Technology and Entertainment with Journalist Simon Applebaum

We at FDH believe that if you want to be plugged in to the intersection of entertainment and futuristic technology, go talk to the man who talks to more leaders in these realms than anybody else. As such, we've secured a conversation with a friend of ours, one of the most informative guests to ever appear on our *FDH Lounge* program (Wednesdays, 7-10 PM EDT on [SportsTalkNetwork.com](http://SportsTalkNetwork.com)). Fittingly, for a man who regularly conducts interviews with interesting people from different areas, Simon Applebaum himself disseminates his *Tomorrow Will Be Televised* brand on different platforms: [his blog at JackMyers.com](http://his.blog.at.JackMyers.com) and his weekly webcast (Mondays/two Fridays a month, 3-4 PM EDT on [BlogTalkRadio](http://BlogTalkRadio) and podcast at [Sonibyte.com](http://Sonibyte.com)). These conversations that he has on a regular basis make him the logical person to turn to as we try to grapple with how technology will change our lives in the 2010s.

For this feature, Simon was interviewed by FDH Managing Partner Rick Morris.

**Rick:** One of the most noteworthy pieces of information you dropped on our show this past June is that Hulu.com is part of a service by which cable companies are merging Internet and television in some test markets. Essentially, this provides consumers in those areas something that people still regard as very futuristic: significant video-on-demand from the many programs and clips stored on Hulu. Now, since then, you've written on your blog that Time Warner CEO Jeff Bewkes said, "Broadband is the future, but it's not the future yet ... The revolution is VOD, not broadband." To the extent that we can square these developments, how can we? Are we starting to get a picture of whether video-on-demand is going to stem from a further merging of Internet and TV or TV going about it independent of the Web?

*"Ultimately, I believe [video on demand] will be a huge mix of content available at any moment ... most of that programming will be available to subscribers free of charge and in high-definition."*

**Simon:** The picture is starting to form for video-on-demand in several ways. First, you're seeing more Web destinations with online video experiment with video-on-demand distribution of their product -- Howcast.com placing some of its vast library of original how-to video clips on FiOS TV and other multichannel distributors, for example. Second, more first-run broadcast and cable network primetime series are letting cable and satellite operators play their episodes same or next-day/night on VOD. And third, more blockbuster films are running on VOD at the same time, or slightly earlier, than their DVD release. Ultimately, I believe VOD will be a huge mix of content available at any moment--all broadcast/cable programs, all first-run syndicated programming, digital networks unable to be presented on digital basic tiers, Web-generated content, and VOD-exclusive programming. Most of that programming will be available to subscribers free of charge and in high-definition; the more blockbuster movies and events will be priced in a 99 cent to \$5 range per play. How soon we realize that scenario depends on expanding bandwidth capacity for VOD and the actions of content players.

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### Tomorrow Will Be Televised

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## Looking Ahead To The Next 10 Years of Technology and Entertainment with Journalist Simon Applebaum

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**Rick:** As we move towards that video-on-demand world, are we going to see most non-sporting events (because sports pretty much have to be viewed live to be perceived as having value by most people) treated as though they are a debut rather than the main opportunity to see the program (i.e. "Tune in this Thursday at 9 PM EDT on NBC for the first glimpse of the new episode of *The Office*, available thereafter on NBC-On-Demand")? I've seen pundits predict that new episodes of programs will one day be uploaded completely for video-on-demand without any regard for when they first are available, but that strikes me as extreme. Time-slots as they presently exist for shows will probably exist in the "debut" sense in the future, will they not?

**Simon:** If they are made-for-VOD, that will be the first run anywhere, so they'll get the debut treatment, including primetime position. If not, depending on the whims of content providers, distributors and the cable/satellite operators, they will premiere in a variety of promotional tactics.

**Rick:** Medium to long-term over the next decade, do you think that local TV affiliates have anything to fear from the growing merger of TV and Internet programming (i.e. the capacity to watch shows on sites such as Hulu.com) and video-on-demand that would be available on other channels? If local channels are reduced to being the site of "debut" programming, sporting events and any local programming, does that not imperil them in an increasingly competitive media marketplace?

**Simon:** That marketplace might -- if they first get by the incredible chasm they're encountering now in local ad sales. Local ad sales are down more than 15-20 percent for some stations, due to auto/auto dealer, financial, travel and other advertising category pullouts these stations depend on. As a result, stations are cutting out weekend newscasts, or filling their ad avails with direct response lawyer/health ads.

*"The big sporting events will have to be on mobile."*

**Rick:** In terms of huge sporting events, because they do account for some of the highest-rated programming on television, I'm curious about how mobile platforms will eventually be involved. Could the Super Bowl or World Series eventually wind up being available on mobile devices or is that something that the networks would not want to sacrifice the exclusivity for, even if they have generous deals with cell phone companies?

**Simon:** If you believe in a three-screen world--mobile/PC/TV -- where the same content, live included, can run on all three (just looking different from screen to screen), then the big sporting events will have to be on mobile. It's possible the mobile version will have special features, such as player stats or team stats, available for display at the viewer's choice, while the game runs live. The wider the distribution, the better it will be for both the sports leagues and distributors, so some accommodation will be made in those big-event rights deals of the future. Also, look for interactive TV versions of the Super Bowl, Olympics, World Cup and other top sports attractions.

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## Looking Ahead To The Next 10 Years of Technology and Entertainment with Journalist Simon Applebaum

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**Rick:** With everything that you cover, there's always disparate stories going on that have some overlap. You recently wrote about how NBC's experiment with the *Jay Leno Show* and also recently on your program, you interviewed the creative team behind the FX show *The League*. The two appear to be related to me, in terms of how Leno is joining the decade-long trend of reality shows and game shows driving quality scripted programming off of the networks and onto outlets like FX. When you look at cable networks like that one and USA, which has really come on strong in recent years with their own original programming, are we looking at a circumstance where the predominant action with scripted shows will eventually move to cable?

**Simon:** We could if the broadcast networks follow NBC with Leno and do more primetime strip programs; for example, ABC running *Nightline* at 10 p.m. rather than 11:30 p.m., so that *Jimmy Kimmel Live* can be on head-to-head with Conan and Letterman at that hour. But for now, it looks like Leno's ratings free-fall in primetime will keep CBS and ABC from considering strip plans of their own. Some damage has been done, with drama series producers so angry with NBC for running Leno (such as John Wells, whose cancelled *Southland* could find new life at TNT starting in January) that they will give cable networks like USA and FX more consideration for top projects. Also, the number of basic cable nets in the scripted drama game is expanding, factoring in Cartoon Network, Bravo and possibly Hallmark Channel.

*"Drama producers [are] so angry with NBC for running Leno [at 10 PM weeknights, in place of scripted drama] that they will give cable networks like USA and FX more consideration for top projects."*

**Rick:** How will the growing availability of Internet broadcasting affect the overall food chain? Now that audio capabilities are beginning to be installed in cars, will this accelerate the freefall of an already dying-on-the-vine terrestrial radio business?

**Simon:** It may be the final nail for some small-market or extremely niche terrestrial radio stations. But not for the medium as a whole. Internet radio will benefit from car installations, opening up a brand new, on-the-go audience for this medium.

**Rick:** Although our focus here is primarily the future, I'm curious how important you think history will regard YouTube coming along in 2005 and helping to make Internet video part of our way of life. It seems to me that it did a lot to bring us closer to that Jetsons-type future many of us always envisioned in terms of technology, with the ability to bring up these videos on demand and then subsequently on mobile devices -- a bridge, if you will, between the more two-dimensional Internet that we had before and the looming developments on the horizon that we're discussing here.

**Simon:** YouTube did, along with Amazon.com and other e-commerce sites, and the emergence of social media such as Facebook and MySpace, with their opportunity for outside developers to make contributions. Altogether, they put a personal spin on the Internet, making this communications medium more three-dimensional.

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## Looking Back and Ahead: Pop Culture in the 2000s and 2010s

Because The FDH Lounge is the place where “nothing is off-topic,” it is not surprising that it has seen a great deal of focus on pop culture, which is the great catch-all of American life. From music to movies to celebrities, in short, it is what people are talking about. And the husband-and-wife team of FDH Senior Editor Jason Jones and FDH Entertainment Editor Samantha Jones really loves its pop culture! FDH Managing Partner Rick Morris put some questions to them to help get a grip on what we have just seen and what lies ahead in pop culture.

**Rick:** OK, the first one is on music. Am I right in noticing that this decade really didn't have any big innovations, at least in terms of the mainstream? Unless you count emo, that is, or some of the other modern rock around the middle of the decade. But there was nothing like grunge in the '90s, technopop in the '80s, the dozens of styles out there in the '70s ... do you notice the same thing and if so, do you have any ideas as to why?

**Jason:** First and foremost, F&%\$ emo! Emo, in my humble opinion, is more responsible for social ineptitude with the kids these days than NWA and Metallica were responsible for the rise in violence 10-20 years ago. With that being said, it feels like music today and over the course of the last ten years is searching for something. Searching for themselves, maybe. It's a lot like when the '90s style dictated the return of platform shoes and bellbottoms. Musically, it seems to be a regurgitation of stuff we've already seen. The only problem is that the originators did it better. Rap music is completely old and stale, so much so that it has lost all sense of its own identity.

*"Emo, in my humble opinion, is more responsible for social ineptitude with the kids these days than NWA and Metallica were responsible for the rise in violence 10-20 years ago."*

As far as rock is concerned, it's very similar. It's really just the same old stuff done over and over again, and somewhere in between, you may find a diamond in the rough you didn't know before. But at the very peak of it, you'll like it because you like it, not because its groundbreaking, revolutionary or inventive. Music over the last ten years has just lacked innovation as an ongoing and underlining theme.

**Samantha:** I definitely feel that music has stagnated quite a bit. 90's Grunge changed the face of rock music allowing it to evolve into Nu Metal. In the late 90's, bands like Linkin Park, Limp Bizkit (which shouldn't count since Fred Durst is a joke), and Rage Against the Machine (while the band is good, I could do without Zack de la Rocha) infused the rap element with the traditional rock approach. It opened doors for a great deal of new bands to flourish under a similar style. And while Linkin Park is one of my favorite bands, a lot of people consider them Emo because of their lyrics. But if you really sit down and listen to them, the intricacies of how they build a song contain a level of talent I have not seen in any other band. They started an almost completely new genre of music. As to why music has stagnated, it's become so easy to digitize voices and instruments that musicians have become lazy. If you have a computer, you can make music. I think that is why we are starting to see a resurgence of bands like Alice In Chains with the release of their new album and with Jay-Z and his single "Death to Autotune (D.O.A.)". People are getting sick of it and they want real music back.

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## Looking Back and Ahead: Pop Culture in the 2000s and 2010s

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**Rick:** What do you think about the explosion of reality shows and game shows in prime time? The reality shows in particular have gotten to be pretty cliched and shows you and I like, such as *The Office* and *Numb3rs*, are almost more in the background even with the success they've had.

**Jason:** This question is closer to me than the music one because I take my TV very seriously. To be honest, I watch most of my TV online now to avoid the clutter of crap I find on my guide feature. Reality TV: I've hated it almost since the beginning. I don't remember where it started, but I knew as early as *Survivor* and *American Idol* that it had already gone too far. Seriously, if the only reality TV shows were *Survivor* and *American Idol*, it would be a novelty and very easy to live with, but *Survivor*'s success seemed to build spinoffs that won't quit. "Do something stupid or humiliating for a chance to win money" seems to be the blueprint for *Big Brother*, *Fear Factor*, *Road Rules*, etc. (the one exception our fellow FDH Lounge Dignitary Paul Teeple turned me onto, *Ninja Warrior*-hilarious!). As for the competition reality show like *American Idol* ... almost none of them are what they claim to be. And in general, they just seem to be a way for Americans to feel better about their own lives or to keep themselves in an impossible pipe dream.

Initially, I think we really believed that *Idol* would find some really talented person out there that would be the next Michael Jackson or Madonna. And that is clearly not the case. The greatest winner from that show is still just a very successful recording artist (Carrie Underwood). Not to mention, the process is just so convoluted. More often than not, the people who deserve to win don't. Daughtry should have won the year he was in it and didn't. The reason is, like voting for all-star teams, we as a whole should not allow individual Americans the privilege to vote. In most of those shows, people vote for side stories or inspiration instead of talent. It's like voting for a presidential candidate because he came from humble beginnings instead of voting on merit. The same can be said for the fringe competitions like *Project Runway*, *Design Star*, *Next Iron Chef*, *America's Next Top Model*, etc. They almost never get it right.

"More often than not, the people who deserve to win [reality shows] don't ... The reason is, like voting for all-star teams, we as a whole should not allow individual Americans the privilege to vote."

To support my point, I LOVE LOVE LOVE *America's Got Talent*. And again, they don't even get it right. Eli Mattson is great, incredible-ceiling great, and he lost to a fat opera singer with a good story. America in general doesn't even like opera. I think it would benefit us all greatly if reality TV would go the way of *Dallas* and *Dynasty*. As for the others you mentioned, those shows require one to think, absorb and react, maybe too much for America's attention spans. *The Office* is a great example of a show that requires you to be mentally involved and if you are, it is genius. *Numb3rs* and any sort of police, forensic, detective shows definitely require a level of audience participation. Those shows are not going anywhere, but are being diluted by the reality movement. Just imagine if Ralph Nader had screwed something like 30+%. Reality TV just takes away from quality TV.

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## Looking Back and Ahead: Pop Culture in the 2000s and 2010s

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**Samantha:** Reality TV is not good TV. I believe a lot of it comes from people's tendency to laugh at other people's misfortune. We love watching the weirdos that audition for American Idol, how stupid celebrities can be, and how real people deal with the spotlight. Case in point, there is an entire show dedicated to highlighting all of the "point and laugh" moments from all of the reality shows. On the other hand, we love to root for the underdog. Clay Aiken would never have a record deal if not for American Idol. Despite the popularity of Reality TV, we still crave those well thought out dramas and comedies like *The Office*, *Numb3rs*, *Lie To Me*, *Scurbs*, and *House MD*.

*"[Americans] love watching the weirdos that audition for American Idol, how stupid celebrities can be, and how real people deal with the spotlight."*

**Rick:** Well, reality TV has been blurred with tabloid culture for most of the decade, so let's take a look at that. Much like with music, it seems like a lot of celebs from past decades were dominating the tabloids now as well: Brangelina/Aniston, Jacko, etc. There were also some of the aforementioned reality types like Jon'n'Kate as well. What do you make of this low-end part of pop culture and how did Internet sites like TMZ impact it?

**Jason:** I still have never been to or watched TMZ — I guess I disagree with the premise of it. On one side, you have Brangelina (two A-list celebs), Michael Jackson, Oprah, etc. I get that, even if I don't get in line with it. Those are real serious celebrities. It has always been a fascination of ours as a nation, it seems, to want to know everything there is to know about celebrities. And I do somewhat limit it to our country. Samm is a huge fan of this German band. And after looking into it, I found out that even though they are huge over there, German people don't demand every little detail about them. At some point they are still just people. So what if Jennifer Aniston is a bitter scorned ex, why do people care? But what's worse is Jon and Kate and Paris Hilton.

Those types are no more celebrity than you or I. The difference is, we put a camera in front of them and that sheer fact makes them a celebrity. Have you ever seen the crap on TLC? The Duggars? Little People Big World? These people are nothing, but their followers believe them to be so and would act the same around Tom Hanks or Steven Tyler as they would Kim Kardashian. It is all very low-end. It annoys me to the level that people are infatuated with other peoples lives and the details that should remain personal. Look, I love sports. But I don't need to know when or if LeBron and his children's mother are ever getting married, or was Tila Tequila really just jealous or was there more to it. I care about what those men do on the field of play. And I don't really care about their personal lives away from their work unless it affects their work. If I had to make a list and prioritize which kind of reality show go first, second, etc., this lowbrow, tabloid crap would be first and on a tier all by itself.

**Samantha:** If you go anywhere outside of America, they are not as rabid about their celebrities as we are. I like a band from Germany that Jason referenced called Oomph! Being the typical American that I am, I wanted to know every detail about the band. Due to the fact they are from Germany, you cannot find out personal details like what kind of car they drive or who they're married to. As a fan of American musicians, I know that Josh Groban is single and has a Wheaten Terrier named Sweeney. Chester Bennington has four children and is divorced. David Miller of Il Divo graduated from Oberlin College in Ohio. Americans just love to pry. As for the "low-end" tabloid-dominated celebrities mentioned, I couldn't care less. I have noticed, though, that whenever those names are mentioned around people I know, I get nothing but eye-rolling and groans.

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## Looking Back and Ahead: Pop Culture in the 2000s and 2010s

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**Rick:** When you look at pop culture in this decade, what jumps out is that it was the first decade to have the Internet squarely as a part of American life from beginning to end. And there has been a lot of technological change within that during the course of these ten years, with the creation of YouTube in '05 maybe being the best example of this. Talk about how the Internet and some of the manifestations of it like online videos really helped shape pop culture.

**Jason:** Well, YouTube is great. It seems to mirror the Internet vastness. Blogs, message boards, user groups, etc., all contribute to the idea that there is no information that is unavailable. If anything, we should all be more informed and there should be no facet of pop culture that would elude us. All of it is readily available and for little-to-no-cost. I still remember some years ago when the whole Napster thing was mind-blowing. Now, people more often than not download music before they buy it.

*"I know people who can go a month without watching TV or listening to the radio because of advances like YouTube."*

Just last week, I was dead-set on watching a movie that was 8-9 years old and I didn't have it on DVD (!). Renting it was out of the question, because I wasn't going to pay one penny to see it, and with that stipulation, I knew I still had half a million ways to find it: Netflix (which I guess I pay for), message boards, bit torrents, etc. Now that's just movies and music. No longer do you have to wait for someone's opinion you trust to tell you something is good, or wait for it to come on cable. The options are out there and it all contributes to one thought: we should be more "informed" about our pop culture decisions. With the Internet, we should be entertained by quality, yet somehow a large percentage of people aren't. I know people who can go a month without watching TV or listening to the radio because of advances like YouTube. It's great, really. The people who make the shows, movies and albums we like are getting rated. It's how they know how good or bad their product is. Instead of just consuming what they say we should because that's what's on, more people should use the internet as a tool to find what you really like. Unlimited options! Thanks to the Internet, I discovered one of my favorite television series of all time, and then switched to Showtime shortly thereafter (although, I still can't find the entire *The Blind Side* yet, I guess you can't have everything you want all the time).

*"I watch a lot of YouTube, so much so that I have suggested that we no longer need cable. My husband just responds with dirty looks."*

**Samantha:** I watch a lot of YouTube, so much so that I have suggested that we no longer need cable. My husband just responds with dirty looks. The notion of no more cable doesn't seem that far-fetched because of things like YouTube. If you would have told me ten years ago that I would go weeks without watching TV, I would've asked you what drugs are you on and where do you get them? Take Charles Trippy, for example. The website is called, internetkilledtelevision.com. This young guy from Florida makes his living by Vlogging (video blogging) his daily activities. He then posts them on YouTube for all the world to see. He has actually become a celebrity by talking into his video camera. There is a whole subculture of YouTube celebrities - Charles Trippy and Alli Speed, Shaycarl, Sxephil...the list goes on and on. And unlike the conventional ones, these celebrities are still regular people...like you or me.

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## Looking Back and Ahead: Pop Culture in the 2000s and 2010s

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**Rick:** Let's go back to TV for a minute. Obviously, there's a huge proliferation of channels, more fragmentation every day, and that leads to some odd dynamics. A show like *The Office* is not a ratings powerhouse in the traditional sense, but it's huge in terms of being DVR'd and selling iTunes episodes, DVDs, merchandise, etc., so it's almost redefining what it means to be a network cornerstone. When you think of TV over the past 10 years, what stands out to you?

**Jason:** Well network television is not necessarily fading as fast as newspapers, but I wouldn't be surprised if they had to change their entire setup. First off, in 2000, what percentage of shows that you watched regularly were on NBC, CBS, ABC, FOX? And now? Just my own personal answer: if this were a Venn diagram, ESPN, TNT, TBS, USA, and network stations would be in the middle. However, Fox Sports (regional), ABC Family (for the 25 days of Christmas, I'm a Christmas degenerate), the History Channel, Food Network, Syfy, Bravo, Spike, Versus, NFL Network, etc., would be on one side. The other side would have channels like MTV and Comedy Central (which I generally don't watch anymore). Because of the number of choices available now, things will inevitably change. DVRs and iTunes will be instrumental in those changes.

Like the Internet and cell phones before it, I don't know how I ever lived without a DVR. Right now, I'm watching Sunday Night Football in real time. But if the game gets out of hand, I have at least seven hours of television I have not seen yet that I can defer to and ... wait for it ... skip commercials or any other aspect of the program I do not wish to sit through. And now we have the iPod Touch, which from what I've heard, is like the iPod and iPhone had a baby with all of the apps. We can also add Slingbox and other types of hardware that allow us to watch what we want when we want and how we want. I would not be surprised if ten years from now, all television was on-demand. You want the evening news at 1:30 AM, so be it. You want Monday Night Football on Wednesday night, whatever. Technology has affected pop culture in the best way.

**Samantha:** What stands out to me with TV in the last ten years? The good shows are few and far between and the general populus is easily swayed. The large amount of channels has allowed for a large amount of crap.

**Rick:** Now, both of you are huge into movies, so clearly you've got some thoughts here. We had another decade with big summer popcorn movies, with some of the biggest ones being adaptations of comic characters. But what do you think of when you reflect on the movie business this decade?

**Jason:** I love it! Again, it comes back to options. One thing we've noticed is that people love reliving things they loved before. Comic book adaptation is just the surface. Book adaptations have been big as well in general: *Da Vinci Code*, *Twilight*, and all of the Tom Clancy and other adaptations.

Getting away from adaptations, we have the rekindling of younger days. The *National Treasure* franchise is, for all intents and purposes, the new generation's version of *Indiana Jones*. *Pirates of the Caribbean* is just a cinematic version of many stories you or I would have heard when we were children. Fantasy has made its way into the forefront. And I think that is great. 20 years ago, 90% of the movies out there were reality-based. Action films were based in current reality. Dramas simply reinforced ideas we all dealt with in real life. Movies like *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Tron*, etc., were few and far between. Now they are just as frequent. People use movies as an escape from the norm, and now that is more readily available. As far as the mainstream stuff, it seems to be better also. Judd Apatow has made comedies more blunt and in your face. A great deal of the comedies that come out are more complete and laugh-out-loud funny. Whereas before, the Mel Brooks and other comedies of that type in the past were just clever and tee-hee funny. There will always be the conventional movies, but the options are greater and more frequent. For every *Sleepless in Seattle*, there will be a *Twilight*. For every *Die Hard*, there will be a *Transformers*. And due to the fact that there are more options of varying degrees, there is more competition. Movie-makers have to try harder and must experiment with various ideas to compete for the entertainment dollar. And for the record, not knowing the exact fact of it, I'm pretty sure there have been more record-setting theatrical releases in the past decade than ever before (*Harry Potter*, *Transformers*, *Twilight*, most of the comic book adaptations, etc.).

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**SAMANTHA:** Some of the best movies ever have come in this past decade. The comic book and cartoon adaptations (*Transformers*, *Dark Knight*, *GI Joe*, etc) were hitting the big screen at just the right time. My age group, 25-35 year-olds, were kids when the originals aired. It's just nostalgic enough for us to get excited about it. The advances in CG have made anything possible in movies. Because of the improved CG, budgets get bigger. More movie fans go to the theatre. More people justify bigger budgets and the movies keep getting more and more epic. There are movie that HAVE TO be seen the moment they come out. I waited for months to see *Star Trek*, and it was everything I hoped it would be.

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**Rick:** I've used this example on our FDH LOUNGE show (Wednesdays, 7-10 PM EDT on [SportsTalkNetwork.com](http://SportsTalkNetwork.com)): I've always generally hated bubblegum pop music, but when I was growing up, I couldn't escape Howard Jones and Wham, they were everywhere. In this decade, artists such as Taylor Swift and the Jonas Brothers are huge, but I've been able to wall myself off from them; I couldn't name two or three songs from either of them. With our increased ability to "escape" genres we don't like, is this only going to increase the fame and profile of those few artists who do put out tunes that get stuck in everyone's head like Lady Gaga?

*"Besides, when was the last time the under-18 population got it right about music anyway? Color Me Badd, N'Sync, Kris Kross, New Kids on the Block, all were deplorably bad, but kids are impressionable."*

**Jason:** This may actually be a negative. Lets say that at any given time there are three artists/bands that would otherwise dominate the charts and airplay. With our newfound technology and options, artists/bands from #4 to 500,000 can get similar attention. The problem is, we are dividing one pie 500,000 different ways, so no one act ever will get massive appeal — which can be viewed as a good thing. The problem with music, which we've seen escalate since the payola scandal of the 1960s, continues. Once the decision of interpreting the quality of music was taken away from the disc jockeys, it all started a snowball effect. Now record labels, radio station suits, and market research reports dictate what we hear and how often. We can extend that further to *SNL*, professional sporting events, and nightclubs. If the powers that be decide that Lady Gaga is good, then it is almost impossible to avoid. Back in 2005-06, I refused to listen to a song entitled *Laffy Taffy*. I succeeded until I went to an NBA game. We cannot avoid all of it, but we can still choose what we are willing to voluntarily listen to pay for.

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The crux of the whole thing is that if more people would look at pop culture this way and listen to what they truly like, instead of what they perceive is what they should like, the word would eventually get back to the powers that be. Hopefully, that will eventually happen. For the record, the Jonas Brothers and Miley Cyrus make bad music, simplistic and boring. It succeeds for the same reason that *American Idol* does: people get consumed by all of the wrong details. Besides, when was the last time the under-18 population got it right about music anyway? Color Me Badd, N'Sync, Kris Kross, New Kids on the Block, all were deplorably bad, but kids are impressionable. My advice would be to allow ourselves to be trapped in the music that we like until the mass public begins to think for themselves.

*"Because there is so much music out there, there is something for everyone. It can also make you more open to different kinds of music. My playlist will jump from Straight No Chaser to Five Finger Death Punch to Andrea Boccelli to Boyz II Men."*

**Samantha:** Again, it just goes back to musicians being lazy. It's so easy to knock out an album which has caused a flood of terrible music. You have to know what you like. Because there is so much music out there, there is something for everyone. It can also make you more open to different kinds of music. My playlist will jump from Straight No Chaser to Five Finger Death Punch to Andrea Boccelli to Boyz II Men. If you know what you like, it's easy to take in the good and block out the bad. But dammit! I still get Poker Face and Apple Bottom Jeans stuck in my head.

**Rick:** In closing, is there anything that we didn't cover that we should have?

**Jason:** Give a number of options a shot. It's all entertainment and up to us to decide whether we like it or not. Just don't judge something because, on the surface, it sounds like something you'd be ashamed to be into. Vampires, pirates, wizards, it's all more than that, all of which are good, well-thought-out stories worth consideration.

Television and music are more difficult. After listening to contemporary music compared to what I loved in the past, I realized I don't LOVE music the way some others do. I know what I like and I choose to listen to what I like. The key is that no matter what I like, I am willing to open my mind to anything else. I even went to an Il Divo concert this year. I'll give anything a shot and decide for myself what I like.

People have no excuse with television. Ratings decide everything. By no means am I delusional enough to think that if we all avoid bad TV that bad TV will go away. What I am saying is that there is never an excuse for nothing being on. My cable package is above basic and below premium and I never run out of stuff to watch, and it's only stuff that I like. Again, though, keeping an open mind, if I listed my top ten shows of the last ten years, chances are at least six of them are shows I initially did not think I'd be interested in. The bottom line is: embrace technological advances, each person should decide for themselves, and nothing should be out of the question until you've seen or heard it first. Options, options, options.

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**Samantha:** Things I think you should learn about, perhaps starting with Google:

**Bands:**

Oomph!  
Straight No Chaser  
Five Finger Death Punch  
Josh Groban  
Il Divo

**YouTube:**

Charles Trippy (internetkilledtelevision.com)  
Shaycarl  
Sxephil  
iJustine

**Movies (that you should watch):**

*Star Trek (2009)*  
*Boondock Saints 2* (watch the first one before you see this one or you'll be lost)  
*Transformers*  
*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*

**TV Shows:**

*The Office*  
*Lie To Me*  
*House*  
*Numb3rs*  
*Dexter*  
*It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*  
*True Blood*

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