

## Colin Kaepernick Project

### Rankings:

Better

Better, small sample size

Equal

Worse

Rookies

Inexcusable

### 2016 Better:

The quarterbacks who posted a higher passer rating than Colin Kaepernick in 2016, who most fans would generally agree deserved to start instead of him are:

- Matt Ryan, the 2016 MVP
- Tom Brady, considered by some to be the greatest ever
- Dak Prescott, 2016 NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year
- Aaron Rodgers, considered by some to be the most talented, ever. His last 6 games of the 2016 season were ridiculously dominant and legendary
- Drew Brees, currently the all time leader in many career passing statistics
- Sam Bradford, while an all time draft bust, rebounded in 2016 to the surprise of pretty much everybody
- Brian Hoyer, who played surprisingly well in relief of Jay Cutler
- Kirk Cousins, Pro Bowler, generally agreed to be a pretty good regular season qb
- Derek Carr, had he not gotten injured, was the MVP frontrunner
- Andrew Luck, generational talent, who would shockingly retire just 3 years later
- Marcus Mariota, I have no clue how he's up here
- Ben Roethlisberger, future Hall of Fame qb
- Ryan Tannehill, who played in a very conservative offense, which is a good way to boost passer rating
- Matthew Stafford, who might be the best quarterback in Lions history
- Russell Wilson, who helped me a lot in fantasy football that year

### 2016 Sample

- Jimmy Garoppolo, anointed as a savior now, only started 2 games
- Nick Foles, a career journeyman, only started one game
- Matt Moore, who only started 3 games

### 2016 Equal

- Cody Kessler, who started 8 games for a 1-15 Browns team that got even worse the next year
- Andy Dalton, whose career accomplishments are nonexistent
- Alex Smith, the man who Kaepernick replaced years prior

- Tyrod Taylor, a legitimately good quarterback, whose style of play doesn't bode well to a high passer rating
- Philip Rivers, who will eventually become the best player not in the Hall of Fame if not inducted, or the worst player in the Hall if he is inducted
- Carson Palmer, who had a fairly decent season that year

#### 2016 Worse:

- Landry Jones, who filled in for Ben Roethlisberger when he got hurt
- Jameis Winston, whose penchant for throwing inexplicable picks was second only to his penchant for being an idiot off the field
- Eli Manning, formerly regarded as a decent quarterback, whose arm strength was completely gone by 2016. His numbers were heavily buoyed by elite wide receivers.
- Trevor Siemian, basically a rookie, except he never played the previous year.
- Joe Flacco, the definition of mediocre
- Geno Smith, who started once for the Jets
- Tom Savage, who was dragged kicking and screaming to the playoffs
- Cam Newton, the previous year's MVP, who had a surprising down year

#### 2016 Rookies:

- Jacoby Brissett, who filled in while Tom Brady was suspended and Jimmy Garoppolo was injured
- Carson Wentz, who struggled on an Eagles team who would go on to win a Super Bowl the very next year
- Paxton Lynch, a massive draft bust who was out of the league 2 years later
- Jared Goff, whose career dramatically improved, and then dramatically regressed
- Bryce Petty, a 4th round pick who was perfect for the Jets in their ambition to lose

#### 2016 Inexcusable:

- Blake Bortles, who took advantage of garbage time to pump up some awful stats
- Jay Cutler, a name that sends shivers down the spines of Bears fans
- Case Keenum, a quarterback only kept on the Rams because he was so unwatchable, St. Louis was begging for them to ship off the team (not really, but...)
- Shaun Hill, a career journeyman with 0 interesting facts
- Robert Griffin III, who was sent out to die in Cleveland. He got their only win, unlike...
- Josh McCown, who, along with Griffin III and Kessler, steered the Browns to a 1-15 season
- Brock Osweiler, whose contract was the stuff of nightmares
- Matt Cassel, filling in a game for the Titans
- Ryan Fitzpatrick, who went to Harvard, a school not particularly known for football

- Blaine Gabbert, who replaced Kaepernick midseason even though he was supremely terrible
- Matt Barkley, who was somehow worse than Jay Cutler
- Derek Anderson, a crummy Panthers backup
- Scott Tolzien, filling in for Andrew Luck for a game
- Matt McGloin, who sounds like an auto-generated Madden player
- EJ Manuel, who only started in week 17 so the Bills could screw Tyrod Taylor out of some money
- Drew Stanton, who, despite the awful numbers, actually won his one and only start

#### 2017 Better:

- Alex Smith, having another good season
- Drew Brees, who had another excellent season
- Deshaun Watson, who, while a rookie, was jaw-dropping (before he got hurt)
- Tom Brady, obviously
- Carson Wentz, who turned a corner and was an MVP frontrunner before an ACL tear
- Jared Goff, who rebounded to help turn the Rams into a powerhouse
- Matthew Stafford, again in the midst of having a good season on a lousy team
- Case Keenum sold his soul to the devil so he could have this season
- Aaron Rodgers, even when hurt, was elite
- Jimmy Garoppolo, who rode the Patriots and 49ers benches before having a legendary last 5 games, turning him into a 100 million dollar man
- Philip Rivers, whose season is even more impressive considering he played 16 away games
- Russell Wilson, having another excellent year
- Josh McCown, free from Cleveland, playing for a slightly less incompetent team in the Jets
- Kirk Cousins, having the kind of season that would persuade Minnesota to give him 84 million dollars
- Ben Roethlisberger, benefitting from his high end wideout talent

#### 2017 Sample:

- Sam Bradford, who only started 2 games for the Vikings
- Landry Jones, who started a game for the Steelers

#### 2017 Equal:

- Jameis Winston, who forgot about his penchant to throw backbreaking picks for one season
- Matt Ryan, leading a shaky Falcons team still recovering from blowing a 28-3 lead in the Super Bowl

- Tyrod Taylor, who was having an excellent season that passer rating can't truly do justice for. Bills management got the genius idea to bench him for Nathan Peterman. More on Peterman later.
- Andy Dalton, pro football's version of the Mendoza line
- Dak Prescott, worse than last year, but still very good
- Derek Carr, who played well enough for an Oakland team running off the rails

#### 2017 Worse:

- Ryan Fitzpatrick, clocking in 3 ho-hum games for the Buccaneers
- Blake Bortles, squandering his legendary "Sacksonville" defense
- Geno Smith, while maligned by New York media, played better than Eli Manning
- Carson Palmer, finishing his career with the moribund Cardinals
- Jacoby Brissett, who would eventually become a decent starter, but this season, he was a lacking replacement for an injured Andrew Luck
- Jay Cutler, nuff said
- Cam Newton, rebounding slightly, but not much
- Joe Flacco, perhaps the least watchable quarterback of the year
- Eli Manning, who everybody except the Giants knew was cooked
- Nick Foles, who would have a poor 3 games in the regular season, before embarking on a legendary Super Bowl run

#### 2017 Rookies:

- Mitchell Trubisky, "delighting" Bears fans everywhere
- Patrick Mahomes, who got a week 17 start when the Chiefs had a spot clinched.
- CJ Beathard, who the 49ers drafted to replace Kaepernick.
- DeShone Kizer, who lost each and every one of the 15 games he started as the Browns went 0-16.
- Nathan Peterman, brought up to replace a competent Tyrod Taylor. He would throw 5 picks in a half. He was later spotted during the Bills' snow game and their playoff loss.

#### 2017 Inexcusable:

- Marcus Mariota, with 13 touchdowns in 15 games
- Mike Glennon, the Bears' big free agent quarterback who started 4 games for them
- Matt Moore, somehow still finding work on the Dolphins
- Brian Hoyer, Kaepernick's replacement
- Trevor Siemian, on his way to falling out of the league
- Brock Osweiler, so bad, he was traded with a 2nd round pick by Houston just to be free from his salary
- Sean Mannion, sent out in week 17 when the Rams already had their spot secured
- EJ Manuel, who mopped up for a week while Derek Carr's back was destroyed
- Paxton Lynch, toiling away on a lousy Broncos team
- Blaine Gabbert, who somehow found work on the Cardinals
- Kevin Hogan, who got to start one of the Browns' 16 losses

- Tom Savage, who started week one, got replaced at halftime, and would have never started again if Deshaun Watson didn't get hurt
- Brett Hundley, filling in for an injured Aaron Rodgers. His name will send a shiver down any Packers fan's spine
- Drew Stanton, last year's worst qb, this year's... 7th worst
- TJ Yates, losing all 3 games he started during his 3rd stint with the Texans
- Matt Cassel, whose great season with New England was a decade ago, but it feels like it was a century ago
- Bryce Petty, who got worse his sophomore season
- Scott Tolzien, playing a single game for the Colts

#### 2018 Better:

- Drew Brees, breaking the all time passing yards record
- Patrick Mahomes, league MVP, set tons of offensive records
- Russell Wilson, playing up to his new megacontract
- Matt Ryan, putting up plenty of points, even if his team's record didn't reflect it
- Philip Rivers, being carried by high end receiving talent
- Deshaun Watson, shaking off an 0-3 start to turn around the Texans and enter the playoffs red-hot
- Carson Wentz, who was good before another injury sidelined him for Nick Foles
- Jared Goff, looking like a god, before turning into a pumpkin in the Super Bowl
- Ryan Fitzpatrick, who played surprisingly well in relief of Jameis Winston during his suspension and ineffective play
- Kirk Cousins, who set tons of Vikings single season records, but never won a big game in his life
- Andrew Luck, rallying a 1-5 team to the playoffs before shockingly retiring next year
- Tom Brady, who won another Super Bowl
- Aaron Rodgers, who had basically been both quarterback and offensive coordinator the last few years thanks to the effectiveness of head coach Mike McCarthy
- Dak Prescott: He's in soup commercials
- Ben Roethlisberger, who got all the help he could want with Brown and Juju downfield
- Nick Foles, taking over for Carson Wentz to steer the Eagles to the playoffs
- Mitchell Trubisky, having a decent season being carried by the Bears' superstar defense
- Cam Newton, rebounding from some down years. Injuries hit him and his team down the stretch, and they missed the playoffs
- Derek Carr, leading a gutted Oakland team with no weapons to pass to

#### 2018 Sample:

- Matt Barkley, the 3rd of 4 quarterbacks for the Bills. Played when the other 3 weren't healthy, before a concussion ended his season
- Chase Daniel, filling in for Mitchell Trubisky for 2 games
- Jimmy Garoppolo, who shredded his leg in week 3

#### 2018 Equal:

- Baker Mayfield, Cleveland's savior. Threw a record number of touchdowns, but also threw a whole lotta interceptions
- Ryan Tannehill, powering Adam Gase's screens and checkdowns neo-Martyball
- Eli Manning, looking excellent until teams realized he couldn't throw more than 10 yards and his best wideouts got hurt
- Marcus Mariota, who threw 11 touchdowns in 13 starts, but somehow managed a winning record, with him getting hurt and his Titans just falling short of playoffs
- Nick Mullens, an undrafted rookie who wasn't even verified on Twitter when he started for the 49ers. He played surprisingly well, all things considered
- Jameis Winston, who missed time for groping an Uber driver and for being inconsistent. One of his picks against the Bengals was perhaps one of the worst reads in history
- Matthew Stafford, making millions on another mediocre Lions team
- Andy Dalton, still doing just enough to keep his job
- Brock Osweiler, trudging along in 5 games for an injured Ryan Tannehill
- Alex Smith, having a good season in Washington, before horrifically breaking his leg. The wheels would fall off of Washington's season, and they squandered a 6-4 start.

#### 2018 Rookies:

- Kyle Allen, starting a game for a hurt Cam Newton
- Lamar Jackson, who took over the Ravens after Joe Flacco threatened to checkdown them into an unwatchable oblivion
- Sam Darnold, getting reps with the Jets before they'd discover that he'd be a project quarterback
- Josh Allen, the oft-injured starter for a Bills team cycling through quarterbacks
- Josh Rosen, given the thankless task of leading an awful Cardinals team

#### 2018 Worse:

- Joe Flacco, finally replaced with transcendent rookie Lamar Jackson, freeing Ravens fans from another unwatchable year
- Jeff Driskel, whose name I swear I didn't make up
- CJ Beathard, filling for Jimmy G. He lost all 5 games he started, and was replaced by undrafted rookie Nick Mullens
- Case Keenum, who Broncos fans were clamoring to be benched for Mr. Irrelevant Chad Kelly. It would have happened, too, if Kelly hadn't drunkenly broken into a house.
- Blake Bortles, wasting the prime of #Sacksonville before disappearing to the Rams
- Colt McCoy, taking the reins in Washington after Alex Smith broke his leg. Two weeks later, McCoy would break his leg.
- Cody Kessler, replacing an ineffective Blake Bortles for 4 games
- Blaine Gabbert, who was tasked with winning a do-or-die week 17 game against the Colts if the Titans wanted to make the playoffs. He was terrible, and the Titans lost.

- Teddy Bridgewater, returning to the league after some devastating injury earlier in his career. He started for the Saints when they had their spot already wrapped up
- Josh Johnson, on his 12th(!) team, finished Washington's season after Smith and McCoy broke their legs, and Mark Sanchez played terribly

#### 2018 Inexcusable:

- Tyrod Taylor, who got hurt 3 games into his Browns tenure and was usurped by Baker Mayfield
- Sam Bradford, squeezing in 3 games before being replaced by Josh Rosen
- Taylor Heinicke, filling in for a hurt and deactivated Cam Newton
- Derek Anderson, brought in to mentor the Bills stable of young quarterbacks, was forced to start when the players ahead of him got hurt or were Nathan Peterman
- Josh McCown, who played a handful of games for the Jets
- Nathan Peterman, one of the worst quarterbacks in recent memory
- Mark Sanchez, forced into action after every Washington qb ahead of him broke their legs

Every team and the quarterbacks they started in 2017, 2018, and 2019, the three years Colin Kaepernick was a free agent. Green equals quarterbacks who deserved to start, yellow equals quarterbacks who didn't really deserve to start, but certain circumstances makes it understandable, and red equals those who did not deserve to start. Dark red is reserved for truly terrible starter decisions.

#### Bills:

- Tyrod Taylor, who was about as good as Kap, makes sense
- EJ Manuel, significantly worse
- Nathan Peterman, the worst quarterback of the modern age
- Josh Allen, a rookie with good potential
- Derek Anderson, worse
- Matt Barkley, who wasn't supposed to start

#### Dolphins:

- Ryan Tannehill, was good enough, considering that his head coach was Adam Gase
- Matt Moore, easily worse
- Jay Cutler was signed as a free agent after Tannehill went down even though Kap was available. Terrible.
- Brock Osweiler, legendarily terrible
- Ryan Fitzpatrick, who had exactly 3 good games a year
- Josh Rosen isn't a draft bust yet, but he's getting close

#### Patriots:

- Tom Brady, one of the best players in NFL history

#### Jets:

- Josh McCown, a crummy stopgap quarterback while the Jets tanked
- Bryce Petty, an awful backup filling in for McCown
- Sam Darnold, while the jury is still out on him, is a top 3 pick, and not starting him would be an admission of defeat
- Trevor Siemian, an awful off-the-street signing to fill in while Darnold had mononucleosis
- Luke Falk, the third string rookie forced into action for a handful of games after Siemian got his leg shredded by Myles Garrett. Hard to judge, he had a 12.5% sack rate

#### Ravens:

- Joe Flacco, stifling good Ravens teams. Often pointed to as a shining example of how inferior quarterbacks got to start over Kaepernick
- Lamar Jackson, the most electric quarterback since Mike Vick

#### Bengals:

- Andy Dalton, one of the most consistently "fine" quarterbacks in football
- Jeff Driskel was pretty bad
- Ryan Finley was given a shot to lead a winless Bengals team. He was re-replaced by Dalton, and the Bengals proceeded to win a game

#### Browns:

- DeShone Kizer was a rookie who started 15 games on the 0-16 Browns. He had plenty of rookie mistakes without any of the rookie flashes of brilliance.
- Kevin Hogan will be an easily forgotten member of the Browns bridal train quarterback jersey in about a decade, trust me.
- Tyrod Taylor, a stopgap before Mayfield came in.
- Baker Mayfield, an exciting gunslinger currently suffering a sophomore slump

#### Steelers:

- Ben Roethlisberger is a locker room nuisance, but accrues loads of bulk stats
- Landry Jones, a serviceable backup for a game
- Mason Rudolph, more remembered for his fight with Myles Garrett than he is for his poor quarterbacking
- Devlin "Duck" Hodges. How can you *not* start a dude named Duck?

#### Texans:

- Tom Savage, who got exactly 1 half before Bill O'Brien realized that DeShaun Watson was a way better option
- DeShaun Watson, second only to Lamar Jackson in electric quarterbacks who showed up the pundits
- TJ Yates started 3 games in 2017???

#### Colts:

- Jacoby Brissett used to be the best backup in the league. Now he's an average to below average starter
- Scott Tolzien squeezed in a game while Luck was injured for some reason
- Andrew Luck retired young as one of the best quarterbacks in the league
- Brian Hoyer only started because Brissett's ankle got stepped on by a 300 pound man

#### Jaguars:

- Blake Bortles was awful and got a starting job for 5 years
- Cody Kessler got 4 games because Bortles played like Bortles
- Nick Foles, known for a good tenure in Philadelphia and, supposedly, his rather large... endowments. These are not good reasons to pay him 88 million dollars
- Garner Minshew, the most Florida Man player ever

#### Titans:

- Marcus Mariota, who makes Jameis Winston look like less of a bust
- Matt Cassel, who the Titans thought was good enough to start a game
- Blaine Gabbert, a cockroach who won't die
- Ryan Tannehill, playing well for the Titans, although nobody knows if he's legit

#### Broncos:

- Trevor Siemian, who fit the Elway mold of being tall and white. Didn't have much in the way of talent though
- Brock Osweiler, another tall white talentless qb
- Paxton Lynch, yet another tall white mess at qb
- Case Keenum, the shortest qb to play for the Broncos in the last decade or so. Still terrible.
- Joe Flacco, back on the trend of terrible, tall, white quarterbacks
- Brandon Allen, another tall white guy who didn't have much in the way of football but fit the Bronco mold
- Drew Lock, a (say it with me now) tall white quarterback. He's only played one game, but so far he looks pretty good

#### Chiefs:

- Alex Smith, the man Kaepernick replaced, played well his last year in Kansas City
- Patrick Mahomes, the first Chiefs quarterback taken in the first round in a generation, who quickly became an MVP
- Matt Moore, taking a few starts while Mahomes recovered from a dislocated kneecap

#### Chargers:

- Philip Rivers, who has started over 200 straight games, which is still an active streak

#### Raiders:

- Derek Carr, who looked elite when Kaepernick was still in the league, has now regressed to wildly inconsistent
- EJ Manuel, getting a start because Carr destroyed his back

#### Cowboys:

- Dak Prescott, a widely heralded rookie in Kaepernick's last season, playing at a high level

#### Giants:

- Eli Manning slowly had his talent disappear, especially as his good receivers either got traded or injured
- Geno Smith broke Manning's 200+ consecutive starts streak when Giants management decided Eli wasn't cutting it. He bombed, and lousy Eli was back to starting.
- Daniel Jones was booed by Giants fans as a terrible draft pick, even though he was actually a good prospect. He is now a hero in New York, despite being mediocre.

#### Eagles:

- Carson Wentz, a project quarterback who was having an MVP year, before getting his ACL obliterated by the Rams. This led to...
- Nick Foles, stepping off the bench, and shocking everybody and leading them to a Super Bowl win

#### Washington:

- Kirk Cousins is a really good quarterback who can't beat a team with a winning record to save his life
- Alex Smith was brought in to replace Cousins in the 2018 offseason. He played legitimately well, before he gruesomely broke his leg
- Colt McCoy was the replacement for Smith. He didn't play that well, and then he went on to break his leg. This opened the door for...
- Mark Sanchez, who played inexcusably terribly. He was so bad, he was replaced by...
- Josh Johnson, a dude on his 12th team, who played better than Sanchez, but still poorly. If there is any proof that Kaepernick was blackballed from the league and that teams signed vastly inferior quarterbacks instead, this would be it.
- Case Keenum, a bland retread quarterback, was brought in. He didn't play well.
- Dwayne Haskins Jr. replaced him, and even though he was a rookie, his reads were awful

#### Bears:

- Mike Glennon, an overpaid giraffe with an albatross contract
- Mitchell Trubisky, whom most Bears fans want to be fired from a trebuchet into Lake Michigan, considering he may go down as one of the biggest draft busts in recent memory
- Chase Daniel, the best qb the Bears have started this decade, filling in for Trubisky after he got injured

#### Lions:

- Matthew Stafford, a good qb stuck on a bad franchise
- Jeff Driskell, one of the worst journeymen qbs, filling in for Stafford before he got hurt as well
- David Blough, an undrafted rookie. While his play has been acceptable, the fact the Lions signed him as opposed to Kaepernick speaks volumes

#### Packers:

- Aaron Rodgers, a hall of famer before he turned 30
- Brett Hundley, filling in for an injured Rodgers, was so bad, he got the ball rolling on the fact that Kaepernick was being blackballed

#### Vikings:

- Sam Bradford, one of the biggest busts in NFL history. He was on a massive, bloated contract, so it made sense to start him until he got injured.
- Case Keenum was brought in and played way over his head. He threw the pass in the famous 'Minneapolis Miracle' and then got stomped by the Eagles in the Conference Championship
- Kirk Cousins plenty of Vikings records as a free agent from Washington, but he is despised by the fanbase, and hasn't won very many games against good teams

#### Falcons:

- Matt Ryan, league MVP in 2016
- Matt Schaub, an ancient backup, who filled in a game when Ryan got hurt

#### Panthers:

- Cam Newton, 2015 MVP, however, he has been hampered by injuries the last few years
- Taylor Heinicke, a feel-good story about an undrafted quarterback who got a week 16 start with Newton hurt and the Panthers already eliminated. He got his elbow destroyed during the game, and is now roaming the XFL
- Kyle Allen, the rookie who got week 17 after Heinicke went down. Newton missed most of 2019, and while Allen looks like he shows promise, he also hasn't looked great

#### Saints:

- Drew Brees, an NFL legend who owns or will own most significant passing records
- Teddy Bridgewater, a backup generally agreed upon to be better than some starters
- Taysom Hill never started a game, but he has played all over the field and deserves a special mention. If there is any team who wouldn't need Kap, it's the Saints.

#### Buccaneers:

- Jameis Winston, who throws tons of befuddling picks, but also a huge chunk of touchdowns. Tampa's insistence to stick with this lemon of a qb is remarkable.
- Ryan Fitzpatrick had 2 games that will become part of NFL lore to kick off 2016 in relief while Jameis was suspended for groping an Uber driver. Played 'meh' for the rest of the year.

#### Cardinals:

- Carson Palmer has been old my whole life, and he was drafted after I was born
- Blaine Gabbert was infamously drafted before JJ Watt
- Drew Stanton was a 2008 Lion, if that's any indication
- Sam Bradford, the retread quarterback to end all retread quarterbacks
- Josh Rosen, who has been saddled with leading lousy, tanking teams twice. It's a bad sign when you're a top 10 pick, and your team trades you and picks another rookie with the 1st overall pick the next year
- Kyle Murray was that 1st overall pick. Under the Cardinals new Air Raid offense, he has been effective and pick-adverse

#### Rams:

- Jared Goff, the least interesting first overall pick in ages
- Sean Mannion, starting in 2017 because the Rams had their spot tied up

#### 49ers:

- Brian Hoyer, the man supposed to replace Kaepernick. Awful.
- CJ Beathard, the man supposed to replace Hoyer. Bad.
- Jimmy Garoppolo, acquired from the Patriots to replace Beathard. Became the face of the franchise, but some have said he has been carried by high end talent recently
- Nick Mullens, an undrafted rookie who surprised everybody and was quite competent, if not incredible

#### Seahawks:

- Russell Wilson, an elite quarterback