

## Rookies of the Year

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College sports are on the rise, and the talent out there this year is phenomenal. Scouts from across North America are on the prowl to get the most talented athletes on their professional teams. Below is a list of the top 5 rookies to look out for in Football (NFL) and Soccer (MLS).

### Football

**Donald Brown (Indianapolis Colts &ndash; Running Back)** Brown is the complete package and will most likely be considered a steal of the '09 draft. In 2008, he led the nation in rushing with 2083 yards. On top of that, he is tough, elusive and a powerhouse at 5'11" and 210lbs. Prospects suggest that he will be named the offensive rookie of the year, beating out Joseph Adai by as soon as mid season.

**Hakeem Nicks (New York Giants &ndash; Wide Receiver)** Extremely lucky to be drafted to a very good football team, Nicks stands at 6'1" and weighs in at 217lbs. At 6' 1" and 217lbs. Its possible that since an opening for go to receiver has been left open with the leaving of Plaxico Burris, Nicks can emerge victorious in the position. Nicks is incredibly fast, strong and competitive, with hands of glue, a great addition to any team.

**James Laurinaitis (St. Louis - Line Backer)** Laurinaitis is a premier line backer machine at his college giving him a pristine opportunity to establish himself as the Rams most valuable and important linebacker on the team in '09. Starting as the middle linebacker at training camp, chances look good for Laurinaitis to be the Rams week 1 MLB starter.

**Brian Orakpo (Washington &ndash; Defensive End)** 1st round, 13th pick overall, Orakpo is an incredible and classic defensive liner at a towering 6'3" and 263lbs. Predictions suggest that Orakpo will begin his NFL career as a strond side linebacker for the Washington Redskins in 2009. Orakpo has enough athletic skill to claim his postion for week 1..

**Percy Harvin (Minnesota Vikings &ndash; Wide Receiver)** Critics say that if Harvin stays healthy and on his game, the skies the limit in football. In fantasy football he has become a very popular choice, since he can make points in many different ways, rushing, catching and return game. With Harvins hands on the ball, he is considered extremely explosive and makes for a very dangerous offensive player in the 2009 NFL draft.

### Soccer

**Stefan Frei (Toronto FC &ndash; Goalkeeper)** Frei was one of the top draft picks of '09 and it surprised many people when he dropped down to Toronto's thirdpick (13th overall). Considered one of the top shot stoppers and predicted as going to DC of Chivas. However, after playing a bit with Toronto, Frei has seemed to score jersey #1 for Toronto as he beat out a veteran (2 shutouts in his first 2 games), earning him a well deserved applause.

**Steve Zakuani (Seattle Sounders FC &ndash; Midfielder)** Zakuani is the #1 draft pick overall, which cant put a lot os

pressure on a guy. He is the least experienced rookie, only appearing 6 times however his record thus far speaks for itself. 2 goals, and 2 assists! His flair and speed and agility are key to his flawless game in midfield.

Rodney Wallace (D.C. United &ndash; Midfielder) Wallace has held nothing back this far, this DC midfielder jumped on the starting line up and has not given it up to any veterans. He played forward wing at the University of Maryland and brings a certain pace of play to his position with DC, which they had lacked in the past. Scoring his first goal against New York last weekend, he has started and played in every minute of every game since then, except for 17 min.

Omar Gonzalez (LA Galaxy &ndash;Defender) Starting all 26 games, Gonzalez led his 2008 Maryland team to the championship. He was a junior at the time and scored a career best 5 goals. Named the NSCAA/Adidas All American First Team and First Team All-ACC while also being named a semifinalist for the MAC Hermann Trophy, which is given out annually to the country's best college soccer player. In the NCAA Tournament, Gonzalez was named the College Cup Defensive MVP.

Sam Cronin (Toronto FC - Midfielder) Another great rookie coming out of Toronto, ranked 4th on the team for goals, with 10 goals and 4 assists. Cronin has started all 24 games and ranks as the highest played athlete in college history of total career games and games played to 98. Cronin was Lowe's Senior CLASS Award Winner , M.A.C. Hermann Trophy Finalist and named to the All-ACC First Team.