

# C.J. Stroud, Jaxon Smith-Njigba Tabbed As Early Contenders For NFL Rookie Of The Year



As is typically the case when a skill player is selected in the first round of the NFL Draft, former Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud and wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba are both expected to factor into the NFL Rookie of the Year race when the season begins in September.

Stroud was tabbed as potentially being one of the best first-year signal callers after he was selected by the Houston Texans with the No. 2 overall pick in the 2023 NFL Draft on April 27, while Smith-Njigba was the first wide receiver off of the board after the Seattle Seahawks picked him up with the No. 20 overall selection. With both players landing among the first 31 picks in the draft, Stroud and Smith-Njigba have high odds to claim the NFL's Rookie of the Year Award.

CBS Sports gives Stroud the third-best odds to claim the award, placing his line at +650 and behind Atlanta Falcons running back Bijan Robinson (+350) and Carolina Panthers quarterback Bryce Young (+400). Smith-Njigba has the best odds of any rookie wide receiver, placing sixth overall with +1200 odds, also trailing Detroit Lions running back Jahmyr Gibbs (+700) and Indianapolis Colts quarterback Anthony Richardson (+900).

Stroud saw a bit of a decrease in DraftKings Sportsbook's odds, falling to +700 and fourth overall behind Robinson, Young and Richardson, while Smith-Njigba ranked fifth overall with +750 odds. Stroud is tied for third with the FanDuel Sportsbook, slotting in alongside Richardson, sporting +700 odds and trailing only Robinson and Young, with Smith-Njigba following with +900 odds and tied for fifth with Gibbs.

Although Stroud and Smith-Njigba don't appear as the favorites for the award, with that honor belonging to Robinson solely, they're certainly expected to make some noise as first-year players next season.

To be fair to Stroud and Smith Njigba, as well, former Ohio State wide receiver, Garrett Wilson, now

with the New York Jets where he claimed the 2022 NFL Rookie of the Year, entered last season with +1600 odds from Ceasars Sportsbook to win the award, slotting in with the 10th-best odds prior to the season.