

Tutorial 1: PC Drafter Overview

Based on 2007 PC Drafter

I'm going to show you how to install PC Drafter while I tell you a little about our software. You can pause or replay this tutorial using the video controls at the bottom of this window. Begin by double-clicking the PCD executable file downloaded from our website.

PC Drafter will install in your Program Files directory, under the current year, such as pcDrafter2007.

PC Drafter is software for the IBM compatible PC and Macintoshes running PC emulation. PC Drafter uses a proprietary player selection algorithm, our Gold Algorithm, to recommend the best draft choice for you in each round of your live fantasy football draft. This quick tutorial has shown you how to install PC Drafter. Some of PC Drafter's features are showing now, but are explained in detail in the league configuration tutorial and The Draft Tutorial. To use PC Drafter, you'll need to have a PC with you during your draft, and have administrator privileges on that PC. If you can't draft with a PC, you'll miss out on PC drafter's automatic recomputations that factor in live draft strategy based on league need and best values of currently available players, but you can still use PC drafter to print cheat sheets to take with you into your draft. The PC Drafter.com website features an FAQ section as well as a user forum for all users, registered or not.

Tutorial 2: Configuring PC Drafter

This tutorial presents how to configure your particular fantasy league in PC Drafter. Users of PC Drafter from last year will have their league files automatically converted to this year's file format during installation. If you're new to PC Drafter, you'll want to setup your fantasy league. We have a 7-step wizard to walk you through this process. Click on the "Setup League" gold button.

In step 1, enter your league's name, number of teams, and the size of your player roster. Pick a draft style such as serpentine, cyclical or auction. Draft order can be customized later if needed.

Step 2 of the setup wizard lets you choose a scoring method that approximates your league's rules. Pick one that is close to your league and we'll customize this later.

Choose your league's allowable player positions in step 3. Some leagues combine certain positions, such as Wide Receiver and Tight End, which you may select. Other flex positions, such as Wide Receiver and Running Back, are selected by checking each position and customizing the starters in step 4.

Step 4 lets you enter detailed scoring rules. Start by configuring the minimum and maximum number of players allowed for each roster position, if those numbers are specified in your league's rules. Enter the number of starters required for each position. If your league has a flex position, such as Running Back AND Wide Receiver, enter decimal values in these positions that total to the number of players allowed to start. For example, it's common to specify 2.7 Running Back starters and 1.3 Wide receive starters, since most scoring rules favor running backs but allow either 3 running backs and 1 WR, or 2 RBs and 2 WR. See our forum and FAQ for more advice on starter configurations.

Also in step 4, you can customize individual position rules, or you can enter this information later. To customize the rules now, double click the position you'll customize. Here, you'll need to get used to working with multipliers for each scoring rule. For example, a Quarterback might earn 1 point for every 20 passing yards. That means in 100 yards (the sample value), this quarterback would earn 5 points. 5 points divided by 100 is 0.05, and we see 5 points automatically appear when our multiplier is 0.05. Think of the multiplier as if your player earned 100 of whatever you're measuring, how many points would that be? Then divide by 100 to get the decimal value PC Drafter needs. 3 points per 2 point conversion means that if the player made 100 2-point conversion, he'd earn 300 points, so our multiplier is 3.0. Again, see our FAQ and web forum for additional advice. Getting your scoring rules as close as possible to your league's rules helps PC Drafter optimize your GOLD player picks.

Step 5 is your chance to enter any STRONG drafting tendencies you have observed in your league. For example, many leagues typically favor Running backs and quarter backs early in the draft, and this is typical. But if your league has a strong bias toward or against a particular position, and seems to overvalue that position compared to the scoring rules, you'll want to indicate that here. Most leagues won't make an entry here, but you can always experiment with this in your mock drafts to see what differences play out.

Step 6 lets you customize your team names and owners. The first column, Abbreviations, is the symbol used most in PC Drafter. You'll also want to indicate which team in the league is YOUR team so PC Drafter knows where to optimize the GOLD algorithm in mock drafts.

Step 7 is to configure personal preference options in PC Drafter's interface and behavior. You can modify these choices later.

That's IT! Now you can update your player information with the latest player projections, provided by 4for4.com. Registered users receive these updates right up to NFL game 1. Unregistered users get a baseline profile, but can update that profile manually.

To Register PC Drafter, click the top "HELP" menu item, then choose "Register...". Enter your email address. Once you have purchased a registration on PC Drafter or through a premium subscription such as 4for4.com, your email address will be added to our authentication database within 48 hours and you'll receive updated player projections every time you click on the gold "Update Players" link.

Our next tutorial takes you through the mock draft and live draft process. Remember, our website at pcDrafter.com features a Frequently Asked Questions area as well as a user forum for additional help. We hope you enjoy using PC Drafter, and the unequalled advantage it offers for your live draft. Tell your friends about us, but not the friends in your league!

Tutorial 3: Drafting

This tutorial introduces you to a mock draft, then a live draft, and wraps up with some tips for operating PC Drafter at the same time that you're participating in a live web-based draft. If you haven't configured PC Drafter with your league rules and opposing teams, you should look at our two prior tutorials before diving straight in to drafting.

PC Drafter and the GOLD algorithm are optimized to be a drafting tool working alongside you in your live draft. Without a PC, you'll miss out on the Gold algorithm's automatic recomputations that factor in live draft strategy based on league need and best values of currently available players, but you can still use PC Drafter to print cheat sheets to take with you into your draft.

First we'll look at the mock draft. You've already configured your league rules, and drafting order either in the setup wizard or using the "Edit" menu. If you haven't indicated your own team, do that by choosing "Edit" from the top menu bar, then "League..." and select the "My Team" drop-down box.

OK- click the Gold "Mock Draft" button and we'll modify strategies for your computer opponents. While many follow an Average Draft Position approach, you might want to match the GOLD method against a league that makes use of Value Based Drafting. Try a mock draft each way and compare outcomes.

If you want to observe the process a little closer, tell PC Drafter to stop at your pick.

Click "Start" and the draft progress bar advances until it's your pick. Hit "Close" and make your selection by Clicking the "draft" button for the GOLD recommended pick, or double-clicking the player you'll draft from the roster, then click the "Mock Draft" button to continue the computer-simulated draft. This time when PC Drafter waits for my choice, I'm going to go Find Michael Vick by typing capital V*i*c*k. I can double click him, or drag him to the draft selection window. Hit "Reset" to return to the full league view of available players, and let's get the Mock draft rolling again. This time, I'm going to let automatic picking run its course with GOLD for me, and ADP for everyone else. [uncheck "Stop automatic..."]. You'll see the progress bar advance through the rest of your draft. When the draft is complete, PC Drafter displays a summary report, projecting the total points for each team on your league, based on your player projection file. This shows both a total for all of a teams players, as well as a total for just the top starters on each team. GOLD always finishes on top! The "report..." button lets you save this in either a text format, or Excel-compatible format for further study. Reset your draft by choosing the "Draft" menu, then "Reset Draft" and you're ready for another mock draft, perhaps with VBD opponents, or you can proceed to a live draft.

A live draft is essentially the same. A couple of features will make your live draft painless. First, if you're in an Internet league like ESPN, your draft order may reshuffle 30 minutes prior to the draft start. That's no problem for PC Drafter. Go to the Edit menu, choose "Draft Order" and use the "move up" and "move down" buttons to shuffle the draft order for all draft rounds. If you have variations in individual draft rounds, you can go to a round-by-round level of detail with the "Modify Draft Order" menu item. Most leagues won't need this, but you may have traded draft order for picks or money.

Let's get underway with the live draft. Click the "Start Draft" gold button, and PC drafter launches several new information windows maximized to fit your screen. There's also a quick tutorial if you've not turned off this option. These windows are

also available in your mock draft by clicking on the Gold buttons for “View Rosters” and “View Positions.” Now as your live draft progresses, you’ll input opposing team choices each step of the way. [pick players for opponents...PAUSE] You may need the “find” tool to locate players that aren’t in the top ranks of the list. When your turn comes, you can click the “draft” button to pick the #1 Gold ranked player available, or double-click from the available roster. Continue recording your opponent picks and drafting for yourself. You may find it handy to reorder the player list by Average Draft Position to find players your opposing managers are drafting. Clicking any column name reorders first descending, then ascending.

The trick to successfully working with PC Drafter in an Internet draft is shortcut keys. You can alternate between your browser window and PC Drafter by using the ALT-Tab key combination. Some internet drafts let you resize your browser window to keep things in view, but others use a java window that is a fixed size. This might also be a great time to consider upgrading to a dual-monitor display, or even having a laptop beside your desktop.

Save your league after the draft. By default, PC Drafter saves automatically, but you might even want to make a backup league file using “save as”. You might also look into some of PC Drafter’s reports.

That’s it!

The PC Drafter.com website features an FAQ section as well as a user forum for posting your own questions. Good luck, and thanks for using PC Drafter.