Stat Slayers

NFL Targets and Receiving Yards: Does Position Matter?

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Research Question

What is the relationship between the number of targets and the total receiving yards among NFL players in the 2024 season, and does this relationship differ by position (WR, TE, RB)?

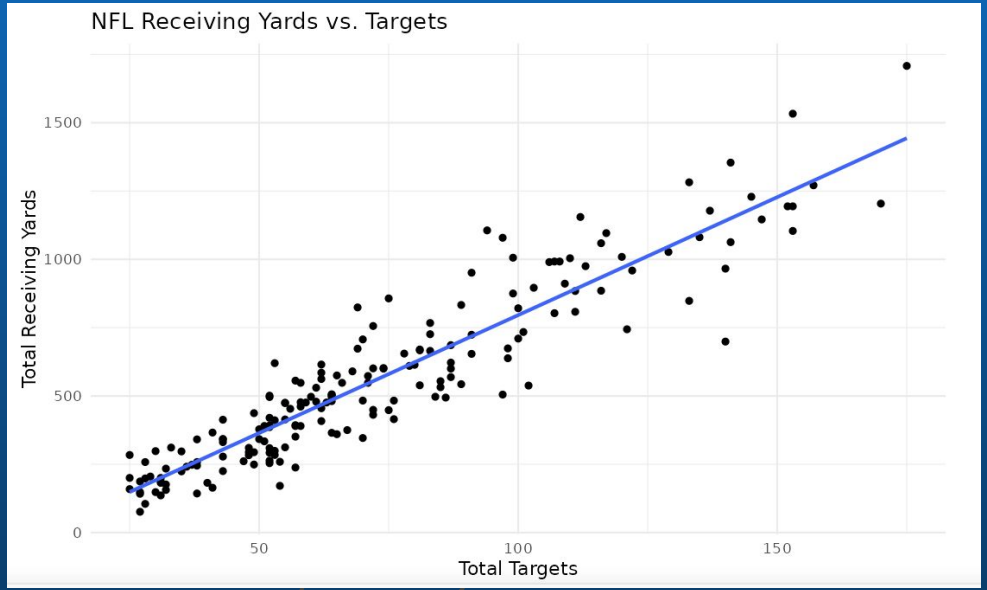
Introduction to the Data

- **Why our question?** It explores how target opportunity could be used to predict receiver efficiency based on position.
- **Targets (TAR)** - total times a receiver was targeted by a quarterback's pass, regardless of whether the pass is caught or dropped
- **Receiving yards (YDS)** - the total number of yards a player gains from a completed pass

Data and Methodology

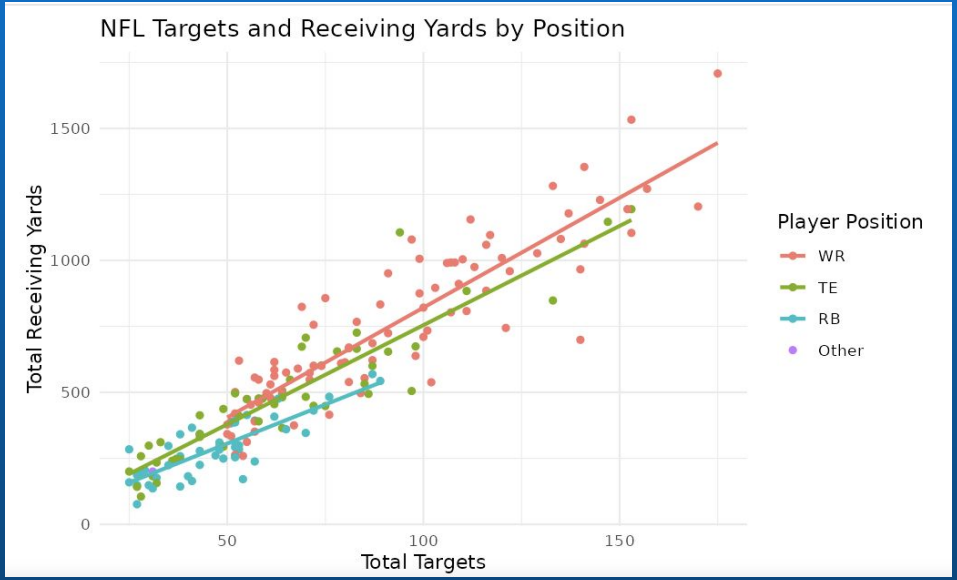
- **Dataset**: 2024 NFL receiving statistics (185 rows x 20 columns)
- **Key Variables**: Player Name, Team, Position, Total Targets, and Total Receiving Yards
- Each observation represents an individual player from the 2024 season
- **How we cleaned/organized:**
  - Scraped the data from FTNFantasy.com
  - Grouped the players using their positions (WR, TE, RB, & Other)
  - Mutated YDS_per_TAR by dividing total receiving yards by total targets to compare receiving efficiency across positions. Accounts for differences in target volume.

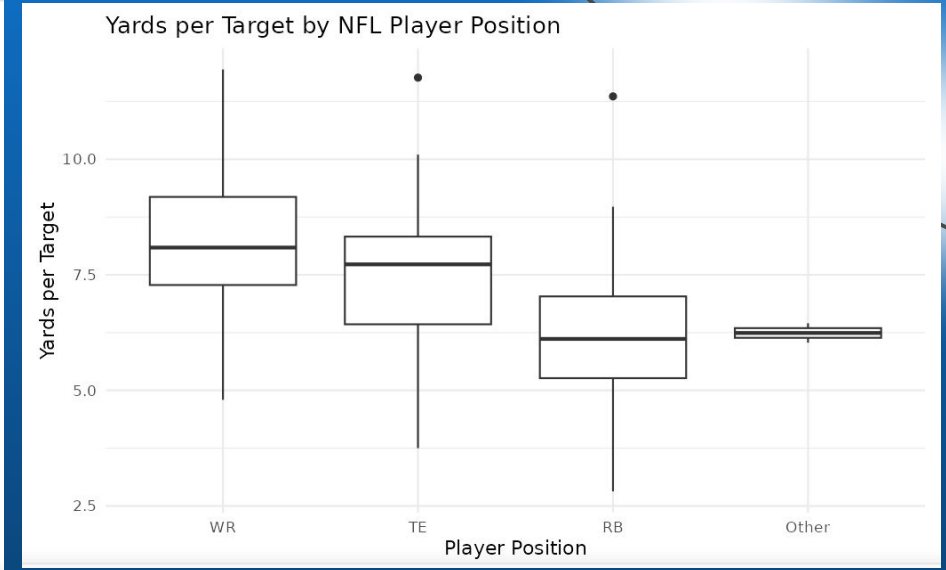
Targets Vs. Receiving Yards Results



- Not grouped by position
- Relatively strong, positive, linear relationship
- Based on the variability, players with a similar target number differ greatly in receiving yards

Comparing Positions and Efficiency





- The “Other” category was unhelpful and too small to show trends
- WR, TE, and RB all show positive linear relationships
- WR have the highest overall receiving yards and the highest median yds/target
- TE have a few more scattered observations and high variability
- RB have lower targets, receiving yards, and yds/target than WR and TE

Conclusion: What did we find?

- All position groups showed an upward trend: players with more targets tended to have more receiving yards
- WR have the steepest relationship and RB have the shallowest
- **Overall**, our findings suggest that target number is related to receiving production, but the relationship varies depending on player position.

Limitations and Reflection

- Our dataset only represents the 2024 season
- Correlation does not prove causation
- Football positions are made to have different roles within an offense
- Other factors such as playing time, quarterback performance, offensive schemes, and injury can influence both targets and receiving yards

Next Steps:

- If we were to investigate further using our new findings, it would be interesting to look into how a players position could be used to predict their number of targets or receiving yards.