

# *NFL Draft Preview 2015*



## *In This Issue:*

*Inside the Draft IQ Philosophy*  
*Late Round Sleepers*

*1<sup>st</sup> Round Mock Draft*  
*100+ Player Ratings*

# Path to the Draft: Something for Everyone in 2014

Every draft has its own narrative, that's the reason we start every guide with the Path to the Draft. Last year's cover story emphasized Seattle's blueprint of drafting and developing mid-round prospects, collectively molding them into a championship roster. This year's draft doesn't offer the same opportunity, so teams will have to draw up a new blueprint for 2015. It is, however, a unique draft with a few incredibly deep positions and equally weak groups at several others. The QB class is as about as poor as it's been since 1997, a draft that featured Jim Drukenmiller as the first and only QB taken in the first round (by San Francisco). Receiver, on the other hand, offers 8-10 first-round talents and more potential starters and game changers later into the draft. We anticipate a lot of movement via trade at the top of the draft as teams jostle for position to select one of the few superstars available this year.



**Gurley: Blend of  
Speed & Power**

RB: The NFL is an ebb and flow of trends and after two years of no running backs selected in round one, we expect two – Georgia's Todd Gurley and Wisconsin's Melvin Gordon – to be taken in the top 25. There's a chance of Indiana's Tevin Coleman, Nebraska's Ameer Abdullah or Boise State's Jay Ajayi sneaking into round one as well. As you'll see in our cover story, it's still a passing league, but a focus on the RB position seems to be coming back in style.

OT: This group is deep and there's a lot to like. There's a cluster at the top with Iowa's Brandon Scherff, LSU's La'el Collins, Stanford's Andrus Peat and Miami's Ereck Flowers, but second-tier guys like Florida's D.J. Humphries, Pitt's T.J. Clemmings, Oregon's Jake Fisher and Texas A&M's Cedric Ogbuehi (coming off a torn ACL) all have bright futures as starting tackles in the NFL.

CB: Speaking of trends, for two years in a row we have deep classes at both receiver and their defensive counterpart. Michigan State's Trae Waynes is the consensus top CB but beyond that there's a litany of players with a lot to offer. Natural talents like Wake Forest's Kevin Johnson and Miami's (Ohio) Quentin Rollins are juxtaposed with talented yet troubled prospects like Washington's Marcus Peters and LSU's Jalen Collins. There are some intriguing players late including Louisville's Charles Gaines, USC's Josh Shaw and Memphis' Bobby McCain.

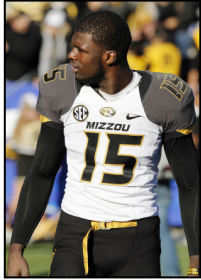
Sit back and buckle up, the unpredictability of this year's class should make for an interesting day one. Fitting as the draft moves to Chicago this year, the first time not in New York in 51 years. The path might be a bumpy one so sit back and try to enjoy the ride!



**Johnson:  
Complete CB**

# Cover Story: The Dawn of the Receiving Era

For years NFL rule changes have typically favored the passing game. It really started to take shape in the late 1970s when the rule stating a defense cannot engage a receiver 5 yards beyond the line of scrimmage was instituted. Since then it seems each year rule changes like no head slaps, greater protection of QBs in the pocket, post-reception “football move” to decrease fumbles, etc. all seem to favor passing offenses.



Green-Beckham:  
The Enigma

But the rule changes are only part of the story. Longtime Dallas Cowboys Vice President of Player Personnel Gil Brandt studied trends in Texas high school football and what he discovered helps explain the offensive output by signal callers and their pass catchers. A statistical analysis of 242 of the largest Texas high school teams revealed that only 53 teams scored less than 25 points. Brandt credits the high scoring to increasingly complex passing offenses utilized at the high school level. By the time these players reach the NFL they’ve been working within pass-oriented systems for up to 8 years.

The initial thought was that the offensive metamorphosis would lead to a bevy of high performing quarterbacks putting up numbers never before seen in the league. And after 2011 it looked like that was about to happen. Twelve teams – nearly a fifth of the league – drafted QB’s in the 2011 draft. Cam Newton, Jake Locker, Blaine Gabbert, Christian Ponder, Andy Dalton and Colin Kaepernick were at the head of the class, taken in the first two rounds. Newton passed for 422 yards in his pro debut. Kaepernick has appeared in a Super Bowl. Even the much maligned Dalton has averaged 3,700 yards passing in his first four seasons.

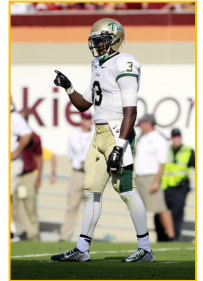


Perriman: Late  
Riser

A look at the state of QB’s in this year’s offseason reveals that the “new age of QB” never came. Ponder and Gabbert were busts. Locker is out of the league. For teams in need of a QB in 2015 such as Cleveland, Tampa Bay, Houston, Tennessee and the N.Y. Jets, there were no big free agent finds, no QB’s waiting in the wings to be traded. They essentially played a game of musical chairs with Tampa’s Josh McCown signing with Cleveland, Houston’s Ryan Fitzpatrick now with the Jets and Cleveland’s Bryan Hoyer in Houston. Tampa Bay and Tennessee are expected to try their luck again in this year’s draft, selecting first and second respectively.

Though passing numbers are up teams are still struggling to develop a franchise QB. Wide receivers, on the other hand, are developing at a rapid pace. Until recently a receiver was expected to take about three seasons to develop, but 2014’s draft class said to the world, “To hell with your three years, we’re here now.” They were, arguably, the greatest rookie WR class of all time. Statistically there is no argument. The 33 receivers taken produced 807 receptions for 10,445 yards and 81 TD’s. Odell Beckham Jr., Mike Evans and Kelvin Benjamin became the first trio from the same draft to top 1,000 yards their rookie years.

This year’s class looks to be just as good, with as many as 8 first round prospects. Amari Cooper, Kevin White and Devante Parker make up this year’s top trio, but a host of others are lining up behind them, ready to make their mark in the NFL. It seems the receiver, not the QB, is ultimately the position that will define modern NFL offenses.



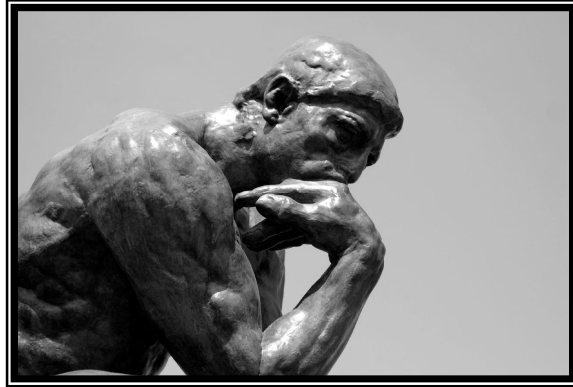
McBride: Late  
Round Steal?



Dorsett: Fastest  
of the Bunch?



# The Definitive Draft IQ Philosophy



## The Science Behind The Player Rating System

I've been following the NFL draft closely since 1990 and putting together the yearly guide that started on a Days Inn hotel Xerox machine and developed into the small manifesto it is today since 1998. Since the beginning there has been a four-prong philosophy used to rank players. A fifth prong that naturally exists among every fan is "team fit" but this of course differs from person to person based on their NFL team's needs. The four prongs break down to these simple concepts:

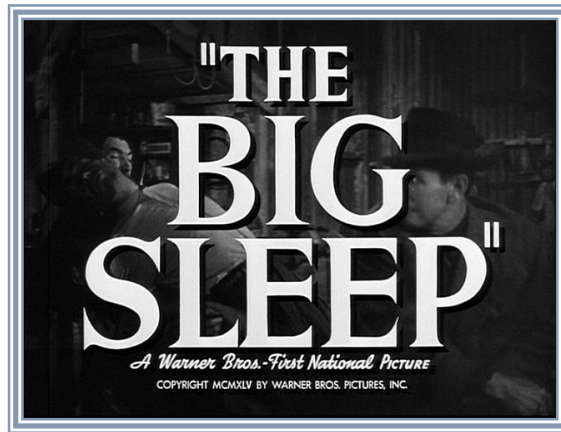
1. Does the prospect *look* like a football player? Every position has an ideal size or sizes, such as 5'10" slippery slot receiver or large, 6'4" red zone threat. There's a phrase that you'll often hear, "He plays bigger/faster than is," which really boils down to how comfortable a player is in his skin. Different body types are better suited for certain positions, but you want your football players to be in shape and have a body type that matches both their position and style of play.

2. Does the prospect *play* like a football player? Even some of the most athletic players just play awkward. Current free agent TE Jermaine Gresham looks the part as a big, strong athlete, but it's really tough to watch him awkwardly maneuver around defenders and making hapless turnovers. We prefer players that make it look effortless.

3. Does the prospect *think* like a football player? We're talking football IQ and instincts here. Some players pick up the game quicker than others. Position changes, pedigree, and coaching staffs all play an integral role in helping develop a player's football smarts (or possibly hinder his development). Does it come easy or do they struggle to pick up concepts in the classroom and diagnose plays on the field? We like our players thinking fast and reacting on instinct.

4. What is the prospect's floor and ceiling? How pro ready is the player entering the NFL (his floor) and how much more do you expect him to develop once in the pros (his ceiling). Amari Cooper and Kevin White are perfect examples from this class as Cooper is more pro ready now and the safer pick, but with his superior size and speed White has a greater chance to develop further in the NFL.

There of course are other factors (offense/defense scheme, consistency of productivity, leadership skills, etc.) but these are the four basic pillars that support our rating system.



## Late Round Gems Ready for Their Close-Up

Film critic Roger Ebert described Howard Hawks' 1946 film noir *The Big Sleep* as being about the process of a criminal investigation. Ironically it is the process leading up to the NFL draft that often uncovers the classic "sleeper." Whether it's a small school, buying in on a late bloomer or simply a scout seeing something special in a player that others missed, each draft offers a plethora of steals that make those mid-to-late round picks incredibly valuable. It's all about the process of finding the right player for your team.

### Running Back

*David Johnson, Northern Iowa:* Johnson is a big back with some wiggle and proved he belongs with the big boys, racking up 200 yards receiving alone vs. Iowa in 2014.

*John Crockett, North Dakota State:* Extremely productive at the FCS level with three consecutive 1,000-plus yard seasons including 1,994 yards and 21 TD's in 2014. Has the potential to be an every-down back in the pros.



**Crockett**

*Tyler Varga, Yale:* Versatile back in the Danny Woodhead mold but bigger at 225 lbs., and can play some fullback as well. Tough inside runner and offers some surprising speed. Finished eighth among all college football backs in yards per game in 2015 with 142.3.

### Wide Receiver



**Hall**

*Rannell Hall, Central Florida:* Teammate Breshad Perriman might get all the attention but Hall is no slouch. 6'0" 193 lbs. and ran the 40 in 4.38 seconds. Hall was a late addition to the Senior Bowl and looked as technically sound as any receiver in the game.

*Tre McBride, William & Mary:* Former high school RB is a big-bodied receiver who relies on route running and positioning rather than speed to get open. He made it look easy vs. smaller corners at the East-West Shrine game.

# The Big Sleep Cont.

## Defensive End

*Anthony Chickillo, Miami (Fla.):* Prototype 4-3 DE was out of place in Miami's 3-4 defensive scheme and should be a better pro than a college player. Dependable, third generation player for the Hurricanes, started nearly every game of his college career including nine starts as a true freshman.



Chickillo

*Jermauria Rasco, LSU:* Though he didn't get the headlines behind more high profile teammates Rasco led the Tigers in sacks his junior and senior seasons. Scrappy player with good burst and always seems to be around the ball.

## Defensive Tackle

*Leterrius Walton, Central Michigan:* Converted offensive lineman is still a work in progress but a 6'5" 321 and athletic he can play multiple schemes. If coached up, Walton could become more than just a rotational player.

*Xavier Williams, Northern Iowa:* Space eater at 325 lbs., Williams posted a surprising 8 sacks in 2014 along with 11 tackles for loss. The question is if he can continue to disrupt the backfield with such a large leap to the NFL.

## Cornerback

*Charles Gaines, Louisville:* Converted wide receiver is still learning the technical side of the position but shows natural playmaking ability and cover skills to the point that opponents often threw away from him in 2014.

*Justin Coleman, Tennessee:* Physical and confident corner might be relegated to slot duty because of limited size at 5'10' 190 lbs. Believes he can matchup against anyone.

*Ladarius Gunter, Miami (Fla.):* Looks the part at 6'1" and 200 lbs. with natural athleticism but hasn't put it all together for some reason. Seems to be in his head, if coached up there's starting potential here.



Eskridge

## Safety

*Durrell Eskridge, Syracuse:* Tremendous size and athletic ability but still developing as a football player. The physical tools are there, the question is if his instincts will ever catch up to his athleticism.

*Anthony Jefferson, UCLA:* Hard worker and respected teammate battled injury and position changes to settle in at strong safety while earning All-Pac-12 honors the past two seasons.



## 2015 Mock Draft

**Do we have to keep doing this? Oh, all right, fine!**



### 1. Tampa Bay Buccaneers

*Jameis Winston, QB, Florida State:* This pick makes the most sense, it is a huge need for the Bucs and though Winston might not be the top overall player, he's a top player that fills their biggest need.



### 2. Tennessee Titans

*Marcus Mariota, QB, Oregon:* We're pretty sure Mariota goes here, we're just not convinced it's Tennessee making the pick.



### 3. Jacksonville Jaguars

*Leonard Williams, DT, USC:* Gus Bradley can't pass on the top overall player in the draft.



### 4. Oakland Raiders

*Amari Cooper, WR, Alabama:* Derek Carr had a pretty good rookie campaign, Cooper gives him an actual receiving threat.



### 5. Washington Redskins

*Dante Fowler, Jr., OLB, Florida:* Redskins jump at the chance to grab Fowler when he falls this far.



### 6. N.Y. Jets

*Bud Dupree, OLB, Kentucky:* Rex Ryan may be gone but defense is still the name of the game in New York.



### 7. Chicago Bears

*Danny Shelton, DT, Washington:* Chicago is making the switch to a 3-4 defense without a true NT on their roster. New head coach John Fox has a history of defensive first round picks. Shelton makes sense here.



### 8. Atlanta Falcons

*Todd Gurley, RB, Georgia:* Atlanta is admittedly desperate for a pass rush, but with guys like Gregory and Ray falling, they can fill that need later. Julio Jones and Roddy White with Gurley? Who do you defend in Hotlanta?



### 9. New York Giants

*Brandon Scherff, OT, Iowa:* Giants are still a run-oriented team and have some holes to fill on the offensive line.

## Mock Draft Cont.



### 10. St. Louis Rams

*Trae Waynes, CB, Michigan State:* Tough to pass on Kevin White here but defense dominates the NFC West and the Rams are already one of the best before this pick.



### 11. Minnesota Vikings

*Kevin White, WR, West Virginia:* What a weapon for young QB Teddy Bridgewater. If Peterson returns to form, this offense could be potent.



### 12. Cleveland Browns

*DeVante Parker, WR, Louisville:* Regardless of who is actually throwing the passes in Cleveland they need to replace talented WR Josh Gordon. Parker fits the bill.



### 13. New Orleans Saints

*Randy Gregory, OLB, Nebraska:* The Saints are desperate to reload on offense and take a chance on Gregory, who falls after a failed drug test at the combine.



### 14. Miami Dolphins

*Melvin Gordon, RB, Wisconsin:* Gordon gives Joe Philbin's offense a new dynamic and takes pressure off both Ryan Tannehill and Lamar Miller.



### 15. San Francisco 49ers

*Arik Armstead, DE, Oregon:* The 49ers begin to pick up the pieces after Patrick Willis announced his retirement and Justin Smith expected to follow. Armstead is a nice start and could play inside or outside in their 3-4 defense.



### 16. Houston Texans

*Nelson Agholor, WR, USC:* They don't have to find the next Andre Johnson, just someone to play opposite DeAndre Hopkins. Agholor gives whoever starts at QB a decent pair of weapons.



### 17. San Diego Chargers

*Andrus Peat, OT, Stanford:* The Chargers line was a mess last season, Peat offers a good value and stays in California.



### 18. Kansas City Chiefs

*Malcolm Brown, DT, Texas:* The temptation to go receiver hill is strong...as in Jalen Strong, but K.C. also has issues on the D-line and can go WR later in a deep class.



### 19. Cleveland Browns

*Eddie Goldman, DT, Florida State:* If the Browns are smart and stay put with both 1<sup>st</sup> round picks they could walk away addressing needs on both sides of the ball.



## Mock Draft Cont.



### 20. Philadelphia Eagles

*Kevin Johnson, CB, Wake Forest:* We'll actually be quite surprised if Chip Kelly stays put, but Johnson is a safe pick and fills a need for the birds.



### 21. Cincinnati Bengals

*Ereck Flowers, OT, Miami:* There's a good chance at least one of Cincy's two starting tackles will be gone next season, and we think it's the RT.



### 22. Pittsburgh Steelers

*Marcus Peters, CB, Washington:* The Steelers have aged quite a bit on defense in recent years, opening the door to take a chance on a troubled yet talented defender in Peters.



### 23. Detroit Lions

*Jordan Phillips, DT, Oklahoma:* The Lions lost both their talented interior lineman that predicated everything they did on defense. They start over with a high risk/high reward prospect in Phillips...kind of like both Suh and Fairley.



### 24. Arizona Cardinals

*Jaelen Strong, WR, Arizona State:* The Cardinals need a plan for Larry Fitzgerald's eventual replacement and they go with the hometown boy that offers a similar style of play.



### 25. Carolina Panthers

*La'el Collins, OT, LSU:* The panthers have major issues at both tackle positions. They can fill one here and have their choice. A case could also be made for Florida OT D.J. Humphries



### 26. Baltimore Ravens

*Breshad Perriman, WR, Central Florida:* Don't believe Joe Flacco when he tells you the Ravens are happy with their current crop of wideouts. They need a big weapon and get one in Perriman.



### 27. Dallas Cowboys

*Phillip Dorsett, WR, Miami (Fla.):* The Cowboys don't get the RB they need this deep into the first round, so they load up with more weapons for Romo.



### 28. Denver Broncos

*D.J. Humphries, OT, Florida:* Last year's RT Louis Vasquez was a fill-in from the guard position. Humphries is a plug-and-play RT, allowing Vasquez to move back to his natural position.



### 29. Indianapolis Colts

*Landon Collins, S, Alabama:* Collins fits a major need for the Colts and they manage to get the top rated player at his position near the bottom of the round.

## Mock Draft Cont.



### 30. Green Bay Packers

*Eric Kendricks, LB, UCLA:* With A.J. Hawk gone, the Packers find a more athletic replacement in Kendricks.



### 31. New Orleans Saints

*Jalen Collins, CB, LSU:* The defensive rebuild continues, again with a questionable but talented character. Defensive coordinator Rob Ryan should gravitate towards Collins' aggressive nature.



### 32. New England Patriots

*Laken Tomlinson, OG, Duke:* Classic Patriots selection, unheralded yet solid player who might start from day one.



# THE RATINGS



**Quarterback:** This is the weakest class we can remember.

*Who We Love: Brett Hundley*



*Physically a combination of Robert Griffin III and Cam Newton.*

1. **Jameis Winston, Florida State:** Has all the physical skills and on-field leadership you want in a franchise QB. The big question mark is the off-field behavior. He's ready for the physical rigors of the NFL. Is he ready for the fame?

*NFL Equal: Ben Roethlisberger, Pittsburgh*

2. **Marcus Mariota, Oregon:** Unlike Winston, Mariota's questions come on the field. Dual-threat QB looks the part but is a system QB that will need to adjust to NFL play.

*NFL Equal: Ryan Tannehill, Miami*

3. **Brett Hundley, UCLA:** Hundley put up consistent numbers three years in a row in the Pac 12, even during an injury-filled senior campaign. Physical specimen should develop into a quality starter with some seasoning.

4. **Bryce Petty, Baylor:** Has physical tools and all the confidence you want in your QB. Can make every NFL throw but operated in a college system that dictated his reads. He'll need some time to learn how to read and react to NFL defenses.

5. **Garrett Grayson, Colorado St.:** There is a significant drop off in this year's class after Petty. From here on out it's mostly career backups, including Grayson. Decent accuracy but average arm strength gives defenders that extra split second they need to defend his passes.

6. **Sean Mannion, Oregon State:** Looks the part at nearly 6'6" and 230 lbs. but hasn't yet put it all together. Wildly inconsistent, you're not sure if you're getting Joe Flacco or Andy Dalton.

7. **Taylor Kelly, Arizona State:** Athletic QB with intangibles off the chart. He won't win any arm strength competitions and is undersized for the position, but something about his college game reminds of Tom Brady's Michigan days.

8. **Shane Carden, East Carolina:** Gunslinger with impressive yardage and TD-INT ratio in three years as a Pirate. Carden unfortunately lacks the physical tools – height and arm strength specifically. He'll make a roster and try to prove himself from there.

9. **Connor Halliday, Washington State:** Put up big numbers in the Cougars' spread offense, so the question of "system quarterback" will linger until he plays in the NFL. Good size at 6'4" and an NFL arm.

10. **Bo Wallace, Mississippi:** Perhaps the most physically gifted of this weak QB class but sloppy mechanics and inconsistency leave a lot to be desired. Wallace will need to be coached up but will be one worth watching in the coming seasons.

**Running Back: Deep class with a potential once-in-a-decade back at the top.**

***Who We Love: Ameer Abdullah, Nebraska***



***Unheralded but undersized, Abdullah is solid in every aspect of his game.***

1. **Todd Gurley, Georgia:** Medical re-checks after a torn ACL look good so Gurley should be on an NFL field in 2015. Terrific blend of speed and power and tough to bring down once he gets going.

*NFL Equal: Marshawn Lynch, Seattle*

2. **Melvin Gordon, Wisconsin:** Put up huge numbers in 2014 with 2,587 yards rushing and 29 TD's. More speed than power with great acceleration and good vision.

*NFL Equal: LeSean McCoy, Buffalo*

3. **Ameer Abdullah, Nebraska:** Small stature at 5'8" and 200 lbs. but tremendous instinct and patience as a runner. Put up back-to-back 1,600-plus yard seasons at Nebraska. Should thrive in the NFL in the right system.

4. **Tevin Coleman, Indiana:** Speed back with decent power and runs with authority, which sometimes leads to injury. Had 2,036 yards rushing and averaged an insane 40.3 yards per score on his 15 TD runs. As big a home run threat as you'll find in this draft.

5. **Jay Ajayi, Boise State:** London-born Ajayi had a rough start to his college career with an arrest and torn ACL in 2011. Rebounded to set school records in rushing yards (1,823), rushing TD's (28) and all-purpose yards (2,358) among others. Big knock is a lack of patience as he often bounces outside looking for the big play. That won't fly in the NFL.

6. **Duke Johnson, Miami (Fla.):** Miami's all-time leader in all-purpose yards bounced back from a broken ankle in 2013 to rush for 1,652 yards in 2014. Big play threat may be best utilized as the speed option of a two-back set due to his slight frame and injury concerns.

7. **T.J. Yeldon, Alabama:** Big play threat but rough around the edges as an upright runner with issues in pass protection and with fumbling. If coached up Yeldon could be the steal of this talented RB class.

8. **David Johnson, Northern Iowa:** Poor man's Le'Veon Bell put up big numbers at Northern Iowa, including three 1,000-plus yard seasons and 141 receptions in four seasons.



9. **David Cobb, Minnesota:** Workhorse back with a thick build, Cobb was made to be a feature back in the NFL. Not the big play threat other backs are but will keep the chains moving in the right direction.

10. **Javorius Allen, USC:** Looks the part and put up nearly 2,000 all-purpose yards in 2014. Allen does everything good, nothing great.

**Wide Receiver: This class is as deep, if not deeper, than last year's fantastic class of wideouts. There are starters to be found in the middle rounds.**

***Who We Love: Nelson Agholor, USC***



***Great blend of size and speed and a dynamic return man for added value.***

1. **Kevin White, West Virginia:** Has the highest floor of any wide receiver since A.J. Green in 2011. 6'3" and 210 lbs. and a burner who can beat you on the outside. The only concern is the one year of production at West Virginia, but what a year with 109 receptions for 1,447 yards and 10 TD's.

*NFL Equal: Julio Jones, Atlanta*

2. **Amari Cooper, Alabama:** White may have the highest ceiling but Cooper has the highest floor. Which one of those is more valued on draft day has yet to be determined. Technically solid, can run any route and can turn short passes into long gains. Not as explosive as some of the other WR's in this class but as close to a veteran as you'll find in a rookie.

*NFL Equal: Antonio Brown, Pittsburgh*

3. **DeVante Parker, Louisville:** Not quite the playmaker as White, not quite the technician of Cooper, but may excel in each category over one of the other two, putting him right in the middle of the debate on best receiver. Though he may not be the first WR taken, he may pull and Odell Beckham Jr. and be the best after 2015.

4. **Dorial Green-Beckham, Oklahoma:** We're going to use two Bengals receivers for comparison – Green-Beckham has the size and talent of A.J. Green and the off-field issues of Chris Henry. Troubles are well documented with multiple drug charges and accused of assaulting his girlfriend, leading to his dismissal from Missouri. At 6'6, 225 lbs. he's the wildcard of the first round, no one is sure where he'll ultimately be drafted.

5. **Jaelen Strong, Arizona State:** Big-bodied receiver will win contested balls in tight coverage, minimizing the window for his QB to hit. Coming off a wrist injury but medically cleared. Three consecutive 1,000-plus yard seasons with the Sun Devils.

6. **Nelson Agholor, USC:** Stepped up in the wake of Marquise Lee's injury in 2013, becoming the team's most consistent receiver. Followed that with 104 catches for 1,313 yards and 12 TD's in 2014 as the official number one receiver. After Cooper he's probably the most polished receiver available.

7. **Phillip Dorsett, Miami (Fla.):** Possibly the fastest receiver in the draft and can cut on a dime, turning cornerbacks around. Has terrific body control and is a threat wherever he catches the ball. A bit small at 5'9" but an absolute playmaker. The only caveat – the same thing was said about similar player in Tavon Austin.

8. **Breshad Perriman, Central Florida:** Has all the physical tools at 6'3" 215 lbs. and ran an insane 4.25 40 yard dash at his pro day. Modern day Mike Mamula, as Perriman was inconsistent at Central Florida, running sloppy routes and dropping catchable balls. Very raw but could put it all together to be a star. If he's not over-drafted he could be the steal of the draft. Great pedigree, son of former NFL receiver Brett Perriman.

9. **Tyler Lockett, Kansas State:** Similar player to Dorsett with a bit less in the speed department. Small in stature at 5'9" but makes big plays. Father is former Kansas State great and NFL WR Kevin Lockett. Should excel in the slot.

10. **Josh Harper, Fresno State:** Followed up a strong 2013 campaign with a better 2014 despite the loss of QB Derek Carr. Good size, speed and route running. May never be a true number one but a steady, reliable number two for a decade.

## **Best of the Rest**

### **The Burners**

Devin Smith, Ohio State (4.38 40 dash)

Sammie Coates, Auburn (4.36 40 dash)

Stefon Diggs, Maryland (4.46 40 dash)

Chris Conley, Georgia (4.35 40 dash)

### **The Big Guys**

Devin Funchess, Michigan (6'5")

Vince Mayle, Wash. St. (6'2")

Tony Lippett, Michigan (6'3")

Devin Gardner, Michigan (6'4")

**Tight End: Weak class with a few quality all-around prospects at the top.**

***Who We Love: Jeff Heuerman, Ohio State***



***If given the opportunity in a passing offense, he may end up the best all-around TE in this class.***

1. **Maxx Williams, Minnesota:** Second generation player is the son of former N.Y. Giants offensive lineman Brian Williams. Not a game changer but can do everything asked of an NFL TE. Very scheme-diverse and can should be a day one starter.  
*NFL Equal: Jordan Cameron, Miami*
2. **Clive Walford, Miami (Fla.):** More athletic than Williams but nowhere near as consistent. Will offer mismatches against LB's trying to cover him, but probably needs some coaching and seasoning at the pro level.  
*NFL Equal: Jermaine Gresham, Free Agent*
3. **Jeff Heuerman, Ohio State:** Excellent blocker offers surprising athleticism and hands. Not a big threat to make plays after the catch but at 6'5" he's a big target for QB's.
4. **Nick O'Leary, Florida State:** Gritty player is more of a receiving threat than in-line blocker. Would be best suited as the receiving TE in an offense that features two TE's.
5. **Ben Koyack, Notre Dame:** Following in Notre Dame's tradition of churning out NFL TE's like Kyle Rudolph and Tyler Eifert. Koyack offers similar skills but not nearly as polished as his predecessors and will need a year or two to develop.
6. **Jesse James, Penn State:** Red zone threat but doesn't always play as big as his size (6'7", 255 lbs.). Continued steady improvement his junior year but should have stayed for one more year.
7. **Nick Boyle, Delaware:** A big blocking TE that flashes occasionally as a receiver, as his 42 receptions for 476 yards and 7 TD's as a junior reflect.
8. **Tyler Croft, Rutgers:** Receiving threat not much of a blocker at 240 lbs. Will likely be utilized as a spread TE in the Jimmy Graham mold.
9. **E.J. Bibbs, Iowa State:** Jack-of-all-trades is a good athlete and a highlight reel of excellent grabs but lacks the size to hold up as an every-down TE.
10. **MyCole Prewitt, Southern Illinois:** Good athlete caught 81 balls for 861 yards along with 13 TD's in 2014 at the FCS level.

## Offensive Tackle



**Collins**

1. Brandon Scherff, Iowa
2. La'el Collins, LSU
3. Andrus Peat, Stanford
4. Ereck Flowers, Miami (Fla.)
5. T.J. Clemmings, Pittsburgh
6. Jake Fisher, Oregon
7. D.J. Humphries, Florida
8. Cedric Ogbuehi, Texas A&M
9. Daryl Williams, Oklahoma
10. Ty Sambrailo, Colorado State

## Offensive Guard



**Marpet**

1. A.J. Cann, South Carolina
2. Laken Tomlinson, Duke
3. Tre' Jackson, Florida State
4. Arie Kouandjio, Alabama
5. Ali Marpet, Hobart
6. John Miller, Louisville
7. Josue Matias, Florida
8. Jarvis Harrison, Texas A&M
9. Jamil Douglas, Arizona State
10. Jamon Brown, Louisville

## Center

1. Cameron Erving, Florida State
2. Reese Dismukes, Auburn
3. Hroniss Grasu, Oregon
4. Andy Gallik, Boston College
5. B.J. Finney, Kansas State

**Defensive End:** Tough group to classify as some project as OLB's in a 3-4 defense.

## *Who We Love: Owamagbe Odighizuwa*



***More than just a cool name, Odighizuwa is relentless on the line.***

1. **Alvin "Bud" Dupree, Kentucky:** Undersized 4-3 DE at 270 lbs. has tremendous pass rushing and tackling skills. Projects as a double-digit sack artist at the pro level.  
*NFL Equal: Ezekiel "Ziggy" Ansah, Detroit*



2. **Shane Ray, Missouri:** Just days before the draft Ray was cited on a marijuana possession charge after being pulled over for speeding. These citations are becoming more common among college players but the timing is what is so bad here. A top-ten prospect will likely fall out of the first round now. Undersized at 245 lbs. and will be drafted high with one mission in mind – get to the quarterback. Explosive athlete has the speed to blow by left tackles.

*NFL Equal: Bruce Irvin, Seattle*

3. **Arik Armstead, Oregon:** Prototype 3-4 DE at 6'7" and 295 lbs. Powerful but raw athlete is versatile enough to move in side on a 4-3 front as well.

4. **Randy Gregory, Nebraska:** Gregory's stock is sliding fast. Once considered a potential top-5 pick, Gregory failed a drug test at the scouting combine even though he knew the test was coming. That and his lack of size (240 lbs.) have teams second-guessing him as a high first round talent. Elite pass-rusher, but possibly a one-trick pony.

5. **Owamagbe Odighizuwa, UCLA:** Scheme-versatile and a tremendous athlete who gives maximum effort. Two surgeries on his hip wiped out his 2013 season but he rebounded in 2014, starting 13 games and recording 6 sacks and 11 tackles for loss.

6. **Mario Edwards, Florida State:** 3-4 run-stuffing DE at 6'3" and 295 lbs. There are questions about keeping him motivated every play.

7. **Nate Orchard, Utah State:** Came out of nowhere his senior season to log 18.5 sacks and 19 tackles for loss, after putting up only 6 sacks his first three seasons. Undersized and will struggle against bigger lineman in run defense.

8. **Danielle Hunter, LSU:** Surprisingly solid against both the pass and the run despite his small stature at 240 lbs. 6'6" frame helps him clog passing lanes.

9. **Trey Flowers, Arkansas:** Stout run defender that also averaged 5.5 sacks per year in final three seasons with the Razorbacks.

10. **Za'Darius Smith, Kentucky:** Bud Dupree's running mate on the Kentucky D-line, Smith makes his living as a grinder. Still developing with only five years of organized football. Steadily improved, making the successful transition from JUCO to SEC and now the NFL.

## Defensive Tackle: Some intriguing prospects this year that could become difference makers in the NFL.

### *Who We Love: Marcus Hardison*



***Hardison is an electric player to watch, rare for the big men in the middle.***

1. **Leonard Williams, USC:** Tremendous athlete and instincts for the game. Williams can play up and down the line, specifically DT in a 4-3 or DE in a 3-4. Disruptive and powerful and shows a passion for the game.  
*NFL Equal: Gerald McCoy, Tampa Bay*
2. **Danny Shelton, Washington:** Impressive athlete at 340 lbs., Shelton rarely leaves the field, even on passing downs. Could be a 3-4 NT anchor or a 4-3 run-stuffer.  
*NFL Equal: Haloti Ngata, Detroit*
3. **Malcolm Brown, Texas:** Playmaker against the run and the pass, Brown disrupts plays by getting into the backfield often, but may need to be part of a rotation to stay fresh.
4. **Eddie Goldman, Florida State:** Very similar to Brown as a stout run defender, not quite the pass-rushing threat though. Will likely be a better pro than a college player.
5. **Jordan Phillips, Oklahoma:** A rare blend of size and athleticism at 6'6" 335 lbs. but maddening inconsistency. One of the top boom-or-bust prospects in this draft.
6. **Michael Bennett, Ohio State:** If he can add strength Bennett might develop into an Aaron Donald-type player as an elite interior pass rush threat.
7. **Carl Davis, Iowa:** Davis only does one thing, but does he ever do it well. The big man clogs up running lanes and ties up lineman, allowing the LB's behind him to run free.
8. **Marcus Hardison, Arizona State:** Raw prospect just scratching the surface of his potential. Racked up 10 sacks, 15 tackles for loss and caused 6 turnovers in 2014.
9. **Xavier Cooper, Washington State:** Pass rushing prospect played out of scheme in the Cougars' 3-4 defense. Will make a good rotational player that could develop into an every-down DT.
10. **Grady Jarrett, Clemson:** Son of former NFL LB Jessie Tuggle. Stout run defender doesn't offer much pass rush threat, suited for a 4-3 rotation. Tallied 83 tackles in 2013, impressive for an interior lineman.

**Linebacker: Decent class with some projects and question marks throughout.**

***Who We Love: Shaq Thompson***



***Incredible athlete who can play multiple positions on offense and defense.***

1. **Dante Fowler, Jr., Florida (OLB):** Can play all over and often was asked to do just that in college. High character and football IQ. A defensive mastermind should have a field day with Fowler's natural talent and versatility.

*NFL Equal: Terrell Suggs, Baltimore*

2. **Vic Beasley, Clemson (OLB):** Sack artist racked up 33 sacks in three years as a starter on his way to becoming Clemson's all-time sack leader. A bit aggressive and sometimes over-pursues plays. May not be an every-down player.

*NFL Equal: Von Miller, Denver*

3. **Shaq Thompson, Washington (OLB):** 2014 Paul Hornung Award-winner for his versatility, Thompson could play safety or running back but has committed to being a linebacker. It might be his most instinctual position, as he scored 4 defensive TD's in 2014.

4. **Eric Kendricks, UCLA (ILB/OLB):** Can play inside in a 3-4 or outside as a weak side 4-3 LB. Four-year starter at UCLA, racked up 480 tackles in his career. Older brother Mychal is currently a LB for the Eagles.

5. **Denzel Perryman, Miami (Fla.) (ILB):** Strong, fast and instinctual, Perryman can play inside or outside, and racked up 100+ tackles at each position at Miami. Struggles in coverage and may not be a three-down backer.

6. **Eli Harold, Virginia (OLB):** Played both LB and DE at Virginia primarily rushing the passer. Fits best in a 3-4 scheme, will likely struggle when asked to cover backs and TE's.

7. **Stephone Anthony, Clemson (OLB):** Has the size and physical tools to be a starting NFL inside linebacker, but is a bit raw and somewhat of a project.

8. **Benardrick McKinney, Mississippi State (ILB):** Solid run defender can play all LB spots, but will be a liability in pass coverage.

9. **Paul Dawson, TCU (ILB):** An enigma in that he played fast and put up big numbers in TCU's unconventional defense, but poor workouts leading up the draft have teams taking a closer look. Could be this year's Vontaze Burfict.

10. **Ramik Wilson, Georgia (ILB):** Rangy LB racked up 243 tackles as a two-year starter at Georgie. Can play all three spots and should be a solid special teamer while coaches figure out where he fits best.

**Cornerback:** Not quite as deep as last year but another deep class with potential starters to be found in the middle rounds.

***Who We Love: Quentin Rollins***



***Though his resume is only one season long, Rollins is a sure bet to be a star.***

1. **Trae Waynes, Michigan State:** Arguably the best cover corner in the class. Physical corner with good recovery speed. Only knock is he's a bit lanky, but they pay corners to cover, not tackle.

*NFL Equal:* Darqueze Denard, Cincinnati

2. **Marcus Peters, Washington:** The first of several troubled players in this group. Immature attitude led to a litany of offenses including being held out of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the Huskies' 2013 bowl game, a one-game suspension after an in-game sideline tirade, and permanent dismissal from the team in November of 2014. On the field, Peters has excellent athleticism and ball skills, though he does tend to grab receivers downfield.

*NFL Equal:* Vontae Davis, Indianapolis

3. **Kevin Johnson, Wake Forest:** Lanky athlete with fluid hips, Johnson flew under the radar at a program that doesn't get a lot of national attention. Best natural cover corner after Waynes in this group.

4. **Quentin Rollins, Miami (Ohio):** Rollins story is pretty incredible. Four year player for the Red Hawks basketball team, decided to give football a try his senior year and ended up starting. A natural at the position with tremendous ball skills (7 INT's in his first year of college football), Rollins is incredibly raw but a superstar in the making.

5. **P.J. Williams, Florida State:** Big game player was the 2014 National Championship game MVP. Solid all around corner has off-field issues, specifically a recent DUI charge (that was eventually dropped) leading up to the draft. A first round talent will likely go somewhere in round

6. **Jalen Collins, LSU:** Another enigma in this draft, Collins is everything you want physically in a corner with great size (6'2" 200 lbs.) and speed, but is immature and didn't put it all together in college. Needs to be coached up and watch what the veterans do when he gets to the pros. Low risk-high reward as a mid-round pick but we think someone will gamble early.



7. **Byron Jones, Connecticut:** Aggressive corner battled injuries throughout 2014 that limited him to 7 games. Versatile, played both corner and safety in college. Voted team captain and highly respected by teammates.

8. **D’Joun Smith, Florida Atlantic:** A bit undersized at 5’10” but tremendous athlete and great ball skills. 7 INT’s in 2013 before a down year in 2014. The move from Florida Atlantic to the NFL might be a gradual transition, but Smith projects as a starter in the pros.

9. **Alex Carter, Stanford:** Son of former first-round pick Tom Carter. Plays a physical style that might draw some penalties but also the new style of play for the modern CB.

10. **Ifo Ekpre-Olomu, Oregon:** First team All-Pac 12 three straight years, the only thing not to like about Ekpre-Olomu is his size. At 5’9” he’ll be at a huge disadvantage against the bigger receivers in the NFL. Has a knack for creating turnovers with 18 takeaways in his career. Coming off a knee injury suffered just before the playoff game vs. Florida St..

**Safety: Not a lot to get excited about in this group, with Collins the only potential first-rounder.**

#### ***Who We Love: Damarious Randall***



***Randall quite possibly the only potential true star of this group.***

1. **Landon Collins, Alabama:** Better in run support than pass coverage but the most solid all-around safety in this year’s class. Does everything good, nothing great.

*NFL Equal: Rashad Johnson, Arizona*

2. **Damarious Randall, Arizona State:** Fast, physical free safety is still developing, so we may not have seen the best of this first-team All- Pac-12 player.

*NFL Equal: Charles Woodson, Oakland*

3. **Cody Prewitt, Mississippi:** Good instincts with 12 career INT’s in the SEC, Prewitt is more of a center fielder than a run defender, but is a solid tackler and will lay the wood when given the opportunity.

4. **Derron Smith, Fresno State:** Not a great tackler but tremendous in coverage and has good ball skills with 14 INT’s as three years as a starter.

5. **Eric Rowe, Utah:** All-conference and three-year starter at free safety, Rowe made the position move to CB in 2014 after the team lost Keith McGill. Could remain at corner, shows good instincts at both positions.

6. **Jaquiski Tartt, Samford:** Two year All-American and a standout at the Senior Bowl, Tartt is a heavy-hitting safety that will need time to adjust to the level of play in the pros, but should become a solid starter.

7. **Chris Hackett, TCU:** Played both safety and corner at FSU but at 5'8" he projects as a either full-time safety or slot corner. Aggressive and a good athlete, size is his biggest liability.

8. **Anthony Harris, Virginia:** All around safety has good ball skills and is a solid tackler but lanky at 6'1" 190 lbs. and not much of an intimidating presence.

9. **Kurtis Drummond, Michigan State:** Centerfielder had 12 career INT's in four years, but needs to improve his tackling and doesn't offer much in run support.

9. **Durrell Eskridge, Syracuse:** Big safety at 6'3" and hits with some power, still a work in progress but is a playmaker with high upside.

## FINAL THOUGHTS



This year's draft was particularly challenging to prepare for because of the lack of depth at so many positions and the growing variations of schemes that teams use today in both the college and pros. Offenses combine spreads with read options, defenses run hybrid 3-4/4-3, or TCU's crazy 4-2-5 defense. As the passing game evolves, defensive ends are becoming lighter and quicker with getting to the QB a priority over all else. Because of this, we hypothesize that in a year or two we'll be featuring a cover story about the return of the running back. For now, however, it's the wide receivers time to shine, and oh how they will. This class is loaded.

The draft will have a different feel this year as it emanates from Roosevelt University in Chicago this year – the first time in 51 years it hasn't been held somewhere in New York. Changing faces, changing city, and hopefully your team changing for the better! As always, Merry Christmas in April!

-Travis Yates, April 2015

# Report Card



## No Draft Prognosticator Left Behind: How we fared last year



Lache Seastrunk, RB (Drafted by Washington): We got a little punch drunk and listed Seastrunk as our number one back last year. Admittedly, we got a bit over excited watching some of his big runs. Perhaps the biggest miss of our career, cut by the Redskins and eventually signed with Tennessee: Verdict: MISS!



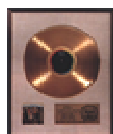
Terrance West, RB, (Drafted by Cleveland): The back from tiny Towson topped our “Who We Love” list at the RB position. Ended up starting 6 games for the Browns, scoring 4 TD’s. Verdict: HIT!



Zach Mettenberger, QB (Drafted by Tennessee): Despite being drafted in the 6<sup>th</sup> round, Mettenberger was our 3<sup>rd</sup> rated QB and he showed why, starting 6 games for the Titans, throwing for nearly 1,500 yards and 8 TD’s. Verdict: HIT!



Jace Amaro, TE (Drafted by New York Jets): The Jets thought highly of Amaro, as we did, ranking him as our third TE. Up and down rookie season where he caught 38 balls for 345 yards and 2 TD’s. We expected more, and still do in year two. Verdict: Undecided



E.J. Gaines, CB (Drafted by St. Louis): We were really high on Gaines, calling him a future starter...and it happened his rookie year despite being drafted in the 6<sup>th</sup> round. Verdict: HIT!



Johnny Manziel, QB (Drafted by Cleveland): The jury is technically still out on this one but Manziel’s rookie season was so bad he spend the offseason in rehab. We pondered if he was Bret Favre or Ryan Leaf. I think we’re seeing the truth come out. Verdict: MISS!



*Overall:* Score one more for the good guys! We whiffed on Seastrunk but came back with solid rankings on West and Mettenberger. The rest of the ratings were pretty accurate, which is no small feat in today’s NFL!