



NFL Draft 2015 Scouting Report: WR Amari Cooper, Alabama

**WR grades can and will change as more information comes in from Pro Day workouts, Wonderlic test results leaked, etc. We will update ratings as new info becomes available.*

**WR-B stands for "Big-WR," a classification we use to separate the more physical, downfield/over-the-top, heavy-red-zone-threat-type WRs. Our WR-S/"Small-WRs" are profiled by our computer more as slot and/or possession-type WRs who are less typically physical and rely more on speed/agility to operate underneath the defense and/or use big speed to get open deep...they are not used as weapons in the red zone as much.*

Going into this year, I thought there would be no way this 2015 WR class would be as good as the one in 2014. Initially, with almost no study, I also had a pre-bias thinking **Amari Cooper** was probably another hyped-up Alabama prospect, who would be overrated by the media to start the Draft process, and then he'd fade off the 1st-round landscape as time wore on.

I was wrong...on both counts.

(1) This WR class is a lot better, and a lot deeper than I expected.

(2) I might argue **Amari Cooper** is one of the best WR prospects in years. As much as it pains me to keep agreeing with the conventional wisdom on WRs—our computer scouting models agree on **Kevin White**, **DeVante Parker**, and **Amari Cooper** (WR is about the only position our scouting systems and conventional wisdom seem to agree upon in 2015 it seems).

I would describe **Amari Cooper** as what **Anquan Boldin** would be like if he were highly athletic. I couldn't argue with calling Cooper "a shorter **Larry Fitzgerald**" either. Our systems see Cooper as a cross between **Reggie Wayne** and **Pierre Garcon**. All these NFL comparisons are pushing the notion of a six-foot+ WR who has great hands, sensational instincts...basically he is a ready-made 'Pro' right now.

I cannot add much to what you already know, and what others are saying about Cooper. He has sensational hands. He is an almost 100% pro-ready as a route runner. He is a tireless worker. Obviously, he blew up the SEC this year. He was terrific at the NFL Combine. He's borderline 'awesome'.

To start the draft process, everyone loved **Amari Cooper**—he was the chic Mock Draft pick at #4 to Oakland...the #1 WR off-the-board. After the NFL Combine, Cooper started to fade. He committed the Combine-crime of being very good, but his closest WR competitor (**Kevin White**) ran a more impressive 40-time, so now White has become the sexy WR pick...and Cooper's now 'your grandpa's top WR'. That's a huge mistake analysts are making.



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Cooper is not as 'sexy' a prospect as **Kevin White**, which would have been a real 'thing' to 'feel' 3-5-10 years ago. However, "bigger is better" is dead as a mantra for NFL WRs. The new rules favoring the passing game, and all receivers makes **Antonio Brown** and **T.Y. Hilton** just as valuable, productive, and dangerous as **Calvin Johnson** and **Dez Bryant**. The playing field has been leveled at WR, as it pertains to physical size. We should no longer have a loaded coin flip in our mind that says, "*Cooper and White are both great, but I'll take the 'big guy' in an even scouting scenario.*"

Both White and Cooper are excellent WR prospects.

Cooper, I would argue, is the better of the two. With Cooper, you have no flaws. He has NFL-speed and elite agility. He has a work ethic like none other among these WRs, or maybe any WR in years. He has terrific hands and produced on the biggest stage in 'baddest' conference (SEC). You cannot lose with him as a Draft pick—he's an 'A' prospect, who will shine for a decade.

White might be a future 'A+' given his size speed, but he has struggled 'lifting off' quickly at the JUCO ranks and at West Virginia. He might be a slow-starter in the NFL as well—taking 1-2 years to get going at a high-level. He's going to be fine, but maybe he winds up as a 'B-' or 'B+' WR instead of an 'A'?

I have the slightest of doubts on White...I have no doubt on Cooper.

The only thing that will hold Cooper's NFL career back is winding up with **Geno Smith** or **E.J. Manuel** for an extended period of time.

I always whine about how I would never take a WR in the early 1st-round, or in the 1st-round at all. I don't think the NFL-economics at WR warrant it—too much supply now, and too much to come. There is no need to force anything. However, I would consider making an exception here. I am so sure Cooper is going to be rock solid on the field, and a quality teammate for a franchise—I would break my rule here. I would take Cooper highly in this Draft. I don't care what offense you run, or what the other needs are.

That's about the best endorsement I could ever give a WR.

Amari Cooper, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

Some of the numbers Cooper produced in college are jaw-dropping when you put them in some comparisons with other 'big-name' WRs. Here are a few data points our computer models found most interesting:

-- In 13 of his last 15 games, Cooper had eight or more catches in a game. On a team that is more run oriented and had a fringe NFL prospect QB. That's amazing. One of the games he was well below eight catches was against an FCS school, where he took it easy/didn't play the whole time. The other, against Arkansas—he was dinged up a bit mid-game but came back to finish the game (with just two catches).



Sammy Watkins had eight or more grabs in a game in six of his last 15 games, and only two of them against bowl teams. Eleven of Cooper's 13-games making eight catches (in his last 15 games) occurred against bowl teams.

Julio Jones, who was a more physically gifted WR than Cooper, and played with a more pro-style QB—he caught eight or more passes in a game just four-times in his final 15 games.

Odell Beckham Jr. caught eight or more passes in a game just once in his final 15 games...and only the one-time over his final two college seasons.

-- Cooper played in three bowl games. His output per game: 8.0 catches for 99.0 yards and 1.33 TDs.

-- Career games with 120+ yards receiving in college:

12 = **Amari Cooper**

10 = **Sammy Watkins**

4 = **Julio Jones**

4 = **Odell Beckham Jr.** (3 of the 4 out of conference, 2 of those 3 against FCS teams)

I must note: Cooper accomplished all this with a team that was not known for its passing game the past three years (or ever). This is not Cooper racking these numbers on a wild 'spread', 'fun and gun' passing game like you'd find in the WAC or Mountain West...this happened against mostly SEC defenders on a balanced offense.

As far as measurables, Cooper left the NFL Combine with a vibe like he disappointed a little. I would not call running a 4.42 40-time with sensational agility times "disappointing." His 10-yard split was so-so, and his vertical was below-average to average, but neither of those attributes were awful, and everything else he did was stellar--including measuring with huge 10.0" hands.

I cannot find even a small reason not to love **Amari Cooper** for the NFL.

The Historical WR Prospects to Whom Amari Cooper Most Compares Within Our System:

I mentioned it earlier: **Reggie Wayne** and a little **Pierre Garcon**.



A little less Garcon, because Pierre is like a Mack Truck with high-end speed...and is one of the most underutilized WRs in the NFL. Cooper is more finesse than strong (but he has strength). He's like **Reggie Wayne**...a blend of speed, agility, instincts, IQ, finesse, strength, and great hands.

| <u>WR Score</u> | <u>Draft Yr</u> | <u>Last</u> | <u>First</u> | <u>College</u> | <u>H</u> | <u>H</u> | <u>W</u> | <u>Power Strngth Metric</u> | <u>Speed Agility Metric</u> | <u>Hands' Metric</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 10.89 | 2015 | Cooper | Amari | Alabama | 6 | 0.7 | 211 | 11.04 | 12.62 | 13.60 |
| 12.05 | 2001 | Wayne | Reggie | Miami, Fla | 6 | 0.0 | 200 | 10.02 | 9.87 | 9.18 |
| 11.58 | 2008 | Garcon | Pierre | Mt Union | 5 | 11.9 | 210 | 12.92 | 9.98 | 10.11 |
| 9.69 | 2006 | Jennings | Greg | W. Michigan | 5 | 11.0 | 197 | 9.93 | 12.81 | 9.91 |
| 9.79 | 2013 | Boyce | Josh | TCU | 5 | 11.0 | 206 | 12.53 | 14.19 | 8.67 |
| 8.37 | 2004 | Evans | Lee | Wisconsin | 5 | 10.7 | 197 | 8.68 | 13.45 | 10.83 |
| 7.76 | 2013 | Spadola | Ryan | Lehigh | 6 | 1.2 | 204 | 8.85 | 12.92 | 8.96 |

**A score of 7.0+ is where we start to take a Small-WR prospect more seriously. A score of 8.50+ is where we see a stronger correlation of a Small-WR going on to become NFL good/great/elite. A score of 10.00+ is more rarefied air in our system and indicates a greater probability of becoming an elite NFL Small-WR.*

All of the WR ratings are based on a 0–10 scale, but a player can score negative, or above a 10.0 in certain instances.

Overall WR score = A combination of several on-field performance measures, including refinement for strength of opponents faced. Mixed with all the physical measurement metrics, rated historically in our database.

“Power-Strength” = A combination of unique metrics surrounding physical-size profiling, bench press strength, etc. High scorers here project to be more physical, better blockers, and less injury-prone.

“Speed-Agility” = A combination of unique metrics surrounding speed, agility, physical size, mixed with some on-field performance metrics. High scorers here project to have a better YAC and show characteristics to be used as deep threats/create separation.

“Hands” = A combination of unique metrics surrounding on-field performance in college, considering the strength of opponents played. Furthermore, this data considers some physical profiling for hand size, etc. High scorers here have a better track record of college statistical performance, and overall this projects the combination of performance and physical data for the next level.

