# NFL Draft 2017 Scouting Report: WR Curtis Samuel, Ohio State

**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.*

It was probably just a stupid bias on my end, but I didn't like **Curtis Samuel** in my first, brief tape watching pre-NFL Combine. I think I saw/dreamed him up as another Ohio State (or Clemson, or Alabama) guy getting a big draft push with loads of other talented wide receiver prospects out there getting ignored and I was already pre-aggravated. I watched the basic tape a few weeks ago and it was fine…a bunch of untouched TD runs and TD catches from a guy who didn't matter much until his 2016 breakout. All the 'gadgetry' of it was likely to blame for the TD spike. He wasn't a classic running back, and he wasn't a 'real' wide receiver. Just a guy making a bunch of plays with his speed here and there…or in other words…*the future offensive weapon type of the new era NFL*.

We're (me) so used to visualizing a 'type' of player that when something different pops up, we aren't as adept at fitting it our 'boxes'…and we run the risk of 'missing it'. What Kansas City did with **Tyreek Hill** is pure genius and is lost on most NFL teams. Most teams get a **Cordarrelle Patterson** (example), who is as prolific a runner of the ball as a WR as anyone in history (until Tyreek came along), and the offensive coordinators don't use them early and often in inventive ways. Guys that are unconventional 'weapons' do not fit the conventional O-C playbooks designed in the 1980s or 90s. I made a similar mistake when I first saw Samuel.

Samuel is not the greatest multifaceted prospect I've seen. Gimme Tyreek or Cordarrelle all day long, but that should not be used to tarnish Samuel…because those guys are fantastic: standard-bearers. Once I had a chance to watch several of Samuel's games and not just the highlights, I came to appreciate him.

How great is it to have a prospect you could line up at RB for 10–15 plays a game, and at WR for 25–50 plays? Samuel works as a normal, traditional speedster wide receiver. But he can also come across in motion for a running play from the WR spot. Or he can just line up as a running back and take a few carries or work as a passing game weapon out of the backfield. He gives an NFL team options. He's a 4.31 runner…so the options will be 'high speed'.

Samuel is not just 'fast guy' who we need to figure out what to do with. He took 97 carries last season with 7.9 yards per carry average…against a Big 10 schedule + Oklahoma and Clemson. He has a comfort level with running the ball more than just a 1–2x a game gimmick guy. He also worked as a traditional WR – 74 catches for 865 yards. He wasn't a constant screen, bubble, swing pass gimmick guy either – he worked like a real receiver all over the field…and he's a very solid, tough receiver. 18 bench reps for a 5'11"/196-pound guy…pretty nice. On tape, you can see he's not '*the fast guy who we fear taking hits*'. He can play all the snaps.

I missed it the first time around on Samuel. I wasn't thinking straight. I was using old thinking. When I saw our computer models compare him to **Tyreek Hill** at various stages (but short of Hill in the end), I was annoyed thinking '*Samuel is no Tyreek Hill*'. It is true that he is not Tyreek, but no one is – it also does not mean that Samuel isn't a damn good, interesting player.

You could have frail speedster **John Ross** in the first round or multidimensional speedster **Curtis Samuel** in the second. I know which one I'd choose.

## Curtis Samuel, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

8 rushing TDs and 7 receiving TDs in 2016…that's really a great achievement. A semi-unheard of split of TDs. I wanted to dismiss it as gimmicky at first, but it isn't. Samuel is just a really good player who got the ball and made plays. **John Ross** catching 17 TDs and rushing for 1 TD isn't as dynamic as what Samuel accomplished.

Against Oklahoma, Penn State, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Clemson in 2016 (his toughest opponents), Samuel averaged 111.4 total yards (rush + rec.), 5.8 catches, and 0.6 TDs per game.

<u>NFL Combine data…</u>

5'10.5"/196, 9.5" hands, 31.3" arms

4.31 40-time, 4.33 shuttle, 7.09 three-cone

18 bench reps, 37.0" vertical, 9'11" broad jump

Did anyone run a quieter 4.31 40-time than **Curtis Samuel**? When **Will Fuller** ran a 4.32 last year you would have thought the world had split in two from *the momentous occasion*. Fuller was a fraud compared to what Samuel brings to the table.

Samuel's college stats on CFB Reference: http://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/players/curtis-samuel-1.html

## The Historical WR Prospects to Whom Curtis Samuel Most Compares Within Our System:

I don't love our comparison list for Samuel. There's not enough history of these RB/WR hybrids coming along yet for our system to properly match Samuel. He's one of a kind…but many **Curtis Samuels** are going to hit the NFL. College coaches figure out most offensive innovations ahead of the NFL…the use of speedy WRs to carry the ball more is a wave that is forming and will crash ashore in the NFL in a few years. Samuel is a little ahead of his time.

You can't compare Samuel and **Tyreek Hill** as similar/equal because Hill's agility readings (and on tape) are freakish, and Samuel's underwhelming three-cone and shuttle times do not match what you see on tape. Samuel's agility times are not great…but on tape, it doesn't seem to be an issue. Samuel is very adept at stopping-starting and shifting directions swiftly. Much better than I realized or what his NFL Combine numbers would say.

| WR Score | Draft Yr | Last | First | College | H | H | W | Power Strngth Metric | Speed Agility Metric | Hands' Metric |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **8.476** | 2017 | Samuel | Curtis | Ohio State | 5 | 10.5 | 196 | 8.54 | 12.12 | 8.22 |
| **8.021** | 2007 | Hill | Jason | Washington St | 6 | 0.5 | 204 | 8.69 | 12.39 | 9.31 |
| **8.861** | 2009 | Wallace | Mike | Mississippi | 6 | 0.3 | 199 | 9.33 | 13.42 | 6.44 |
| **7.385** | 2011 | Gates | Edmond | Ab. Christian | 5 | 11.8 | 192 | 8.71 | 15.05 | 7.55 |
| **7.106** | 2012 | Givens | Chris | Wake Forest | 5 | 11.1 | 198 | 10.14 | 10.03 | 7.74 |
| **6.980** | 2005 | Clayton | Mark | Oklahoma | 5 | 11.0 | 193 | 7.53 | 9.61 | 7.59 |

**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.*

## 2017 NFL Draft Outlook:

Because Samuel's 4.31 40-time was buried by **John Ross's** 4.22, and because Samuel isn't a player who fits the typical positional box…he's fallen from mostly first-round projections in January–February to second-round in most places in late March/early April. I could see him sneaking into the first round – #32 to the Saints as a **Brandin Cooks** replacement attempt.

## NFL Outlook:

If Samuel goes to an innovative, changing-with-the-times head coach – he could be an impact player right out of the gates. If he gets stuck in Minnesota or Cincinnati or wherever dull offenses exist, then Samuel will probably be underutilized for years.

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