



NFL Draft 2016 Scouting Report: OLB Jatavis Brown, Akron

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

For the last week or so, I have gorged myself on watching tape of all the top, or decent, or newsworthy linebacker prospects who went to the NFL Combine in 2016. After watching the tape, and looking at our computer model grades on this linebacker group, I was left uninspired by the 2016 linebacker draft class as a whole, both inside and outside linebacker prospects.

There is no physical freak from the NFL Combine like a **Ryan Shazier** to discuss. **Myles Jack** may be that guy, but he skipped being tested in many key areas. Scouts and fans are left to speculate on what their eyes see on Jack's real speed-agility, and that's never good to rely upon.

There was no old-school middle linebacker at the NFL Combine who had instincts beyond all others, who ruled the middle of the field whether controlling the line of scrimmage or kicking to the outside to pursue ballcarriers...like an **Eric Kendricks** or **Luke Kuechly**. That 'rock' for the middle of defense just does not exist from the NFL Combine group. **Reggie Ragland** is not the answer.

Once I wrapped up studying those NFL Combine linebackers, I started to turn to all the notable linebacker prospects who were not invited to Indianapolis. Our computer models told me I needed to look at Akron's **Jatavis Brown** immediately. Once again, our computer sees what humans do not – because **Jatavis Brown** is by far the best linebacker prospect I have seen on tape of anyone in this 2016 class, even better than **Myles Jack**.

We currently have Jack rated higher in our computer models, with our guesstimates of his physical abilities for speed and agility. What everyone knows about Jack's strength, vertical, etc. foretells a possible physical 'freak' all-around. At his best, Jack probably is the best linebacker talent in this draft. However, for my taste, for the price it will take to draft him/pin a team's first-round hopes on...there are too many times I see Jack not doing a whole lot in games in college. People are taking a leap of faith with **Myles Jack** based on awesome highlights, because his college production is just decent for a supposed NFL stud.

There is no leap of faith with **Jatavis Brown**. His tape proves it. His production numbers prove it. He's by far the hardest-hitting, most 'sure' tackler of any linebacker that I've seen in this class so far. He's also the fastest linebacker, running a 4.44 40-time at his Pro Day. You could say, "*Pro Day speed is always a little inflated,*" and that maybe **Darron Lee** (4.47) is actually the fastest linebacker in 2016. I'm with you. However, I cannot hold my arms wide enough to show the talent difference, I see on tape, between Lee and Brown. Their speed is elite, but only Brown's tape is elite. An NFL team picking Lee over Brown should have its team booted from the NFL. FYI, there will only be one scout in the world who will



definitely rate **Jatavis Brown** over **Darron Lee** for this draft...teams, scouts, and analysts on one side, and us on the other. Just the way I like it.

No linebacker in this class (that I've seen so far) tracks ballcarriers like **Jatavis Brown**. **Kentrell Brothers** is a technically sound tackler, the best pure tackler I saw from the NFL Combine group, but he's no **Jatavis Brown**...and Brown is literally one-half of a full second faster in the 40-time than Brothers. Stanford's **Blake Martinez** is arguably the best inside linebacker at identifying and moving towards short/screen or swing passes out of the backfield, but I think Brown has him beat there because he moves so much faster – Brown can afford to not see something at first, but ultimately get to it faster than Martinez due to elite linebacker foot speed. Whatever Brown identifies, he's going to get there faster than any linebacker in this draft along with **Myles Jack**. Brown is such a smart, talented linebacker that when you put his already solid-to-good-to-great linebacker instincts with his high-end speed, he's a force of a prospect at linebacker.

Because of his elite linebacker speed, Brown is excellent at pressuring the quarterback when set in on a blitz. As a roving middle/outsider linebacker for Akron in 2015, Brown amassed 11.5 sacks, which 8th in the nation last season. The NFL craves pressure on the QB, and most every NFL linebacker and defensive end prospect tested poorly, average/mediocre in 40-time speed -- in that scope, it makes Brown stands out big-time. Arguably, **Jatavis Brown** is the best pass rushing force of any prospect in 2016...as a sneak attack inside or outside linebacker.

So why is **Jatavis Brown** not considered among the top linebackers by national scouts? That's simple. If you're not invited to the NFL Combine, you might as well not even exist, as far as the NFL or national football analysts are concerned. You're doomed to a cute 'sleeper' status at best when you are not graced with a Combine invite. What some scouts have against Brown is his size – he's 5'11"+/227. He's in between linebacker and safety size. He's not the traditional linebacker size scouts like – if he were an inch taller and 5–10 pounds heavier, people would go bananas. I'm not a nutritionist, but I'm assuming Brown could add 5+ pounds of muscle as needed in the NFL. Oh, and FYI...Brown benched 33 reps at his Pro Day. Throwing down 33 reps on a bench press is 'freakish' for a 227-pound human. Brown is arguably (not really arguable) the fastest and strongest linebacker prospect in 2016.

If Brown adds 5–10 pounds of muscle, and he loses a little bit of his speed, he would still have very high-end NFL speed for an inside linebacker. He's already in the upper group of the upper group of fastest linebackers in the history of pre-draft measurements. He's somewhat of a 'freak' no matter how you look at it.

I think NFL teams could use Brown as either a 3-4 scheme OLB or a 4-3 scheme OLB. I think he works either way. He can chase plays all over, and blitz the backfield as well as any linebacker out there. I like him more in a traditional linebacker role rather than chasing receivers, so I would love to see him more as an inside linebacker in a 3-4 scheme. He may be a little undersized today for an inside linebacker role in the NFL, but I think he could bump up and add 5+ pounds of muscle to become another **Sam Mills** type destroyer in the middle, or maybe a poor man's **Ryan Shazier**. He also reminds me of a



shorter, smaller, poor man's version of **Von Miller**...linebackers with such amazing speed that they can get to the quarterback lining up at any number of positions on defense.

There are a lot of things you can do with **Jatavis Brown** at the next level, because of his athleticism. It's not out of the question that he drops like seven pounds and becomes a **Deone Bucannon**-like linebacker/safety hybrid. Brown hits like Bucannon, and when I say that I'm paying a major compliment because I think Deone is one of the best defensive players in the NFL, and we thought so the first time we saw him in college.

For my money, Brown deserves to be a first-round prospect all day long. They don't make linebacker prospects like this. His speed is off the charts. However, his tape is off the charts as well. He's clearly the best all-around linebacker in the 2016 class. **Myles Jack** may be more gifted, and has more upside to go along with his larger size (15-20 heavier/thicker than Brown)...but Jack's college tape is spotty. With Jack there are moments of greatness, and moments where I'm not sure what he's doing.

I believe Brown is the most 'sure thing' linebacker prospect in this draft, to a degree...whether he is an inside or outside linebacker, or LB/safety hybrid ultimately. He has elite speed. He is a proven performer. He was the Akron team captain and won some academic awards in college as well. We'll see if the 'sure thing' label is just that he's 'good' in the NFL, or if he's possibly 'great'; a Pro Bowl player. Of all the linebackers I've scouted this year, there are less than a handful I could see as future Pro Bowl players...and Brown is one of them. **Myles Jack** may have more upside, but he also comes with risk (injury history and disappearing in games)...and a much higher draft price tag.

Jatavis Brown, Through the Lens of Our OLB Scouting Algorithm:

It's difficult to compare Brown to other linebackers because he played so many roles on the team, and was by far their best player, and was the target of the opposition blockers. The best line of numbers I can give to make a point about Brown's gifts is...

Brown had five games with major opponents the past two seasons. He faced Pitt (twice, and won one), Penn State, Oklahoma, and a bowl game vs. Utah State. In those five games, Brown averaged 9.6 total tackles, 1.7 TFLs, and 1.0 sacks per game. He had at least one TFL in each of those games, and a sack in four of the five. He was even better playing teams superior to Akron.

In 2014, Brown was put in on offense...and caught three passes for 34 yards in the team's season finale. The only game he registered numbers on offense in his career.

I'm interested in Brown as a possible ILB in the NFL, but he may not get to the size for it. However, taking some stat tally comparisons on other ILBs we did prior, and inserting 'labeled' OLB prospects Brown and **Myles Jack** into the lists for interest's sake...



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Eight or more solo tackles in a game, career:

18 = Matakevich, Temple

7 = Wright, Arizona

6 = Brown, Akron

6 = Martinez, Stanford

6 = Brothers, Missouri

2 = Ragland, Alabama

2 = Jack, UCLA

Games with 10 or more total tackles, career:

26 = Matakevich, Temple

18 = Brothers, Missouri

13 = Brown, Akron

11 = Martinez, Stanford

11 = Wright, Arizona

5 = Ragland, Alabama

3 = Jack, UCLA

2.0 or more TFLs in a game, career:

11 = Matakevich, Temple

9 = Wright, Arizona

6 = Brown, Akron

3 = Jack, UCLA

2 = Brothers, Missouri



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MARCH 8, 2016

2 = Martinez, Stanford

1 = Ragland, Alabama

Passes Defended (PDs) in their final season in college:

7 = Ragland, Alabama

7 = Jack, UCLA (2014, his final full season in college)

6 = Martinez, Stanford

5 = Matakevich, Temple

3 = Brothers, Missouri

1 = Brown, Akron

0 = Wright, Arizona (this was in 2014...his PAC-12/National Defensive Player of the Year season)

Career sacks:

17.0 = Wright, Arizona

16.5 = Brown, Akron

7.0 = Matakevich, Temple

6.5 = Martinez, Stanford

4.5 = Brothers, Missouri

4.0 = Ragland, Alabama

1.0 = Jack, UCLA

The Historical OLB Prospects to Whom Jatavis Brown Most Compares Within Our System:



2016 NFL DRAFT SCOUTING REPORT

MARCH 8, 2016

I think the perfect comp for Brown is **Mychal Kendricks** and/or his brother **Eric Kendricks** (and both first-round draft picks)...players who could excel as an OLB and/or ILB in the NFL. Whatever label you wanted on them – the Kendricks brothers could rush the passer at a high-level, cover the pass game well enough, and stop the run like traditional inside linebackers. Brown is the same kind of guy.

DT Grade	Last	First	Draft Yr	College	H	H	W		Tackle Strgth Metric	Spd Agil Metric	Pass Rush Metric
9.445	Brown	Jatavis	2016	Akron	5	10.7	227		10.46	9.04	7.42
8.243	Kendricks	Eric	2015	UCLA	6	0.2	232		10.91	5.54	4.06
9.118	Pierre-Louis	Kevin	2014	Boston College	6	0.4	232		9.27	10.82	10.11
10.512	Weatherspoon	Sean	2010	Missouri	6	1.2	239		10.85	8.42	7.29
13.176	Shazier	Ryan	2014	Ohio State	6	1.0	237		10.04	12.03	10.60
6.683	Hoffman-Ellis	Alex	2012	Washington St	6	0.4	232		10.40	6.52	5.66
5.764	Sylvestre	Junior	2015	Toledo	5	11.7	233		8.94	3.61	2.99
5.116	Holland	Joe	2012	Purdue	6	1.0	231		7.92	9.96	9.43

*A score of **8.00+** is where we see a stronger correlation of LBs 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 NFL elite LB.

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

Tackle-Strength Metrics = A combination of several physical and performance measurements. An attempt to classify the LB prospect's ability to stop the run, as well as a gauge of how physical the player is and the likelihood of higher tackle counts in the NFL. All based on profiles of LBs historically.

Speed-Agility Metrics = A combination of several speed, agility, and size measurements...as well as game performance data to profile a LB for speed/agility based on LBs historically. A unique measuring system to look for LBs that profile for quickness, pass-coverage ability, and general ability to cover more ground.

Pass Rush Metrics = A combination of the physical measurements, but also proven on-field ability to get to the QB/backfield in college.

2016 NFL Draft Outlook:



2016 NFL DRAFT SCOUTING REPORT

MARCH 8, 2016

I believe Brown is a top 30 draft prospect for 2016. Everyone else has him between #50 and #150, and mostly #125+. He's better than that. I want to believe an NFL team is going to see all the various linebacker and hybrid-safety possibilities and chase him within the first 100 picks, but I'm almost 100% wrong on these types of things – things where we see it but the analysts don't. He's usually a fourth- or fifth-round projection, so I'll guess he goes fourth round.

If I were an NFL GM, I see Brown as one of the great draft values in 2016, so I am moving in for the kill. It's easy to get a random fourth-round pick by either trading back, etc. to do so. Acquiring Brown is part of my 2016 draft strategy.

NFL Outlook:

Barring injury, I know Brown is going to be productive in the NFL. This pick is nearly bust-proof. I just don't know if he'll go down in history as 'good' or 'great', but 'great' is on the table. Because he'll be grabbed mid-draft, he won't likely start day one, so we'll see what depth chart he lands on – whether he takes over quickly or is a ghost for a few years before he gets his chance. He's such a talent, I bet he sits for a few games...and then cannot be denied mid-2016, and goes on to become a star.

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Signature _____

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.C." with a small dot above the "C".

Date _____

3/8/2016