



NFL Draft 2017 Scouting Report: WR Zay Jones, East Carolina

**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.*

Note: I put **Zay Jones** in as a 'small WR' prospect even though he stands 6'2". He's just 201 pounds and works more like a smaller/slot receiver or a 'tweener'...somewhere between a bigger/physical and small/fast receiver.

Also, note: I have to say **Zay Jones** is probably the best wide receiver prospect in this draft. It's going to take a lot for **Cooper Kupp** or **Corey Davis** to overcome him (at this point only been in-depth on Zay, but have done a decent amount of Senior Bowl/Combine work on the other guys). **Zay Jones** may be 'the perfect' NFL wide receiver. Not so much that he is built/constructed like a mythical figure...just the way he plays is just refreshing to watch. The way he handles himself on and off the field is impeccable.

Why is **Zay Jones** possibly 'the best'? Let us count the ways...

-- Most people ding Jones because he came from a high-volume passing game...*so his numbers don't count as much*. And I had that in mind from the jump...making sure not to get too jazzed about his amazing college numbers, especially in 2016 (158 catches-1,746 yards-8 TDs). However, do consider that in that high-volume offense he caught 44%+ of the team's completed passes and 44% of the total receiving yards from his QBs.

Do you know how many other wide receivers we have on record that caught 44%+ of their teams' completed passes and yards in their best college season? 11 of them. How many from D1 schools – 6 of them. One of the six is **Zay Jones**. The other five are **Jordy Nelson**, **Jordan Matthews**, **Earl Bennett**, **Nate Burleson**, and **Tyler Boyd**. Which ones did so with 100+ catches in their season? Jordy, Jordan (Matthews), and Jones.

Yes, **Zay Jones'** stat totals are pushed a bit...but the East Carolina quarterback wasn't great, and everyone knew Jones was getting the ball, but he got it anyway...a lot.



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-- When you think Zay may have benefitted from an easy American Conference schedule, just note that he averaged 13.0 catches for 126.0 yards (and no TDs) per game against South Carolina, Virginia Tech, and NC State (two pro prospect CBs) this past season.

Also, note – Zay went to the Senior Bowl and destroyed it. He led the game itself in receiving, but he missed several TD catches by shoestring calls just out of bounds. Some of them very questionable. He was a few hairs away from having one of the best all-time performances at the Senior Bowl...playing with crappy quarterbacks.

-- Jones is a well above average athlete at wide receiver as measured at the NFL Combine. In the upper group in most every timing drill there was.

-- Jones is a student of the game. A meticulous route-runner with great hands.

-- Jones is a tremendous person off the field. An academic All-American who volunteers time at local hospitals. He has an event coming up in March signing autographs with the proceeds going to a local autism group.

-- He has the DNA...dad is **Robert Jones**, former Pro Bowl linebacker/Dallas. His brother Cayleb was a UDFA receiver for Philadelphia last season – I scouted him some, great hands...not the athlete Zay is. His uncle is former NFL QB **Jeff Blake**. His younger brother is a four-star high school recruit.

-- When Jones is not involved in making a catch, he's an excellent blocker. He's not a physical mauler, he's just always on the lookout for making a hit to spring a ballcarrier. He may be the smartest blocking wide receiver I've ever scouted. He never wanders aimlessly around on the field. He always doing something to help or produce.

I see no flaw in **Zay Jones** except his 201-pound body in a 6'2" frame...a little thin 'on paper'. However, he is all muscle from what I see. He's in terrific shape. He's a terrific athlete. He is as smart a receiver as you'll ever find. I don't know if he'll be an 'A+' / elite...but I know he won't be worse than a 'B+' floor. Jones reminds me of **Antonio Brown** and **Stefon Diggs**...only a better receiver and better human.

If there's a better receiver in this class – then that receiver is pretty freaking great.

I'm not saying Jones is the greatest wide receiver of our lifetime. He's not the biggest nor the strongest nor the fastest nor does he have the best hands I've ever seen. He's just good or great at everything and is nearly without flaw...maybe completely without flaw.



Zay Jones, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

Just sit with these numbers for a second, and I don't care in what system or in what conference he got them...

Jones started the 2016 season with 10- and 7-catch games and then reeled off nine straight games with 10 or more catches with total catches of: 22-10-17-18-11-19-13-12-12.

22 catches for 190 yards against South Carolina in 2016, a game in which ECU lost by 5 points. I assume SEC DBs were trying to cover him?

#1 in the NCAA in catches in 2016 (158). The NCAA all-time leaders in receptions (399). #12 in career yards in the NCAA (4,279).

NFL Combine data...

6'2.1"/201, 32.5" arms, 9.0" hands

4.45 40-time, 4.01 shuttle, 6.79 three-cone

36.5" vertical, 15 bench reps, 11'1" broad jump

Zay Jones college stats in CFB Reference: <http://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/players/isaiah-jones-2.html>

The Historical WR Prospects to Whom Zay Jones Most Compares Within Our System:

Speaking of a receiver without flaws – **Amari Cooper**. **Zay Jones** is like a poor man's **Amari Cooper**...which is a very rich man's thing to have.



<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>
9.966	2017	Jones	Zay	East Carolina	6	2.1	201	8.53	10.54	10.55
10.609	2015	Cooper	Amari	Alabama	6	0.7	211	11.04	12.62	11.56
7.018	2003	Burleson	Nate	Nevada	6	1.0	197	8.86	6.22	10.48
11.160	2014	Matthews	Jordan	Vanderbilt	6	3.1	212	6.89	7.65	11.56
8.675	2008	Nelson	Jordy	Kansas St	6	2.6	217	7.95	5.69	12.74
7.069	2016	Boyd	Tyler	Pitt	6	1.4	197	6.19	5.85	9.83
5.151	2016	Peterson	Darrin	Liberty	6	1.3	204	6.55	3.22	10.06

**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:

Right now, Jones's draft projections are all over the place. Mostly second and third round...usually in the top 100. **Mel Kiper** had him first round in one mock a while back, but not sure if he still does. I don't think there's any way Jones gets out of the second round undrafted and I think he'll go top 40, as high as #25–30. He's too good of a receiver and too clean on his character to fall too far. The football/draft analysts are tricked by the 'because of the offense' bit, but smarter NFL teams won't be.



NFL Outlook:

Will be an instant starter for most any team, and if he lands with the group he'll be a top-producing wide receiver in no time.

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Signature R.C. Date 3/16/2017