



NFL Draft 2017 Scouting Report: RB Joe Williams, Utah

**Our RB 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.*

**We use the term "Power RB" to separate physically bigger, more between-the-tackles-capable RBs from our "speed RBs" group. "Speed RBs" are physically smaller, but much faster/quicker, and less likely to flourish between the tackles.*

As I write this, as you read this, **Joe Williams** has had quite a draft story. Early 2016, he quit/retired from Utah football due to a real family issue (after doing nothing of note on the field to that point). He returned several weeks later and set the world on fire – six 140+ yard rushing efforts in his final 7 games...amazing. His run included a 332-yard effort with 4 TDs against UCLA. Williams was invited to preseason all-star games and the NFL Combine. He floundered/didn't stand out in all-star games. He didn't 'wow' anyone at the NFL Combine (4.41 speed at 210 pounds with 7.19 three-cone). He was kind of a forgotten prospect heading into the draft...a surefire late pick or going undrafted.

You probably know the **Peter King** story from here. **Kyle Shanahan** falls in love with him and the 49ers burn draft capital to take him in the early 4th round. As that story was relayed to the world by King post-draft, it set Williams up as a hot prospect for the NFL and fantasy. A renewed fire was sparked.

I had watched some tape of Williams 2016 ahead of the college all-star games and then watched him in the all-star games...I didn't see anything of note that jumped out like 'wow'. Not on tape, nor in our computer scouting models. Not enough to go deeper or file a longer report on, but now that the 49ers (and Peter King) are smitten, I'm taking a deeper look to try to see what they see.

After watching a few games from 2016 in depth, and looking at the all-star performances again, my short summary is – if I owned the 49ers, I would be PISSED that my head coach and GM fell in love with a mediocre/lacking, low-importance-to-the-NFL-position-of-running-back prospect and burned precious draft capital to chase him. It's one of the most inexplicable things from the 2017 NFL Draft.

Here's the longer version...

One thing you have to keep in mind as you study/consider Williams's 2016 at Utah – nearly the entire Utah offensive line was drafted in 2017. Left tackle **Garett Bolles** the top OL taken in the draft...and one of the best OLs I've ever scouted. Williams had a HUGE advantage running the ball at Utah in 2016, and it's probably why teams were conned into valuing **Devontae Booker** much too high in 2016. The Utah O-Line did for Williams (and Booker) what the Dallas Cowboys' O-Line did for **Ezekiel Elliott** in 2016 – took something good and made it great...to the naked eye.



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I watched Williams's tape of most of his 2016 – all I could do is shake my head wondering '*what in the hell were the 49ers looking at?*' Not that Williams is bad, but he's really nothing special...and has a glaring problem (which I'll get to). Williams is a pretty simple scouting case – nice straight-ahead runner. Legit 4.41 speed, so if he has space, he'll look good in a flash. The problem is that NFL RBs rarely get wide-open Utah-like holes to run through. The other problem – Williams is not a strong-style runner. He goes down quick, especially if you hit him low. He goes down like a house of cards on most simple tackles...he's not that big, a little thin-framed and runs upright. He has good balance to bounce off tackles when hit up high, however. Waist down hits – he's going down.

There's another issue – Williams is a poor east-west runner. Let him run straight ahead and he might make a play given a hole. Make him cut something back to the outside – he gets caught easily. His three-cone times weren't lying.

There's a bigger issue – Williams is a terrible receiver. I mean he has VERY shaky hands. Kinda scary bad hands, especially considering he has a 3rd-down back profile. He outright butchers passes; fights a lot of them to haul in the ones he gets. It's jarring...considering that should be his NFL role (receiving/C.O.P. back). In addition, he was benched in 2015 for fumble issues. In his last 10 games, 6 fumbles...6 lost fumbles.

Here's what you get with Williams...a guy who retired football for a few weeks in 2016 and was nothing of note before that. He returned to college success behind a great O-Line. He is a straight-line fast, sideways slow, 'tweener' size RB who can't catch and fumbles A LOT...and had the advantage of a favorable college O-Line.

What the 49ers see here, enough to move up in a draft and take a 210-pound RB, I have no idea.

Joe Williams, Through the Lens of Our RB Scouting Algorithm:

Here is all you need to know about why you should run from Joe Williams...

Williams had a poor start to 2016, left, came back, and ran for all those 140+ yard games. While he was 'retired', the Utah RBBC ran for 248-152-165-205 yards in the four games Williams was gone. This is a Utah O-Line story, not a **Joe Williams** story.

Williams lost 4 fumbles in 2016, 2 fumbles at the end of 2015 season. He has 6 lost fumbles in 289 career carries.



NFL Combine data...

5'11"/210, 9.8" hands, 30.8" arms

4.41 40-time, 1.58 10-yard, 4.19 shuttle, 7.19 three-cone

14 bench reps, 35.0" vertical, 10'5" broad jump

The Historical RB Prospects to Whom Joe Williams Most Compares Within Our System:

Come to think of it, Williams does remind me of **Dalvin Cook**...if Cook couldn't catch passes well and fumbled all the time. A little **Jeremy Langford** hype in there makes sense too.

<u>RB Score</u>	<u>RB-Re</u>	<u>RB-ru</u>	<u>Last</u>	<u>First</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>Yr</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>Speed Metric</u>	<u>Agility Metric</u>	<u>Power Metric</u>
5.567	1.79	4.29	Williams	Joe	Utah	2017	5	11.0	210	7.93	-3.46	4.76
6.393	2.53	5.90	Langford	Jeremy	Michigan St	2015	5	11.5	208	6.12	-1.15	6.65
6.755	7.56	6.53	Cook	Dalvin	Florida St	2017	5	10.3	210	4.78	-2.50	8.39
1.736	3.52	0.99	Scott	Da'Rel	Maryland	2011	5	11.0	211	8.22	2.84	5.96
4.186	-0.49	1.6	Moscatel	John	So Conn St	2016	5	11.5	207	0.92	-5.25	2.82
1.722	-0.5	1.61	Anthony	Deon	Troy	2014	5	11.0	214	1.15	-3.21	5.75
1.170	0.94	1.06	DeMartino	Joey	Utah State	2014	5	11.0	200	2.41	-2.80	5.08

**A score of 8.50+ is where we see a stronger correlation of RBs 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 RB.*

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

Overall rating/score = A combination of several on-field performance measures, including refinement for the strength of opponents faced, mixed with all the physical measurement metrics – then compared/rated historically within our database and formulas. More of a traditional three-down search – runner, blocker, and receiver.

**RB-Re score = New/testing in 2017. Our new formula/rating that attempts to identify and quantify a prospect's receiving skills even deeper than in our original formulas. RB prospects can now make it/thrive*



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in the NFL strictly based on their receiving skills – it is an individual attribute sought out for the NFL and no longer dismissed or overlooked. Our rating combines a study of their receiving numbers in college in relation to their offense and opponents, as well as profiling size-speed-agility along with hand size measurables, etc.

**RB-Ru score = New/testing in 2017. Our new formula/rating that attempts to classify and quantify an RB prospect's ability strictly as a runner of the ball. Our rating combines a study of their rushing numbers in college in relation to their offense and strength of opponents, as well as profiling size-speed-agility along with various size measurables, etc.*

Raw Speed Metric = A combination of several speed and size measurements from the NFL Combine, judged along with physical size profile, and then compared/rated historically within our database and scouting formulas. This is a rating strictly for RBs of a similar/bigger size profile.

Agility Metric = A combination of several speed and agility measurements from the NFL Combine, judged along with physical size profile, and then compared/rated historically within our database and scouting formulas. This is a rating strictly for RBs of a similar/bigger size profile.

2017 NFL Draft Outlook:

Joe Williams is set to embarrass **Kyle Shanahan**. Everyone in the media has bought this story, and they are now expecting big things. Shanahan will not give up easily, he's going to fight this every step of the way giving Williams chance after chance after chance. Eventually, we'll all forget (or remember a lot of fumbles) and move on to something else in a few years. I won't forget...

NFL Outlook:

He'll get a push, may have a moment/game early like **Jeremy Langford** did, suckering fans and an organization, but eventually the reality of disappointment sets in and everyone conveniently forgets Williams and moves on to something else they want to promote. This could be a fast 'bust' and disappearing act if his hands are as bad as I think they might be.

