



## NFL Draft 2015 Scouting Report: WR Devin Funchess, Michigan

*\*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.*

There's two main scouting discussions that take place with Devin Funchess:

- 1) Will his weaker NFL Combine numbers mean he should move back to TE for NFL Draft consideration (he was a TE for his first two seasons at Michigan)?
- 2) Will his weaker NFL Combine numbers even matter, because his size and 'catch radius' makes him a replica of Kelvin Benjamin?

Let me share what I see on tape and in the data on Devin Funchess, and then we'll circle back to these two critical questions...

When I watch tape of Funchess play, I see some positives for the next-level, but mostly I see questions marks and issues.

When I watch Funchess at work the past two college seasons, I see a very smart, technically sound receiver. He runs pretty precise short routes, much like a crafty, veteran TE. I like his two-step burst, then a quick cut away toward the sideline route he used often at Michigan—it creates a nice predictable timing and target window for a QB to rely upon. He's a pretty savvy, heady receiver.

Also, somewhat of a positive (to my surprise), his hands aren't as bad as advertised. So many people ding Funchess for his hands, but they aren't 'that' bad. However, there is one specific issue to discuss with a particular scenario of him catching the ball. To me, Funchess is not like Eric Ebron who near-butchers every throw headed his way, as if someone just tossed him a wet bar of soap. Funchess has reliable hands...except when there is trouble around. In a scrum, Funchess is worked and distracted too easily by a defender. Funchess does not put up much of a 'fight' for the ball. He can get away with that some in college, but it is trouble when projecting for the NFL. Under normal circumstances, Funchess will catch what you throw, and can go up over the top fairly well as needed, but if you need a 'tough catch', Funchess is not your first choice.



MARCH 2, 2015

I never watched any tape of Funchess, and was left marveling at his speed/agility. I would classify him as a slower NFL WR or an average (speed-wise) NFL TE.

Funchess is smart, and goes up to a nice high point for catches, but he is not a primo athlete, he is not high-energy, and he is not a fighter—in my book.

Back to the two questions everyone ponders on Funchess:

1) Will his weaker NFL Combine numbers mean Funchess should move back to TE?

I think not. The reason being—I don't think he has the heart of a TE. He may have the athletic package of a decent TE, but not the heart...not the strength.

As a blocker, he dances with defenders, using his arms to push them away. He is never aggressively lunging forward into would-be tacklers to smash them, to move them away. He just puts his very long arms out and tries to create a barrier for defenders to move around. It won't work well in the NFL. Aggressive, bigger defenders will blow him back into the backfield.

His speed-agility is not off-the-charts for a TE either. He's no 'next Jimmy Graham' just because he played a year at WR plus two years of TE...it's a stretch to call Funchess a TE-hybrid. Funchess would project as a moderate-to-decent speed-agility TE, who is woefully under-sized in frame.

Because Funchess is more finesse than aggression, he also does not do well catching the ball in a crowd, nor does he do a great job 'picking' a defender behind him (a la Antonio Gates) to make tough over-the-middle catches. Besides height, there's not much TE in him.

2) Will his weaker NFL Combine numbers even matter, because his size and 'catch radius' makes him a replica of Kelvin Benjamin?

I don't see this equivocation either.

Our computer models were totally wrong on Kelvin Benjamin. I thought there was no way Benjamin's speed-agility would thrive, even with the big 'catch radius'. As soon as I watched Benjamin in the 2014 preseason, I knew I was very wrong. Benjamin had much better hands than I thought I saw at Florida State, and he played with high energy for Carolina, and just made things happen. Benjamin is aggressive.

Funchess doesn't make things happen, things come to him...or they don't. You can use Funchess situationally as a tall, red-zone target, but even then, I'd worry he'd struggle in tight coverage going after jump balls. He's more finesse, not as physical, aggressive.

Athletically, Funchess is a slower Benjamin with better hops. Mentally, I don't think Funchess is anything like Benjamin.



In the end, Funchess is a nice college player, and has some NFL usefulness, but there is nothing in the data or on tape that shows he has an 'it' factor at WR or TE to star in the NFL.

### Devin Funchess, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

---

Here is one of the more telling statistics on **Devin Funchess**: He moved to WR in 2014, after two years at TE prior. In his opening game of the 2014 season, he posted 3 TDs against FCS opponent Appalachian State. In his next 10 games (his final 10 games of his career), he scored just one TD. Granted, the Michigan QB play was pretty flimsy...but part of it was that Funchess isn't a very dynamic, 'take charge', ultra-talented receiver.

In his last 17 games, against D1 opponents, Funchess has produced just 3 TDs. He's just not making a huge impact...the kind of impact to get you excited about his transition to the next-level.

Funchess wasn't a bad receiver, he caught a solid amount of passes: 3.8 per game in 2013 as a TE, and 5.6 per game as a WR in 2014. Those aren't horrible numbers on a really weak passing team. Funchess can serve you well, he's just not a 'next-level star' prospect.

Physically, his 40-time is trouble for a WR: Funchess ran a 4.70. **Kelvin Benjamin** was considered slow at 4.61. Funchess and Benjamin both measured with similar 10-yard splits and seem to be close in agility measurements (both a little tight, not all that agile). Benjamin has a wider 'catching radius'—he's about one-inch taller, with 2-3+ inches more wingspan. However, Funchess is a much better leaper.

A poor man's **Kelvin Benjamin** is the right call here on Funchess, and not projecting him as a conversion to TE.

The upside of Funchess's measurables could be that he drops 12-pounds to get to 220-pounds and gives up the TE pipe dream. Minus 12-pounds, Funchess may be a 4.6 runner with maybe a 40" vertical...and becomes a little more intriguing as a WR. Still, a 4.6 40-time is still dicey for a 220-pound WR, when Kelvin's running a 4.6 carrying 240-pounds.

More power, more aggression all the way around with Benjamin over Funchess. He's a very poor man's **Kelvin Benjamin**.

### The Historical WR Prospects to Whom Devin Funchess Most Compares Within Our System:

---



MARCH 2, 2015

WR Comps: We were way off on our scouting of **Kelvin Benjamin** (after his rookie campaign), and our computer scouting models are not 'way off' on many players as you look back over time. If Funchess breaks through to success like Benjamin has, then we have to really reconsider how we are devising our formulas for these larger, slower WRs. We think Funchess is not as likely to 'splash' in the NFL because he doesn't show the aggressive nature Benjamin had...or the hands in tight spaces.

I want to slam Funchess a little more, but Benjamin so defied what we saw of him in college, I'm hesitant to declare a moral absolute on Funchess.

TE Comps: This TE list of 'comparables' to Funchess in our system is 'not good'. The prognosis of a 230+ pound TE who runs a 4.6+-4.7+ 40-time is not great, because a needed 'bulk up' is likely to add some drag to the already mediocre speed-agility. The TEs that compare with Funchess are projects who are still trying to develop but are closer to out of the league than impacting in it.

<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>
<b>4.33</b>	2015	Funchess	Devin	Michigan	6	4.2	232	10.87	-1.85	7.82
<b>5.57</b>	2012	Robinson	Gerell	Arizona State	6	3.1	227	10.77	1.55	7.32
<b>4.42</b>	2014	Benjamin	Kelvin	Florida State	6	5.0	240	13.48	-0.75	8.65
<b>0.68</b>	2009	Williams	Jaison	Oregon	6	4.1	237	13.14	-2.00	4.70
<b>1.87</b>	2012	Mason	Rashad	Georgetown	6	5.3	230	10.54	-1.60	4.43
<b>2.30</b>	2014	Hamm	Je'Ron	La-Monroe	6	3.2	236	10.77	-0.77	4.78
<b>2.35</b>	2012	Siller	Justin	Purdue	6	3.8	227	10.27	3.62	5.49

*\*A score of 7.0+ is where we start to take a Big-WR prospect more seriously. A score of 8.50+ is where we see a stronger correlation of a Big-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 Big-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/to 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.*

### **2015 NFL Draft Outlook:**

Funchess is all over the scouting map in Mock Drafts. Some have projected Funchess to go late in the 1st-round, while other show him late in the 2nd-round...and a few in the 3rd-round. Everyone seems to agree he will go within the first two rounds. I think those who liked him the most were banking on that TE option, but it appears the speed at the Combine killed the TE buzz a little, because even switching there—he would not be considered a great athletic conversion. However, a **Kelvin Benjamin** comparison really helps him for his draft status...because there were many Benjamin skeptics of his speed and hands this time last year.

In the end, I see Funchess going between #30-40 overall with the ‘catching radius’ thing being thrown around all day on him.

If I were an NFL GM, and I could get Funchess only if I picked him within the first 64 picks...then I’ll never have him on my team. There is nothing special here to me...not enough to warrant an expensive use of a high pick for him. Funchess will probably be taken higher in 2015 than what **Cody Latimer** or **Jordan Matthews** were last year—which is insane.

### **NFL Outlook:**

Funchess likely gets off to a slow start in the NFL, as he struggles with the physical nature of the next-level. His draft team will have to keep him since he is a high draft pick. He’ll get in game situationally, and might have a moment or two, but in the end he’s not worth his draft status, and kinda bounces around the league as a nice 4th WR, who can start in a pinch.

---

### **Copyright Statement**

*Copyright at date and time signed below by R.C. Fischer*



## 2015 NFL DRAFT SCOUTING REPORT

MARCH 2, 2015

**All rights reserved.** All content is for entertainment purposes only and TFA is not responsible or liable for personal adverse outcomes nor are any game results or forecasting guaranteed. Past results do not predict future outcomes. We are not held liable for any personal losses incurred. We are solely here to produce and provide content for recreational purposes. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, email the publisher at [rcfischer@fantasyfootballmetrics.com](mailto:rcfischer@fantasyfootballmetrics.com)

Signature                     R.C.                     Date                     3/2/2015