



NFL Draft 2017 Scouting Report: WR Leonte Carroo, Rutgers

**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 typically less 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.*

I like **Leonte Carroo** just fine. However, I get the sense that the Draftnik community might love him a lot more. Mainstream draft/football analysts are doing that thing we all hate – they profess how much they like him, and warn us to 'watch out for this guy', and talk about him as if he's a top talent...but then they all fall in line with uniformity and rank him outside the top 10 wide receivers in this class. They talk about him like he's a top five talent to watch out for, and then they rank him #13 or something.

The Draftnik community has a different agenda. Draftniks are on a constant search for sleepers, which usually means any wide receiver prospect that runs with a 4.55 or better 40-time, and is ranked outside the universal top 10 WR prospects is discussed as a 'sleeper'. This usually means there are between 15 and 27 underground 'sleepers' in a given WR draft class year to year. Carroo is falling into the 'sleeper' category for mainstream analysts, and 'beloved sleeper' for Draftniks.

I've liked Carroo the first time I laid eyes on him in pre-scouting for the Senior Bowl. When I saw his NFL Combine measurables and workout, I thought they were solid. I walked away thinking Carroo would be a pretty good, pretty solid 'hands' WR prospect for the NFL, and didn't think much past that.

Over the past couple of weeks, I've probably gotten more questions on Carroo than any other player. I don't know if it's a dissatisfaction with the WR class overall, or if it's just that time in the draft season where hearts and minds turns to finding that hidden draft gem, but Carroo seems to have a lot of draft/sleeper heat on him right now.

After diving deeper into Carroo's draft resume, and looking over his output and watching game tape, I'm back where I started – **Leonte Carroo** is a good wide receiver, and belongs in the NFL. I'm not sure that he's the league's next breakout WR, but he's really good, and depending on where he ends up he could earn nice accolades in the NFL quickly. My mind is kind of stuck on comparing his draft journey to that of **Davante Adams**.



When **Davante Adams** came out of Fresno State, he was that 'great hands', 'Draftnik sleeper' kind of guy. The mainstream analysts all professed love for Adams, but didn't push him as a top 5 or really top 10 WR prospect in the class. Adams had the hands, and the athleticism to become a nice starter in the NFL – and when he went to Green Bay, people were beyond excited for his NFL prospects. Now, here we all are wondering if Green Bay will be drafting wide receivers to replace him just two years later. I also think of **Justin Hardy**, the East Carolina sensation from last year's draft. He was a fantastic 'hands' receiver, a superior prospect to **Leonte Carroo** in most every way, and his draft team (ATL) talks all day long about how great he is, and then they just spend millions of dollars on **Mohamed Sanu** to be their #2 WR, sending **Justin Hardy** to '*intermittently used third wide receiver*' status. Carroo will only be as good as the situation he lands into, just like with Adams and Hardy. They're all guys who could catch 100 passes in an NFL season, in the right circumstance...or they are guys that will barely be heard from for 2–3+ seasons, and be role players most of their career.

In my overall analysis, **Leonte Carroo** is 'good', but there are some question marks...

It's easy to look at Carroo's 2015 season, a campaign that was shortened by injury to just eight games, and then extrapolate what his numbers might've been in 13 games (it trends to 63 catches for 1,446 yards and 16 TDs) and go, "*See this guy would've been amazing in a full season, and be a much higher-rated prospect!*" I get it, and I don't disagree. However, what concerns me more about his terrific 2015 pace was the two times in 2015 Carroo faced top pass coverage – against Ohio State and Maryland.

If you just look at the stat totals, you would see he had a weak game against Ohio State (3 rec. for 55 yards), and a pretty sweet game against Maryland (7 rec. for 183 yards and 1 TD). On the surface, this two-game sample may not sway you. It's not his game output that concerned me, per se. I'm puzzled by the circumstances I saw in each game...

Ohio State and Maryland would have already known all about **Leonte Carroo** from prior seasons' games, plus all the tape they would've acquired within the Big Ten and beyond. Carroo was already putting up really good numbers in games since 2013, and he had already played Maryland and Ohio State in previous seasons before he faced them again in 2015. He was no 'shock' to either of these teams.

Here's what was shocking about those two games from my perspective – Ohio State and Maryland didn't seem to think Carroo was much to worry about after seeing two years' worth of work. In fact, neither team put a huge effort into sending their shutdown corner over to cover him right away. I watched Carroo against Maryland (8th game of his 2015 season) before I watched him against Ohio State (5th game of his 2015 season) from 2015. When I watched him against Maryland, I just thought perhaps the Terrapins coaches were idiots. In the first half of their game, they stuck a freshman corner over on Carroo. They did not put their star DB **Sean Davis** on him. I couldn't believe it. Carroo instantly went to work on the freshman. Once it dawned on Maryland that this was an issue, then you started to see **Sean Davis** cover Carroo a few times later in the first half, and Carroo started becoming a ghost. Davis went right onto Carroo full-time in the second half, and Rutgers just stop throwing to him in the third quarter. Wherever Davis lined up, teams tried to avoid in 2015. Knowing this about Davis,



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Maryland choose not begin this game with Davis on Carroo, which means they're either stupid, or they weren't all that concerned about Carroo.

Carroo did have a long 50+ yard catch against Davis on a bomb. Carroo put a sweet double move on Davis, and launched out to a 10-yard lead heading downfield. **Sean Davis** closed that gap with a full sprint on an underthrown deep ball, and caught up to Carroo and took a swipe at the pass, but missed it – and Carroo made a terrific catch with Davis in his face. Later, Carroo had another 30+ yard catch on Davis, on another bomb, that was really a back-shoulder timing throw. Davis was with him step for step, and it took a meticulous back-shoulder moment to make the play. Later in the game, with Maryland pulling back into the lead, in part because of the shift to Davis on Carroo, with Rutgers driving late to try to win, Davis was all over Carroo, and he took the star receiver away as Maryland completed the come-from-behind shootout. Carroo had two big/long catches against Davis, and people might see that as a win for Carroo and a loss for Davis, but if you watched every play from this game, Davis had no issues with covering Carroo on most every play. Carroo had his chance against an NFL-caliber cornerback, and he became mediocre/solid...not a standout. Carroo displayed great hands, as usual, but he had a hard time getting separation.

I wondered why Maryland would wait so long to put **Sean Davis** on Carroo, but then I watched Carroo against Ohio State right after that...and saw that star OSU CB **Eli Apple** wasn't on Carroo a lot of the time to start the game. You watch Carroo against Ohio State, and you don't see a superstar WR, you just see a pretty good college wide receiver getting locked down by whichever cornerback was covering him. **Eli Apple** had no real issues with him, and CB **Gareon Conley** fared well against Carroo too. When Carroo faced NFL-like coverage in 2015, he wasn't as glorious.

I'm not anti-**Leonte Carroo**, I'm just not as much in the tank as many analytics and Draftnik people are. I know he has terrific hands, and is a solid enough athlete, but he's not a terrific athlete. He has a limited upside, a specific role in the NFL as an over-the-middle, possession wide receiver...and he's not necessarily the physically strongest wide receiver in this draft (14 bench reps). His college style of play has been more downfield, WR1 or WR2 work...but his profile for the NFL is going to be more working the middle and possession as a 3rd WR. I think it will take time for him to transition, and I don't believe there's a guarantee that it's going to work out swimmingly in the end. I think he'll be fine, I think he'll be good, but I'm not 100% sold on the notion that he's a guaranteed producer in the NFL.

His two-game suspension at Rutgers for a domestic violence issue won't help his draft status either.

Leonte Carroo, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

Carroo has a bizarre TD scoring pattern...he either gets no TDs in a game, or 2+. On 10 occasions in his college career, Carroo posted two or more TDs...and three TDs five times. **Amari Cooper**, for example,



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scored two or more TDs in a game eight times...and popped three TDs in a game only once. In 15 of his last 26 games, Carroo did not score a TD...but in the 11 games he did score, he produced 22 TDs.

I'm not even sure how to explain his TD spikes. I will say he scored 38% of his career TDs (11 of 29) in four specific games...against Indiana (2014-15), Tulane, and Norfolk State. He has a lot of TDs versus weak-to-midland teams.

Unlike a **Justin Hardy** or **Ty Montgomery**, guys that come to mind as comparisons with him, Carroo was not a kick or punt returner in college. He seems to be a very good medium-deep WR, and that was about it. You didn't see a ton of bubble screens and heavy catch counts from Carroo at Rutgers. In his last 13 games in college, he had four or fewer catches in the game eight times. Carroo played, ran routes like a #1 WR in college, but we just all assume he'll excel as a workhorse #3 WR for an NFL team?

At the NFL Combine, Carroo measured with middle-of-the-pack speed (40-time), burst (10-yard split), vertical, broad jump, bench press, and hand size. In all the things Carroo participated in, he was in the middle of the rankings...never awful, never great at any one thing. He skipped the agility drills citing his injury. Him skipping the agility drills at the Combine, and then at his Pro Day...it scares me, because he is doing everything else.

The Historical WR Prospects to Whom Leonte Carroo Most Compares Within Our System:

Our computer scouting models liken Carroo to **Davante Adams** and **Jermaine Kearse**, and I love the comparison. I think Carroo is right in between those two guys. He's more so reminds me of Kearse. You love **Jermaine Kearse** as your stable third wide receiver, your sneaky fourth option in the passing game. Reliable hands, solid size, decent athleticism...a guy you really like to have on the squad. What he is not is an NFL superstar that changes an offense. He's great to have on an ensemble, but he's not someone who's going to be an NFL team's #1 or #2 wide receiver doing a ton of damage. He's not that kind of weapon.



<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>
7.486	2016	Carroo	Leonte	Rutgers	5	11.7	211	8.89	6.16	10.08
7.769	2014	Adams	Davante	Fresno St	6	0.7	212	9.41	5.71	8.98
6.538	2012	Kearse	Jermaine	Washington	6	1.1	209	9.73	7.10	8.37
8.342	2010	Jones	Donald	Youngstown St	6	0.3	214	14.55	8.55	8.71
8.630	2010	Cruz	Victor	Massachusetts	5	11.5	206	12.10	7.61	9.75
8.456	2013	Hopkins	DeAndre	Clemson	6	1.0	214	9.26	6.97	10.86
5.053	2014	Thomas	Eric	Troy	6	0.4	216	8.44	2.43	8.26
2.708	2014	Herndon	Javontee	Arkansas	6	0.2	207	12.51	6.86	7.21

**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:

I see Carroo with a lot of third-round draft grades, but I'm also seeing him slip into the second round of a few mock drafts. On rare occasion, you might see him at the very end of the first round of a mock draft. Carroo has some draft momentum right now. I think that momentum will carry him into the second round, somewhere around pick #50–60.



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If I were an NFL GM, I would like to have **Leonte Carroo** on my football team. However, once I checked the price tag in the draft, I'm not as interested. I'm not willing to pay a top 100 price for Carroo. I don't see him as a game changer, as a difference maker. With a top 100 pick, I would still be able to find great talent, and great value at a variety of positions. I don't need to push for a limited-upside wide receiver. I can find guys like Carroo all over the place. **Justin Hardy** last year would be a better version. **Ty Montgomery** is probably a similar/better version of Carroo. **Rishard Matthews** is a bigger better version of Carroo, and the NFL overlooked him in his draft, and for four NFL years, and in recent free agency. Great hands and moderate athleticism has a lot of supply to meet the demand these days. You don't have to chase it in the draft. I know Carroo wouldn't let me down if I drafted him, but I just don't believe he's that special for the top 100.

NFL Outlook:

Like most wide receivers, Carroo's career will be defined by what offense he lands with. If he becomes a Minnesota Viking, you'll forget he's in the NFL after 2–3 years. If he winds up on the Colts, and injury forces him into the lineup quicker, everyone might lose their mind with this savvy rookie catching 4–5 passes a game. My guess is that Carroo is quiet for a year or two, but shows signs of being decent early, and ends up becoming a pretty good possession receiver by year three in the NFL. He won't be considered one of the best at his craft, but he'll be respected. There are a lot of guys hitting the NFL with his skill set, and I don't know that Carroo will be the one that stands out among them.

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