



NFL Draft 2014 Scouting Report: WR Sammy Watkins, Clemson

**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.*

How you feel about **Torrey Smith** is how you should feel about **Sammy Watkins**. I cannot put it any simpler. **Torrey Smith** is actually a smidge taller, a hair faster, slightly longer arms, stronger (via bench press), with slightly better agility, and a much greater vertical. The only thing that Watkins can claim victory over Smith is bigger hands, a little more weight (+7 pounds at the time of their drafts)...and far more incoming hype from the media and fans.

Smith came into the NFL Draft out of 'boring ole' Maryland, where he played on a team with mediocre QBs that limited his output potential. He had a mild draft buzz, and was taken in the late second round (the 5th WR taken...just behind **Titus Young**).

Watkins was seemingly on TV every week, playing with a fringe NFL QB prospect. Watkins had a great final season in college, but when you look at things in context and proportion, so did **Torrey Smith**...Smith arguably better. However, Watkins is hailed as a franchise WR for this draft...a draft that is loaded at WR. He is **Torrey Smith**-lite. However, you would feel about Torrey is generally how you should feel about Watkins. I like **Torrey Smith**. I think he is misused and undervalued, but I also think he is a #2 WR in the NFL, and not the type of WR in this day and age of oversupply at WR that I would draft in the top-10 overall. That would be insane.

Watkins did NOT run the 40-yard dash in the 4.2s at the 2014 NFL Combine, as was hyped by him...and the media. He ran a garden variety 4.4+ time. Almost every WR prospect in the NFL Draft now runs in the 4.4s. That's not that special. Watkins had decent agility measurements, but not even a top-5 agility among smaller WRs. It wouldn't be top-10 among all 2014 WRs. His vertical was below-average. This creates somewhat of a problem.

The Ravens use **Torrey Smith** as more of a deep threat because of his speed, as well as a red-zone option...because of his leaping ability. **Sammy Watkins** doesn't have **Torrey Smith's** leaping ability (as per their NFL Combine's). Watkins is a tiny bit shorter as well. Watkins is more of a nice possession WR,



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a great WR to have on a team. He's not special enough to be a dominant #1, but he'd make a nice #2. Same thing for Smith...only he's forced to be a #1 with Baltimore.

If **Torrey Smith** were on a different team, he might be a superstar (in output)...or just a great #2 like a **Roddy White** or **Victor Cruz** (back when **Hakeem Nicks** was a classic #1). Smith is forced to be a #1, and with #1 CB attention and double-teams, he is very good, but not a superstar in anyone's eyes. The same will be true of **Sammy Watkins**. You cannot believe that a 6'0"+, 211-pound WR with no vertical who runs a generic 4.4+ 40-time is going to redefine an offense as a #1 WR...do you?

College Football is producing six-foot WRs with 4.4+ speed by the bunches. It's no longer that rare a commodity. It has NFL value for sure, but not top 5-10 overall draft pick value.

I think **Sammy Watkins** is a good-great WR prospect. He belongs. He might thrive if he lands in a New Orleans for an example. He may toil away in "Who Cares-ville" if he lands on the NY Jets or Oakland Raiders. Watkins has great hands, NFL speed, and gives a terrific effort on the field. I want him on my team...but I'm not paying a top-10, or top-20 pick for it...are you nuts?

I am not paying a 1st-round price for it either. Why? Everyone is running around saying this is the deepest WR class ever. I am with the masses...this a very deep class. The shift of young people from RB to WR over the past several years is really starting to "flood the market" with WR talent. I see 5-10 WRs in this draft that are of a high quality...and about five similarly sized/athletically gifted WRs who look just like Watkins...only they weren't afforded the same hype train. Why pay an 'A+' price for a 'B+' talent in a draft flooded with 'B+' WR talent?

Why pay a steeper price for a WR who was suspended a two years ago due to an arrest for possession of marijuana (which is OK in some states now), but also with Vyvanse and Adderall (attention deficit medications)? What if Watkins buckles under the stresses of the NFL? I say that from a standpoint of, "Will I pay a butt load of money, and pay a lot of money to a WR that I can find similar to (or close) in every round of this draft?"

Watkins will not be a bust. He is a solid to good, possibly great WR. My issue is: Is he worth it? Is any "small" WR worth it anymore? Are you going to pass on a potential franchise player like **Jadeveon Clowney** or **Aaron Donald** or any one of the top O-Tackles...for a six-foot WR who runs a 4.4+ with no vertical?

It may seem like I am down on Watkins; thrashing him even. I don't mean to because he is a really good WR, but his hype is way ahead of his data.



Sammy Watkins, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

The following slightly scares me on **Sammy Watkins** (and keep in mind: same QB, same offense)...

7.8 rec., 112.6 yards, 0.92 TDs per game = **Watkins** (13 games in 2013)

6.3 rec., 108.0 yards, 1.38 TDs per game = **DeAndre Hopkins** (13 games in 2012)

DeAndre Hopkins was almost an identical size, and about the same athleticism. He is very good. He is not a high-end game-changer on his own. Hopkins is not big enough to a major red-zone threat. He is not so athletic that he destroys coverage out of the slot. He is just a really solid NFL WR. What if Watkins is another version of Hopkins...is that worth a top-5 pick?

Some people compare Watkins on a level with the top 2011 WRs of **Julio Jones** and **A.J. Green**. First, off that is an insult to **Julio Jones**. Julio is a poor man's **Calvin Johnson**. Watkins is a bankrupt version of Julio. Jones is much taller, much faster and more agile...it's not even worth getting into. It's not close leave it at that.

There are more folks that do an **A.J. Green** comp with Watkins. I think because both are kinda skinnier, great college WRs. It is "close, but no cigar." Athletically, they are almost identical...similar 40-time, same agility, limited verticals, thinner-framed, great hands. There is one big difference: **A.J. Green** is 3.0" taller than Watkins and has longer arms by two inches. When Green reaches up over a DB, he has five extra inches of extra territory to cover...which is one of the reasons why he is an awesome NFL red-zone threat, whereas Watkins projects to be buried/blanketed behind the new-style, bigger CBs.

The Historical WR Prospects to Whom Sammy Watkins Most Compares Within Our System:

We already did the Torrey v. Sammy thing above. You see **Justin Blackmon** rated poorly as a "small-WR" below. Blackmon fits much better as a "big-WR," and he plays more in that physical (vs. speed) style. Watkins is more a threat in a short game, and that's the way he was used (heavily) in college.

You probably thought we would wrap this up with a mediocre grade on Watkins. Not true. He has a passing grade, and an NFL team will be fortunate to have him. He's just not our top rated "Small-WR." He may not be in our top-5 "Small-WRs" by draft day, as there are several quality WRs his size who graded near him. He's going to be fine; he's just not ultra 'special' in this draft is all.



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| <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 Strgth Metric</u> | <u>Speed Agility Metric</u> | <u>Hands Metric</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 9.23 | 2014 | Watkins | Sammy | Clemson | 6 | 0.6 | 211 | 10.99 | 9.32 | 10.36 |
| 10.99 | 2011 | Smith | Torrey | Maryland | 6 | 0.9 | 204 | 11.91 | 12.70 | 8.51 |
| 5.15 | 2012 | Blackmon | Justin | Oklahoma St | 6 | 1.1 | 207 | 10.14 | 4.54 | 10.22 |
| 6.87 | 2008 | Caldwell | Andre | Florida | 6 | 0.3 | 204 | 9.77 | 14.13 | 6.50 |
| 3.92 | 2013 | Woods | Robert | USC | 6 | 0.4 | 201 | 8.27 | 7.11 | 8.96 |
| 7.76 | 2013 | Spadola | Ryan | Lehigh | 6 | 1.2 | 204 | 8.85 | 12.92 | 8.96 |

*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.

2014 NFL Draft Outlook:

It doesn't matter if I am down on Watkins value-wise, and think it is ludicrous to waste a high draft pick on him. The NFL draft analysts are already hyping him to the moon, and the NFL teams typically follow suit. If the Rams can burn a high draft pick on **Tavon Austin**, then someone will do the same with the better WR prospect, and similarly hyped **Sammy Watkins**. I expect he will go top-10 overall...and it won't be a bad pick, because Watkins is a player. It's what they could have taken instead, but didn't, that will judge this draft selection...and the similar types of WRs they could have taken later/cheaper.



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If I were an NFL GM, and in need of a smaller-slot WR-type, I'd love to have Watkins, but again, I am not paying that high price. I think 2012 4th-round pick WR **Josh Boyce** is every bit as good, and better, a WR than Watkins. I wouldn't yield a 1st-round for any non 6'2"+ WR...unless he was built like **Pierre Garcon** or **Hakeem Nicks** and ran like **Dri Archer**.

NFL Outlook:

My one caution on Watkins for the NFL: I hope for his sake that he is taken by a team and is not put out of position like **Torrey Smith** has been. If Watkins is taken to be "the man" for like the St. Louis Rams...it's not going to be as great as if he were opposite **Calvin Johnson** in Detroit. Watkins can be a good-great #2. Everything with Watkins (and every smaller WR) comes down to what team, what offense, and what QB they land with in projecting their NFL output.

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Signature _____

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.C." It is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and a smaller "C" next to it.

Date 2/26/2014