NFL Draft 2018 Scouting Report: WR Allen Lazard, Iowa State

*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.

Everyone in scouting who watches **Allen Lazard** play says the same thing…*he kinda reminds me of **Mike Evans**…*

…and then they just move on to the next topic or chase some other butterfly.

Why is a WR prospect so consistently compared to **Mike Evans** such a shoulder shrug for the 2018 NFL Draft?

Let's set the stage by answering the question: how much (or not) **Allen Lazard** is like **Mike Evans** – because his entire NFL future projection can be seen by how Evans-like (or not) he is…

Measurables comparison:

6'4.5"/227, 32.3" arms, 9.8" hands, 4.55 40-yd, 38" vert., 7.11 three-cone = Lazard/2018

6'4.6"/231, 35.1" arms, 9.6" hands, 4.53 40-yd., 37" vert., 7.08 three-cone = Evans/2014

Evans and Lazard are almost the same/identically constructed WR prospect except Evans has freakishly long arms and Lazard has plain old 'long arms'. Otherwise, they're near identical.

In their best seasons in college (both in 13 game seasons):

71 rec., 941 yards, 10 TDs = Lazard/2017

69 rec., 1,394 yards, 12 TDs = Evans/2013

Give the edge to Evans, but also consider that **Mike Evans** played in a high-powered offense with college-great **Johnny Manziel** throwing to him. Lazard accomplished his numbers with multiple (not

good) QB starters in 2017, none of them considered close to a real draft prospect. What might have happened had Lazard been dropped into the same offense as **Mike Evans**…or vice-versa?

What might have happened had Lazard played for Oklahoma or Alabama instead of Iowa State? Oddly, I think some of the lack of enthusiasm is an underlying bias against Iowa State – *it just doesn't seem like great offensive weapons could come from there, right*? It's not as exciting as 'USC' or 'Clemson'. If Lazard went to a 'name' school…he'd a top 3-5 WR prospect for this draft instead of a fringe top 10.

The knock I see time and time again on Lazard is…*well, he's too slow*. He ran as fast as **Mike Evans** at their Combines. He has a better 10-yard time/burst (measured) than Evans does. How is he deemed slow once the results are in? Is it the reverse of Mike Mayock's excuse for bad speed time…"*He's quicker than fast*." Maybe, Lazard is 'slower than fast'?

I think Lazard looks like he's moving slower than he is on tape because he runs effortlessly with big strides. He's isn't working with small steps/choppy feet and looking frenetic/fleet of foot. He is a smooth runner and effortless…interpreted as 'slow' by one person early in the scouting process and repeated by thousands in football analysis after. We can all see the speed-agility times…we know he's not slow. Unless **Mike Evans** is now *too slow* to be a good NFL prospect.

I don't know how we, as a football studying collective, just blow right past a 6'4"+/227 guy who was a highly thought of/four-star high school recruit – was the Iowa H.S. Offensive Player of the Year in 2013, the year prior he was the state's Defensive Player of the Year. He moves to the Big 12 and is a 1st and 2nd-team WR there. He has good numbers…great considering his offense. He has size, athleticism, production, awards and yet no one cares.

Can he play? I saw a legit big-man WR for the NFL on tape. He has a lot of **Mike Evans** in him – he positions his body wonderfully, shielding off defenders behind him…like a power forward posting up in basketball. He has great concentration on passes – makes a lot of catches with defenders hanging on his back, or adjusting to miss-thrown balls (which he had a lot of), and high pointing over defenders. He gets open, positions his body well, and makes catches…what else do you want from a 6'4"+/227 guy?

I have liked what I've seen every time I've watched Lazard's tape – pre-Senior Bowl, pre-Combine and an extended study for this full report. At one point, early on…I thought he might be the best WR prospect in this draft in my first go-round with Senior Bowl WR prospects. He looks the same against Oklahoma and Iowa as he does against bad defenses like Memphis and Baylor. He's very subtly good…and even I kept pushing off doing his full study off because it just seemed like he was kinda good but not great. I think he's better than good…not sure about great, but I wouldn't rule it out.

Lazard gives you a top size-athleticism-production profile among the WRs in this draft. He has good-to-great hands. He's a solid/willing blocker…even to the point he's being mentioned as a possible TE convert. He was his team's co-captain as a junior. There are all these positives and yet it seems like a yawn…and I really think the 'Iowa State' label is clouding all our judgments in some way.

Allen Lazard, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

Caught at least one pass in every game he played in college – 48 games.

I would argue that Oklahoma, Iowa, and Kansas State were probably the toughest defensive teams Lazard faced every season. From 2015-2017, his numbers against those three teams:

5.7 rec., 82.0 yards, 0.7 TDs per game = vs. Oklahoma (2015-2017)

6.7 rec., 68.3 yards, 0.7 TDs per game = vs. Iowa (2015-2017)

6.3 rec., 105.7 yards, 0.7 TDs per game = vs. K-State (2015-2017)

In his final three seasons, Lazard never went more than three games without scoring a TD.

He made it to one bowl game in 4 seasons at ISU…2017 vs. Memphis – 10 catches, 142 yards, and 1 TD.

Lazard was the model of consistency on a very inconsistent college team/offense.

2018 NFL Combine measurables…

6'4.5"/227, 9.75" hands, 32.25" arms

4.55 40-time, 1.58 10-yard, Pro Day: 4.33 shuttle, 7.11 three-cone

17 bench press reps, 38" vertical, 10'2" broad jump

The Historical WR Prospects to Whom Allen Lazard Most Compares Within Our System:

It's no surprise that **Mike Evans** is the top comp for Lazard…that's purely The Computer's call, not my will, but its. **Marques Colston** is a nice comp as well. It feels like Evans is just so much better than Lazard…but the more I watch and look at the data – I'm beginning to wonder how much of that is Iowa State totally out of the limelight and Evans in the eye of CFB's best story in 2013…**Johnny Manziel**?

WR Score	Draft Yr	Last	First	College	H	H	W	Power Strngth Metric	Speed Agility Metric	Hands Metric
8.182	2018	Lazard	Allen	Iowa State	6	4.5	227	10.24	2.96	8.69
9.160	2014	Evans	Michael	Texas A&M	6	4.6	231	10.56	4.35	7.53
8.085	2006	Colston	Marques	Hofstra	6	4.6	224	8.69	5.90	7.15
5.311	2005	Williams	Mike	USC	6	4.6	229	10.92	4.80	7.20
6.680	2012	Rosario	Nelson	UCLA	6	5.0	221	7.75	3.31	9.84
10.165	2006	Marshall	Brandon	C. Florida	6	4.5	229	11.17	5.91	8.48
7.908	2011	Baldwin	Jonathan	Pittsburgh	6	4.4	228	11.30	4.90	7.77

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.

2018 NFL Draft Outlook:

Despite all the **Mike Evans** comps…Lazard continues to draw 4th+ round projections for the 2018 NFL Draft. I wouldn't be shocked if he slipped into the top 100 but I wouldn't bet a lot of money on it. He'll go between #90-125, I assume.

If I were an NFL GM, I'd be eyeballing Lazard as one of the steals of the draft if he fell into the 4th round. Top 50 skills and body at a 100+ pick price.

NFL Outlook:

There's a bias against Lazard at this stage of the draft reporting…which means the NFL will adopt the same mindset as he joins their organization. I see Lazard getting asked about moving to tight end by the media. It's possible…and that should only enhance his draft status – but it's asked/meant to be a knock on his *'boring'/not good enough* WR skills. Lazard is getting a raw deal in this draft by the analysts and reporters.

If Lazard can find a team who is ready to push him as a big body weapon at WR, Lazard will be one of the best WRs to come from this draft…or best receiving tight ends to convert.