



## NFL Draft 2013 Scouting Report: RB Le'Veon Bell, Michigan State

*\*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.*

**Le'Veon Bell** should be considered among the top-5 RBs in the 2013 NFL Draft at this point in the process. Bell is a 6'1"+, 230+ monster of a RB, who has a very solid 40-yard dash time (4.60) for his size, but also has sensational agility measurements for a man with his massive 230+ pound frame. Prior to the NFL Combine, we would see Bell sitting among the top-10 RB prospects in mainstream websites, but more towards the back end of the list. Post-NFL Combine, Bell is moving up into the top-5...as he should be.

Bell rushed for 1,793 yards (leading the Big-10 in rushing) and punched in 12 rushing TDs last year for Michigan State. Bell has rushed for double-digit TDs in each of the past two seasons, which makes sense because he may be the single best goal line, short-yardage RB prospect in this draft. Bell is like a poor man's **Michael Turner** (but taller), or a quicker, less pugilistic version of **LeGarrette Blount**. Among the higher rated names in this RB class, there is no prospect more massive in overall size, mixed with nimble feet, than Bell.

Many people have Bell's Big-10 cohort, Wisconsin's **Montee Ball** rated higher than Bell. We think there is an argument to be made that Bell is the superior NFL prospect. Not that Montee isn't a fine college RB, who had a surreal 33 rushing TDs in 2011 and 22 more TDs in 2012, but Ball measured below-average in speed at the NFL Combine (4.66 40-time) with a very underwhelming bench press strength (15 reps). Le'Veon is 15-20 pounds heavier, with a much higher bench press strength (24 reps), faster straight-line speed (4.60 in the 40-yard) and better agility. Even if all the measurements were identical for speed-strength-agility, I will take the RB who is doing all that with a 230+ pound frame versus the one at 215-pounds.

When I watch Bell on tape, I see what I would expect looking at the metrics -- a physically imposing runner, who has very nimble feet for his size. What I did not expect to see is all the displays of his athleticism given his size. The data says tall, lumbering RB. The tape shows a RB that is often spinning past and leaping over would be tacklers. His athleticism will surprise you.

Bell also has decent hands for a RB; he is not just a short-yardage specialist. Bell averaged 2.5 receptions per game last season, and had eight catches in a game versus Ohio State as well.



Given Bell's size and athleticism, it is not beyond arguing whether he may be the single best RB prospect in the 2013 NFL Draft. Each year, there are several 200-215 pound college RB prospects who rushed for 1,000+ yards and 10+ TDs in their final season...they almost grow on trees. There are rarely legit NFL RB prospects that are 230+ pounds with NFL speed-agility-power measurables. Bell is in that class, and should be debated among the top RB prospects for this draft.

### Le'Veon Bell, Through the Lens of Our RB Scouting Algorithm:

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Before we coronate Bell as the best RB prospect for 2013...there is an issue. Our statistical analysis shows a troubling flaw with Bell's on-field performance in 2012, and to some degree a similar issue in 2011.

In 2012, our computer would argue that Bell played five games against high-caliber teams/players/defenses (Notre Dame, Ohio State, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Nebraska). Excluding the Nebraska game for a moment (36 carries for 188 yards and 2 TDs), in the other four games, Bell averaged a flimsy 3.2 yards per carry, 66.8 rushing yards per-game with 0.00 rushing TDs. Against the better teams on his schedule, Bell was reduced to mediocre. Some of that may have been the awful overall passing game of Michigan State in 2012, but we saw the same kind of performance issues in 2011. Against Notre Dame, Ohio State, Michigan, Wisconsin (2x) and Georgia, Bell averaged only 56.3 rushing yards per game, but did have a better run at 5.0 yards per carry and 0.50 rushing TDs per game.

The lower performance against more NFL-sized defenses is a semi-troubling slam on Bell, but it may be "reaching" just a little bit...and has more to do with Bell being the Spartans solo weapon in 2012, and splitting time in 2011 with NFL RB **Edwin Baker**. His 44 carries for 201 rushing yards and 2 TD performance opening day 2012 against Boise State and his 36 carries for 188 rushing yards and 2 TDs versus Nebraska in 2012 are hard to overlook...as are his overall three 200+ rushing yard performances in 2012 (vs. Boise State, Eastern Michigan, Minnesota).

Some of the sluggish performances against top teams will hold Bell's overall scouting down for us, but he is definitely a legit top RB prospect, with our computer on the fence on committing to Bell as the best RB...but he is worthy of the discussion.



### The Historical RB Prospects to Whom Le'Veon Bell Most Compares Within Our System:

**Le'Veon Bell** probably profiles as a split between **Rashard Jennings** and **LeGarrette Blount**. Bell is taller, with quick feet like Jennings, but has more of the overall size/frame of Blount (but Bell has slimmed down recently).

There are indications of Bell as a **Mikel Leshoure** type of prospect...and Leshoure rated very highly for us in 2011, but remember that Leshoure was a high draft pick, and then suffered a major injury in his first NFL training camp and hasn't been the same since. We all might have a different vibe on Leshoure had that rookie year injury (and cannabis use issues) caused him to somewhat stumble out of the gates for his NFL career.

Bell is an interesting physical specimen -- he could shed 5-10 pounds and still be very "big," but maybe even faster/quicker. He could also bump up 10-15 more pounds and be a dynamic FB/H-back, except that would not be glamorous/lucrative for him in the NFL. There are a few usage options with Bell, notwithstanding a move to defense as an outside linebacker if all else fails.

RB Grade	Last	First	College	Yr	H	H	W	Speed Metric	Agility Metric	Speed Metric	Hands Metric
7.98	Bell	Le'Veon	Michigan St	2013	6	1.3	230	2.12	10.43	10.30	11.10
7.23	Jennings	Rashard	Liberty	2009	6	1.0	231	1.20	10.80	12.08	9.66
7.40	Allen	Anthony	Ga Tech	2011	6	0.6	228	5.58	13.04	9.28	3.65
8.90	Blount	LeGarrette	Oregon	2010	6	0.4	241	1.44	11.34	7.40	3.05
10.45	Leshoure	Mikel	Illinois	2011	5	11.5	227	6.18	10.09	8.53	7.09

*\*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 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 2016. 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*



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*it/thrive 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 2016. Our new formula/rating that attempts to classify and quantify a 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.*

### **2013 NFL Draft Outlook:**

**Le'Veon Bell** is moving into the top-5 RB prospects in the mainstream, post-NFL Combine. The typical grade on Bell ranges from 3rd to 4th-round draft pick. That is probably fair value. A team with a more burning RB need could pop him in the late 2nd or early 3rd-round. His size and athleticism combination is too much to ignore, and he will not be undervalued in this draft because of it.

If I were advising an NFL franchise for the draft, Bell would be on my short list of RB prospects to consider making a play for. Depending upon my team's desperation for a RB, and what had dropped off the board already, I could see overspending a bit to reach for Bell. I hate to overpay for anything, especially a RB, but Bell falls in that "overspend" category depending upon team need and what's left available across the draft board. There are not many RB prospects in history measuring with the size-speed-agility-strength combination like Bell.

### **NFL Outlook:**

Bell will likely wind up as part of a RB tandem in the NFL...with Bell being the power-RB, and working with a speedster, change-of-pace RB. Bell's NFL career performance will be tied to how much opportunity he gets, depending upon the workload. He could land in a great situation like **Alfred Morris**, play right away, and have people falling all over themselves about how great he is. Or he could wind up like **Bernard Pierce**, a great prospect who is buried behind **Ray Rice** for the first season (or more).



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Bell is a worthy NFL RB, with an upside depending upon workload. However, he is grading short of being tagged as a for-sure superstar or "franchise" RB at the next level, but there are a few indicators that he could be more of a main-carry superstar.

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