



NFL Draft 2013 Scouting Report: TE Vance McDonald, Rice

**Our TE 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.*

***Our TE formulas had some slight changes in the offseason—an adjustment to better identify and value TE prospects that are smaller physically and are primed for the era ahead...the era of Jordan Reed and Delanie Walker-type TEs. Our historical grades will have changed some on various prospects as well, to show their grades by comparison.*

One could make the argument that in this "down" year for TE prospects, the best all-around TE prospect is Rice's **Vance McDonald**.

Tyler Eifert is the best receiving weapon in the 2013 TE draft class...by far. McDonald's teammate **Luke Willson** is arguably the most athletic TE in this draft class. In an all-around sense (receiving, size, blocking ability, athleticism), McDonald is our top choice. Which then allows for the question of if you could only pick one, which TE would you pick in 2013 -- Eifert or McDonald? **We exclude **Zach Ertz** from this discussion as our computers see Ertz as a poor man's/watered-down version of Eifert.*

The difference between the two (Eifert and McDonald) is a debate between what you are looking for in an NFL TE. Eifert is the top receiving weapon of a TE in this class. Eifert is 6'6" tall, 250-pounds, and very nimble for his size. He is the type of WR who can catch 100+ passes a year in an up-tempo offense, and will be a nightmare for DBs and LBs alike to try to maintain coverage on.

McDonald is a very good receiver, but not in the class of Eifert. McDonald is two inches shorter, but 17-pounds thicker. He may be shorter than Eifert, but he has an inch longer arm-length and an inch bigger hand-size. The strength/bench press comparison between the two...is not really much of a comparison. McDonald is not only 17-pounds thicker, but he has a "best in class" (among top TEs) 31 reps in the bench press, and Eifert a more WR-like 18. McDonald profiles as a TE who can stay on the field on both running and passing downs. Eifert may be a bit of a liability in the running game, and at minimum he is inferior to McDonald in the run game.

In a crude sense, we could say that **Tyler Eifert** is a finely tuned sports car, and **Vance McDonald** is a premium pick-up truck. Whichever you value most for your NFL franchise is your top TE for 2013.

When I watched McDonald on tape, it was interesting. There were a few games in which McDonald was a TE coming across as a WR of sorts, and taking "pistol" offense type hand-offs. On a few occasions, McDonald was lined up as a fullback, and other times like a slot WR. McDonald was lined up all over,



which lends to his multifaceted dynamic. That cross functionality, and overall athletic package may lead to McDonald as a shock pick as the first TE taken in the 2013 NFL Draft.

Vance McDonald, Through the Lens of Our TE Scouting Algorithm:

In his peak season of 2010, McDonald had 28 catches for 396 yards and 8 TDs...a decent year in a very flimsy Rice passing game. On the 2010 season, 40% of the team's passing TDs were caught by McDonald...the kicker to that was that he played in only eight games that year -- he averaged a TD per-game in that sophomore season. He had three TDs in a game against Tulane, and two in a game against UTEP that season.

In 2011 and 2012, the Rice passing game declined further in output and efficiency...and with that McDonald's statistical output melted as well. However, McDonald did have a two game stretch in 2012 where he had seven catches in a game (vs. SMU) and nine catches against UTEP the following week.

Tyler Eifert scored 11 TDs in 33 career games -- for an average of a TD for every 3.0 games played.

In 35 career games for McDonald, he scored 15 TDs for every 2.3 games played in his career.

Eifert had six games where he had 80 or more yards in a game, McDonald did it five times. McDonald had two career 100+ yard games (and one 99-yard game), Eifert never recorded a game with 100+ yards in his four years of play for Notre Dame.

McDonald's receiving numbers, surprisingly, hold up well when compared to Eifert. The problem is that Rice University does not have its own national television network boosting its players draft awareness.

Athletically, McDonald is not as graceful as TE teammate **Luke Willson**, but in this weak 2013 class, McDonald is one of the five most athletic TEs in the class. Factor in physical size and bench press strength, and you could argue that McDonald is the best overall NFL body among this 2013 TE class.

The Historical TE Prospects to Whom Vance McDonald Most Compares Within Our System:

Vance McDonald as a second-coming of **Jason Witten** would not be a shock to me after leafing through his data. McDonald's receiving totals in college do not seem like a second-coming of a great receiving TE, but we have to keep in mind that Rice has a weak passing game...and a lot of great receiving weapons



vying for touches (all underutilized, in my opinion). McDonald is a shorter, stronger **Jason Witten**...potentially.

Worst case, McDonald is a **Visanthe Shiancoe**-like TE -- solid, but not a superstar in his prime.

| <u>TE Grade</u> | <u>Last</u> | <u>First</u> | <u>Yr</u> | <u>College</u> | <u>H</u> | <u>H</u> | <u>W</u> | <u>Spd-Agil Metric</u> | <u>Strgth Blxing Metric</u> | <u>Hands Metric</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|----------------|----------|----------|----------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 8.67 | McDonald | Vance | 2013 | Rice | 6 | 4.1 | 267 | 5.79 | 13.51 | 8.63 |
| 7.73 | Witten | Jason | 2003 | Tennessee | 6 | 5.6 | 264 | 6.21 | 10.53 | 8.26 |
| 6.72 | Watson | Ben | 2004 | Georgia | 6 | 3.4 | 258 | 5.28 | 11.89 | 6.25 |
| 5.89 | Shiancoe | Visanthe | 2003 | Morgan State | 6 | 4.3 | 251 | 6.57 | 8.42 | 7.89 |
| 4.98 | Stocker | Luke | 2011 | Tennessee | 6 | 4.6 | 258 | 5.99 | 9.93 | 5.64 |
| 4.64 | Gronkowski | Daniel | 2009 | Maryland | 6 | 5.4 | 255 | 4.12 | 8.18 | 5.80 |
| 4.70 | Stevens | Craig | 2008 | California | 6 | 3.2 | 254 | 7.69 | 10.04 | 5.42 |

**A score of 7.0+ is where we start to take a TE prospect more seriously. A score of 8.50+ is where we see a stronger correlation of TEs 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 TE.*

All of the TE ratings are based on a 0–10 scale, but a player can score negative, or above a 10.0 in certain instances.

“Speed-Agility Metric” = 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.

“Power-Strength Metric” = 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.

“Hands Metric” = 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 project the combination of data for receiving success at the next level.

2013 NFL Draft Outlook:

I'm seeing **Vance McDonald** listed between the 4th and 6th best TE for most national draft websites, and with that a late 2nd or 3rd-round draft projection. I think given this weaker TE class, and McDonald's

