# NFL Draft 2018 Scouting Report: OLB Dorian O'Daniel, Clemson

*Our LB 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.*

One of the late risers for me as the draft study process went on…**Dorian O'Daniel**. Possibly, the best inside linebacker prospect in the draft. He's listed as an OLB for most scouting services but has the potential to bulk up and play middle linebacker or slim down and move to safety or SAF/LB hybrid…or just stay as an OLB (like him more as a 4-3 OLB).

All I want to say about O'Daniel is, from my tape scouting – I don't know if any linebacker (or any player period) moves as gracefully side-to-side as O'Daniel does. It's a beautiful thing because it's such a powerful feature/asset of his. He's 223 pounds and posted a 6.64 three-cone. The amount of 220+ pound defensive prospects at OLB or SAF that ran under a 6.70 three-cone is a 'count on one hand' group of the last decade. It doesn't automatically mean he's a future star but do note his east-west ability is elite…it's special.

Sometimes the measurables and the tape on a prospect can seem to be at odds, but not with O'Daniel. You sit and watch his game tape and you just see him floating around on the field with his great, natural footwork. The advantage being – he can get out of the way or shed blockers with the best of them. When he rushes the passer, he can put on moves that leave offensive tackles breaking their ankles. He can get sucked in for a step on a play action but then bounce back into coverage/recover quicker than most any defender. He has a rare skillset.

This skillset made Clemson use him as a jack of all trades. It's hard to compare him to other prospects at one specific position because on one play O'Daniel would be playing traditional inside linebacker…playing the run and prepared to drop into coverage. The next moment, and too many of his moments for me, he seemed to be him rushing off the edge like a pass rusher. I like him as a surprise attack pass rusher but not an obvious, lined up to go get the QB pass rusher. I think all the backfield rushing took away his more usefulness patrolling the middle of the field.

In the NFL, he's more likely to be a linebacker or safety and not a purposed pass rusher at all.

People have compared him to **Telvin Smith**, another middle of the draft linebacker pick, who tested very athletic pre-draft but didn't seem like a traditional linebacker for the NFL because he didn't look the part – then he became a dominating inside linebacker for Jacksonville and became a Pro Bowl performer. I could see a path to **Telvin Smith** very easily for O'Daniel.

However it is that an NFL team wants to use him, O'Daniel is going to potentially star at the position. He has such gifted feet and is a pretty smart, instinctual player. He's a high-character prospect and dedicated worker – was a Clemson permanent team captain. He represents himself very well in interviews. He should have been drafted much higher – if people like **Minkah Fitzpatrick** for his multiple uses…O'Daniel has multiple usages and is arguably a better football player.

## Dorian O'Daniel, Through the Lens of Our OLB Scouting Algorithm:

O'Daniel tends to make things happen…2 interceptions last season, both returned for TDs. 11.5 TFLs and 5.0 sacks, lining up all over the field for Clemson. He also defended 5 passes last season and recovered 2 fumbles. His numbers show his versatility and they somewhat hide/undersell how good he is because he couldn't rack numbers doing ONE thing. The power of his production was the diversity of it, not the raw totals in any one category…and that's hard to see using analytics and wanting to compare apples-to-apples on all prospects labeled at a certain position.

O'Daniel had four 10+ tackle games in 2017. Had seven games with 4 or fewer tackles too…which was him more playing a different role (coverage or blitzer) in those lower tackle games a lot of the time. He either had at least one TFL, and/or created at least one turnover, and/or defended at least 1 pass in 20 of his final 27 college games.

***NFL Combine measurables…***

6'0.5"/223, 9.0 hands, 31.13" arms

4.16 40-time, 1.64 10-yard, 4.07 shuttle, 6.64 three-cone

21 bench reps, 32.0 vertical, 9'11 broad jump

*Compared to Telvin Smith:*

6'3"/218, 4.52 40-time, 1.57 10-yd, 16 bench reps, 7.04 three-cone = Smith

6'1"/223, 4.61 40-time, 1.64 10-yd, 23 bench reps, 6.64 three-cone = O'Daniel

*Best season stats comparison…*

88 tackles, 11.5 TFLs, 5.0 sacks, 2 INTs, 2 TDs, 5 PDs = O'Daniel

90 tackles,   9.5 TFLs, 2.0 sacks, 3 INTs, 2 TDs, 4 PDs = Smith

## The Historical OLB Prospects to Whom Dorian O'Daniel Most Compares Within Our System:

The good news – there's really almost no one like O'Daniel to compare him to. Dorian is kinda 'one of a kind'.

The bad news is – anyone close to the profile is an NFL no name or never made it.

| OLB Grade | Last | First | Draft Yr | College | H | H | W | Tackle Strgth Metric | Spd Agil Metric | Pass Rush Metric |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8.686 | O'Daniel | Dorian | 2018 | Clemson | 6 | 0.5 | 223 | 7.23 | 11.90 | 10.13 |
| 5.116 | Holland | Joe | 2012 | Purdue | 6 | 1.0 | 231 | 7.92 | 9.96 | 9.43 |
| 3.573 | Bullitt | Terrance | 2014 | Texas Tech | 6 | 2.4 | 226 | 7.03 | 8.88 | 7.95 |
| 4.400 | Hadley | Spencer | 2014 | BYU | 6 | 0.7 | 228 | 5.49 | 8.53 | 7.93 |
| 4.465 | Bello | B.J. | 2017 | Illinois St | 6 | 2.0 | 228 | 5.22 | 8.95 | 7.64 |

*\*A score of **8.00**+ is where we see a stronger correlation of LBs 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 NFL elite LB.*

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

*Tackle-Strength Metrics = A combination of several physical and performance measurements. An attempt to classify the LB prospect's ability to stop the run, as well as a gauge of how physical the player is and the likelihood of higher tackle counts in the NFL. All based on profiles of LBs historically.*

*Speed-Agility Metrics = A combination of several speed, agility, and size measurements...as well as game performance data to profile a LB for speed/agility based on LBs historically. A unique measuring system to look for LBs that profile for quickness, pass-coverage ability, and general ability to cover more ground.*

*Pass Rush Metrics = A combination of the physical measurements, but also proven on-field ability to get to the QB/backfield in college.*

### 2018 NFL Draft Outlook:

At the time of this writing, O'Daniel had already been drafted by the KC Chiefs with pick #100…a very good landing spot for him to play right away. I would have projected him to go in the #75-110 range but thought he might go closer to #75.

If I were an NFL GM, I would have been interested in pulling the trigger early third round. We had him as a 1st-round draft grade. They don't make defenders like this too often.

### NFL Outlook:

I think O'Daniel will be starting late in his rookie season or to begin 2019 season. He may need a year of adjustment focusing on one position if that's the way KC is going to play it. I think the floor is O'Daniel is a good player in the NFL, a starter, and makes a special teams impact early in his career. The upside is you get a Pro Bowl defender in 3-4 seasons. A **Telvin Smith** like patroller of the middle.