NFL Draft 2014 Scouting Report: OLB Ryan Shazier, Ohio St.

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.

I have to be honest. I am totally smitten with **Ryan Shazier**. Outside of Pitt DT **Aaron Donald**, this is the best football prospect that I've seen so far in the 2014 process. When I say 'best', I mean best for the NFL...a difference-maker. The type of player who stands out on paper and on film more than others. My worn-out phrase for these type of prospects is, "The **Calvin Johnson** of _____ (fill-in the position)." By that, I mean a player who is so radically, freakishly different than anything our computer has seen at their particular position...it almost fries the circuitry. It's a prospect that might not just be 'good', or even All-Pro level, but something that could be 'special' in the NFL. That's the kind of prospect that I want to burn a draft pick on.

Of all the high-end OLB/DEs I've watched play this season: Clowney, Mack, Barr, Ford, Ealy, Jeffcoat, et al, Shazier was the best football player I saw...and his measurables humiliate every name mentioned as well.

Comparing **Ryan Shazier** to **Jadeveon Clowney** is apples and oranges. Clowney is a purely a 4-3 DE, and a guy you want to rush the passer/backfield. Shazier is not a 4-3 DE, like many versatile guys who are classified as an OLB. Shazier is a pure OLB, whether 4-3 or 3-4...he can do both. You'd probably like him more in a 3-4, but he works either way. The reason I say, "either way" is because Shazier has the perfect OLB/Safety physique. Incredible speed (and we'll detail that in the next section) and athleticism, plus can drop into coverage, and can sneak-rush the backfield, but will also lay a hit on you. At Ohio State, much of the time, he was playing inside linebacker (but he moved around a lot too). He was an under-sized ILB for Ohio State, but a successful nonetheless...he was a complete disrupter.

I thought that **Jamie Collins** was the "**Calvin Johnson** of OLBs," but **Ryan Shazier** is better..."more Calvin," than Collins...and that's no slap at Collins. College football is churning out crazy, bionic super-athletes now...what we used to think was great a few years ago is now "normal." There are new, radical, physical 'freaks' entering the NFL every year now...and Shazier is one of them for 2014.

I watch Shazier on tape, and it is mostly beautiful. He played a lot of middle linebacker for Ohio State, and he looked so out of place visually (size-wise), but then, when the ball was snapped, he looked like he was shot out of a cannon, he was all over the place (in a good way). He makes big hits like a Free Safety, and covers like a CB, but tackles/plays the game so well that he was Ohio State's middle linebacker in a 3-4 scheme...many times the middle linebacker in a 4-3 set-up. He is multi-dimensional with almost no flaw. They do not make many humans like **Ryan Shazier**...the NFL world may be getting ready to in the future, but for now this is as about as good as it gets at OLB for the NFL.

The one flaw people will find about him, and we think it's lazy scouting, is that he doesn't shed blockers well enough. If you watch the tape, it is true...because most of the times his 237-pound self was perched at middle linebacker, as he bum-rushed up the middle versus Big-10 offensive linemen. If a 300+ interior linemen picks up Shazier coming in, then the O-L will win that battle of horn-locking. Shazier would often win using speed and agility to sail through a crease in the line, or just beat the linemen to a spot with his speed. Shazier won't be a middle linebacker in the NFL...so scouts/analysts commenting about him getting bottled up versus someone like a Wisconsin is silly. You have to envision him at OLB or Strong Safety doing what he does...and he may be a 'god' in the NFL at either of those positions.

At his Pro-Day, Shazier ran an unofficial 4.36 40-time...and that is simply amazing. Pro-Day times, can be a little off, so let's call it 4.46 40-time. OK, a 4.46 40-time is simply amazing. Shazier has the body and athleticism of an elite RB prospect. On paper, he is the best RB prospect in this draft...that's how amazingly athletic Shazier is. His size-speed-athleticism combo is surreal. I said next "**Calvin Johnson**" of **Jamie Collins** last year in part because he had a 41.5' vertical, which is off-the-charts for an OLB (or anybody). At the 2014 NFL Combine, Shazier leapt 42".

Shazier seems to be flawless off-the-field, and of character. There are no known issues with him outside of the football field, or on it.

Ryan Shazier, Through the Lens of Our OLB Scouting Algorithm:

I love this following pickup from the computer...Shazier has a sensational 2013 regardless of how we chop it up, but the computer thinks it's even better than people realize. In 2013, Shazier led the Big-10 in tackles with 144 (3rd best in all the NCAA for 2013, and 11th all-time in the Big-10 for his career). He was awesome. However, in 2013, Ohio State had three cupcake games where they pulled back the Shazier chain (Buffalo, San Diego State, and Florida A&M). Look at the splits of Shazier versus his three cupcakes, and then his other 11 meaningful games:

5.3 total tackles, 4.0 solo tackles, 1.2 TFLs, 0.0 sacks per game = **Shazier vs. 2013 cupcakes**

11.6 total tackles, 8.2 solo tackles, 1.8 TFLs, 0.6 sacks per game = **Shazier vs. 2013 "rest of the schedule"**

Those numbers are sick from a player his size, playing middle and outside linebacker.

Shazier was just not a tackler. He got into the backfield, big-time. He had 23.5 TFLs, the most in the Big-10 (the next closest Big-10 player was 7 TFLs behind him), and he also had the 2nd-most TFLs in the NCAA in 2013. He led the Big-10 in TFLs the prior year as well (17).

In 2012, Shazier was in the Big-10 top-10 for "passes defended" (12). That's a category normally reserved for top CBs, but Shazier jumped up in there...while he also led the Big-10 in TFLs and was 3rd in total tackles. Shazier is 'off the charts' as a performer.

Not only did he crush it on the field, but athletically he is unreal. We've already touched on some of his exploits for 40-times and vertical. Where does he rank among all our OLB prospects in our database in some of those key categories?

- He has greatest vertical leap recorded of any OLB prospect in our system along with **Dontay Moch** at 42"

- He has the best 40-time we've recorded, if you trust the Pro-Day, if not, then he is right there with **Von Miller's** 4.42 range, along with **Dontay Moch's**, who ran a 4.40

- He is one of only 15 OLB prospects in our system analysis to hit below 6.93 on the three-cone drill

He is an "A+" athlete, and an "A+" performer...and you can guess what kind of GPA that will get you in our system...

The Historical OLB Prospects to Whom Ryan Shazier Most Compares Within Our System:

Only **Terrell Suggs** rates higher than **Ryan Shazier** at OLB historically for us. Shazier's game isn't quite like Suggs, who is more of a rush-DE/OLB. **Von Miller** is the same. Shazier is part of a new breed of OLB, the super-athlete like **Jamie Collins**. Guys who can tackle, rush the passer with great speed-agility, but can also drop into coverage like a CB. For that type of "Swiss Army" OLB, there is no one better we've ever seen than **Ryan Shazier**.

OLB Grade	Last	First	Draft Yr	College	H	H	W	Tackle Strgth Metric	Spd Agil Metric	Pass Rush Metric
14.21	Shazier	Ryan	2014	Ohio State	6	1.0	237	10.04	13.10	10.72
10.82	Collins	Jamie	2013	So Miss	6	3.4	240	10.02	10.07	7.51
10.54	Weatherspoon	Sean	2010	Missouri	6	1.2	239	10.85	8.69	7.32
13.86	Miller	Von	2011	Texas A&M	6	2.5	246	8.03	15.28	13.99
7.56	Wagner	Bobby	2012	Utah State	6	0.3	241	10.59	6.78	5.86
5.70	Watson	Dekoda	2010	Florida St	6	1.3	226	7.23	9.32	8.22

*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.

2014 NFL Draft Outlook:

The amazing Pro Day workout, which followed the stellar parts of the NFL Combine Shazier could do, has thrust him into many Mock Draft's 1st-round projection...late 1st-round. He is going 1st-round. I have no doubt about it. I suspect that he will go top-20. There is some minor buzz about his hamstring tweaks in the pre-draft workouts, but I don't think you let them stand in the way here. He has played 38 games for Ohio State the past three seasons.

There is no way, with such an emphasis on the secondary in the NFL, especially to cover TEs, that a guy with Shazier's profile will not go top-20. He should be a top-10. However, the NFL collective brain trust has locked themselves in on Barr-Mack-Ford and won't let go of it. Shazier will be some smart team's genius move on draft day.

If I were an NFL GM, I'd have a dilemma. So far, I see two clear-cut, future elite football players in this draft: **Aaron Donald** and **Ryan Shazier**. My days of getting Donald as a 'sleeper' ended at the NFL Combine. It would take a top-10 pick to be really sure I got him. Shazier is tracking #25-40; he's still a bargain at this stage.

I'd try to pull a two-fer if I could, but if I could only get one of them, I'm not sure what I would do. I suppose I'd go by need first, but all things being equal, I might lean toward Shazier as the best prospect overall based on pick-level/salary, plus the multi-dimensional ways that I can use Shazier. Donald is a DT, end of story. Shazier is an OLB, who can project as an All-Pro Strong Safety, and who could also play

some middle linebacker in a pinch, but I also might try to make him my **Richard Sherman**, and set the NFL-world on its ear with my Robo-CB...a CB sent from the future to the modern day. Hell, you can look at him at RB or WR as well. With all those options; it might be that **Ryan Shazier** is the <u>single best</u> prospect in this draft.

NFL Outlook:

We think Shazier is going to be amazing; a perpetual Pro-Bowler who will hit the ground running in the NFL. I suspect it will be as an OLB, and maybe as a Safety. Either way, buckle up, he's going to be awesome.

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