



NFL Draft 2014 Scouting Report: TE Eric Ebron, UNC

**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.*

Two things to start with: (1) This is a horrible draft class for TEs. (2) **Eric Ebron** is not a great prospect; he is not **Vernon Davis** incarnate. He has many 'bust' flags all over him. I should probably add a third thing: (3) An NFL team is going to draft him in the first 15 picks most likely.

The football scouting world pre-loves **Eric Ebron**. I think they love him for two 'faulty' reasons, the second reason that I will list is the most damning: (1) This TE class is junk, so Ebron seems even more delightful; relatively speaking. He looks like he should be a great TE option among not a lot of great TE options in this draft. A team in need at TE is going to be forced to hit the 'deal' button with Howie Mandel here. (2) Ebron looks like **Vernon Davis** because he is very muscular, is taller/bigger than most of his ACC surroundings, and he wears #85...so it almost seems like **Vernon Davis**, at a glance, but it isn't.

Vernon Davis should sue any football analyst who compares Ebron to him. It's horrible scouting to make the **Vernon Davis-Eric Ebron** connection, but it's done a lot. Let's take a look at Ebron v. Davis, in a moment, but let's also add Ravens TE **Ed Dickson**. Why **Ed Dickson**? Dickson (#70 pick overall 2010) was decently thought of coming out of college. He was bigger than the average college TE, but not huge/massive, and he was pretty athletic for his size. Dickson looked like a great TE at a glance, but he wasn't a dominant college TE; just solid-ish. He looked the part, but had questionable hands, and has been mediocre in the NFL. We think Ebron is headed the same way for the NFL...only somehow, Ebron has turned into an urban legend 'great' TE prospect.

- *40-yard dash*: 4.38 Davis (one of the great TE measurements of all-time), 4.59 Dickson, **4.60 Ebron** (nice, but not Vernon)
- *20-yard split*: 2.59 Davis, 2.69 Dickson, **2.71 Ebron**
- *10-yard split*: 1.51 Davis, **1.63 Ebron**, 1.64 Dickson
- *Bench Press reps*: 33 reps Davis, **24 reps Ebron**, 23 reps Dickson
- *Vertical Jump*: 42" Davis (again, surreal), 34" Dickson, **30" Ebron** (awful)
- *Short-Shuttle*: 4.17 Davis, **4.57 Ebron**, 4.59 Dickson
- *Three-Cone*: 7.00 Davis, 7.32 Dickson, **7.49 Ebron**



MARCH 16, 2014

Eric Ebron is **Ed Dickson**, not **Vernon Davis**...and that is a super buzz-kill on his NFL prospectus (vs. where everyone else is at today). Not only are Dickson (6'4.2", 249) and Ebron (6'4.4", 250) physical clones, they have something else in common...they cannot catch the football very well.

It's been an issue for Dickson in college, and more so in the pros. It's been a bigger issue for Ebron in college, having a notorious 11%+ drop rate this past season, far worst among the top TEs. Questions were already circulating on Ebron's hands, and then at his recent Pro Day, he dropped a few passes as well...furthering the issue.

I really do not need to know drop metrics or Pro Day whispers to know that Ebron has trouble in the passing game. I could just look at his college numbers and see potential trouble.

Look, you cannot be this all-world, top college TE prospect; and only score 8 TDs in 35 game appearances in college. You cannot have a career high 4 TDs in an 11 game season (his 2012 season) working with a fringe NFL prospect QB in **Bryn Renner**. In 13 games last season, Ebron scored only 3 TDs. He scored at least one TD in a game in only six of his last 24 played. You have to be more dominant than that in the ACC...if you are this supposed top-15 wunderkind TE prospect for 2014.

Jimmy Graham did not blow up the ACC statistically, but he only played most of one season of football (was a converted TE after playing four years for the basketball team). Even with that, Graham's one year (10 games), he scored 5 TDs in limited targets...more TDs in a season than Ebron had in any of his 2+ years as a full starter.

I watch Ebron on tape, and I am mildly impressed. You can see he is a big physical presence on the field...for college. He's a guy who looks like he should just crush everything in his path, but he didn't. He's just a garden-variety, very good college TE...one that translates, physically, to a mediocre-solid TE prospect for the NFL. He was just another receiver on North Carolina...and one who dropped the ball a little too much.

It's not only that Ebron struggles a but in the passing game with his hands. He does not possess high-end athletic measurables either. There is not a lot to love here with Ebron, in the context of a guy who is supposed to be a hands-down top-15 draft pick overall. From that lofty expectation, he's likely going on to be a 'bust' in the NFL...huge expectations, and unfulfilled fan hope.

Eric Ebron, Through the Lens of Our TE Scouting Algorithm:

Eric Ebron had one monster game in college: His 2013 game against Miami, Fla with 8 catches for 199 yards and a TD. If we throw that game out as an 'outlier', then here are Ebron's numbers the past two seasons with UNC, per game:



3.6 receptions, 56.8 yards, 0.36 TDs per game = **Ebron 2012**

4.5 receptions, 64.5 yards, 0.16 TDs per game = **Ebron 2013 minus Miami, Fla**

The numbers are OK-ish, but nowhere near special. The weaker college output I could overlook, if Ebron was a high-end athletic specimen that projected 'awesomely' for the NFL, but he isn't. He ran a 4.60 40-time at the NFL Combine...and that's pretty good for a TE, all his other measurables (listed above in the first section) were horrible in TE terms. He's a TE that can go downfield in a straight line pretty fast (for a TE), but doesn't cut well, doesn't leap well at all, and has super-questionable (NFL) hands. Other than that, he's awesome...

The **Eric Ebron** 2014 NFL Draft hysteria is a minor-fraud; an apparition.

The Historical TE Prospects to Whom Eric Ebron Most Compares Within Our System:

We already did the **Ed Dickson** vs. **Eric Ebron** comparison. They are so alike, physically, it's scary. Actually, our computer models see a lot of **Andrew Quarless** in Ebron as well. Dickson and Quarless are solid, NFL-worthy TEs. More backups than starters, but they are plausible, lower-end starters. I wish that I was a plausible, low-end starting NFL TE, so I do not mean to denigrate it. I use the lower expectation comparison to advance to the notion that Ebron is just a regular, flawed TE prospect for the NFL. Likely to be a letdown because of the lofty expectations.

TE Grade	Last	First	Yr	College	H	H	W	Spd-Agil Metric	Strgth Blxing Metri c	Hands Metric
5.38	Ebron	Eric	2014	UNC	6	4.4	250	3.81	7.14	7.07
4.05	Quarless	Andrew	2010	Penn State	6	4.3	254	3.60	8.08	5.80
6.65	Dickson	Ed	2010	Oregon	6	4.2	249	5.98	7.04	10.31
4.78	Watson	Ben	2004	Georgia	6	3.4	258	5.28	11.89	6.25

**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.



MARCH 16, 2014

“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.

2014 NFL Draft Outlook:

Almost everyone worth their draft salt has Ebron in the top 15-20 picks overall in their Mock Drafts; the first TE off the board for sure. There is no reason to think otherwise in reality, as many teams in the NFL follow the conventional wisdom. He's going 1st-round. The fan base will be jacked, and then they will wonder what happened three years from now.

If I were an NFL GM, I just sit back and wait for someone else to take him. Thankful that a team wasted a high draft pick on him. A desperate for a TE team is going to make this 1st-round pull, and I would kinda chuckle to myself as they did. To me, Ebron is barely 3rd-round draft material. I could have signed **Ed Dickson** as a cheap free agent this season, or a more intriguing receiving TE option, and far better athlete in **Jeff Cumberland**...rather than wasting development time on Ebron.

NFL Outlook:

This is going one of two ways. He joins a team with several nice WR weapons, and he has a decent NFL start, with decent output, working with a great ensemble (and people will email me to tell me that I am an idiot). If he were to land on Green Bay, and start, he'd likely have decent numbers working with **Aaron Rodgers** and company...as would a number of TE prospects. Alternatively, if Ebron goes to the Tampa Bay or Buffalo (as some 'Mock' him), then he goes to an NFL Siberia to work with weaker passing teams, and he will be quickly forgotten by fans...or disappoints them. Either way, the story will not end with: Ebron joins 'X' team and becomes an NFL superstar/the next Jimmy Graham. He'll be 'OK' at best, with moments of 'good' with the right team.



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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.C." with a stylized flourish.

Date _____

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