



NFL Draft 2014 Scouting Report: CB Justin Gilbert, Oklahoma State

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NFL Draft 2014: Statistical Analysis of CB Justin Gilbert, Oklahoma State

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Right now, we would guide that there are two high-end CBs available in this draft...and they are very different CB prospects. Your choice comes down to **Justin Gilbert** or **Bradley Roby**.

You go with **Bradley Roby** if you like a more physical CB who can tackle (like a quasi-Free Safety). If you like a more flashy, pure coverage CB with top return man skills, then **Justin Gilbert** is your man.

When I watch **Justin Gilbert** play, it reminds me of **Deion Sanders**. I do not mean that in the full compliment way, per se. What I mean is that he is a thinner-framed, gangly (a bit), speed merchant with nice size (6'0"+, 202)...he has the visual look of Deion. He also tackles like Deion...as in "not interested." Gilbert has a great size for a powerful CB, but he looks just like Deion on the field...he flaps around running all over with blazing speed, and when a straight-on tackle needs to be made; good luck. He'll drag you down from behind pretty well. He'll get tackle counts because he is fast to the ball and can join a pile. However, if there is a one-on-one RB vs. Gilbert straight ahead...there is no way Gilbert is making that tackle in the NFL.

That's the bad news on Gilbert, but the good news is that it's not that big of a deal. Some teams would rather have a lock down CB, and let the other 10 guys make the tackles. With Gilbert, you could be staring at a potential lock down CB. His size, and speed (4.37 40-time), and talent (7 INTs in 2013, 2nd in the NCAA) warrant 'lock down' consideration.

Watching the tape, you can see all the 'tools'. He has the size, speed, and reach to just blanket opposing WRs. He does not have the greatest technique among top CB prospects...not by a long shot. I watched the tape of **Gilbert-Roby-Dennard-Gaines-Verrett** back-to-back-to-back, and I was not ultra-impressed with Gilbert. My expectations were high, so that's probably some of it. To me, Gilbert is all great athlete toying with college WRs. The more savvy QB-WR combos in college were able to elude him some; whereas he would just eliminate WRs, who worked with flimsy QBs. The key is that Gilbert has the high-end athletic profile to be groomed into an elite NFL CB.



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I'm not 100% sure that Gilbert will go to that 'elite' at the next level. I watch his off-field interviews, and he is playful...a little 'Neon Deion' like. I watch his work on-field, and it's all about coverage, not so much tackling, etc. He strikes me as all-athlete, and it has gotten him this far (likely top-15 pick), so I think he will have some culture shock when he hits the NFL. I don't see the signs of overt aggression and grinding effort, but that's circumstantial generalizations.

What you also get with Gilbert is a CB who has been a great college kick returner. Gilbert has six kick return TDs in his career...the third best all-time in the NCAA. Again, he has that 'Neon Deion' vibe. Lots of interceptions, special teams returns, great coverage in the open field...and kinda avoiding tackles and big contact whenever possible.

Justin Gilbert, Through the Lens of Our CB Scouting Algorithm:

The numbers are great with Gilbert, whether you look at his interceptions and passes defended, or if you want to marvel at his kick return numbers (the all-time leader in Big 12 kick return TDs). He ran a 4.37 40-time. He benched 20 reps. He stands 6'0.1" in the era of everyone looking for taller CB prospects. Gilbert is a wonderfully constructed human to play CB in the NFL.

Let's try to knock him down a little bit, because everybody will tell you, "he is great." We don't need more of that.

Gilbert did run a 4.37 40-time, and that's awesome. However, his 10 and 20-yard splits were just 'OK'...from an 'elite' view point. That's where I like **Desmond Trufant** (2013 1st-round CB for Atlanta) a little better than Gilbert. On the deep ball, they are both sub 4.4 runners and can cover step for step. Underneath, on quick slants, etc. a guy with the high-end 10 and 20-yard burst like Trufant closes quickly on a defender to bat those quick passes away. Sometimes, on tape, against better QB-WR combos, I see Gilbert a slight step behind closing on those. Not that he is a bust/fool on those plays, but I mention that in an 'elite' context; looking for a guy who just shuts off the field. I'm not 100% convinced Gilbert is that guy, but he might be...the profile is almost there for it.

Gilbert has much smaller than average hands (8.6"). That won't affect him in coverage, but it might take a slight discount off his interception projections...and could be trouble if a team does use him as a return man. He may be a bit prone to bobbles and fumbles at the NFL-level.

Those two negatives above are a little nit-picky; I know, but most people are pure fawning over Gilbert, and I wanted to try to look at possible negatives from the context of a team taking this guy with a top-15 pick to be a franchise, lock down CB.



The Historical CB Prospects to Whom Justin Gilbert Most Compares Within Our System:

The **Aqib Talib** comparison is encouraging, but Talib was a much better CB in college than Gilbert. **David Amerson** became a starter in his rookie season with Washington, but he is also better all-around athlete, a more physical specimen than Gilbert. We can see that Gilbert is really good, but I'm hesitant to call him special. The past two years have been producing many super-athletic CBs, and likely more to come. If not for all the return man accolades, Gilbert would come down another notch overall in our grades. We're just not sure 'great' is here for sure with Gilbert.

<u>CB Grade</u>	<u>Last</u>	<u>First</u>	<u>Draft Yr</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>Cover Rating</u>	<u>Speed Metrics</u>	<u>Agility Metric</u>	<u>Tackle Metric</u>
9.11	Gilbert	Justin	2014	Oklahoma St.	6	0.1	202	8.62	6.88	5.39	8.32
10.82	Talib	Aqib	2008	Kansas	6	0.6	202	15.99	7.38	8.14	9.02
9.64	Amerson	David	2013	NC State	6	1.0	205	10.29	8.53	6.68	10.79
7.85	Owusu-Ansah	Akwasi	2010	Ind (PA)	6	0.2	207	8.37	8.03	4.64	10.28
7.96	Smith	Jimmy	2011	Colorado	6	2.2	211	6.59	6.47	5.90	13.55
7.97	Slay	Darius	2013	Miss State	6	0.0	192	7.86	9.02	4.75	7.60

**The ratings are based on a 1–10 rating scale, but a prospect can score over 10.0+ and less than 0.0*

OVERALL RATING -- We merge the data from physical measurables, skill times/counts from the NFL Combine/Pro Days, with college performance data available on pass coverage/tackles, etc. and grade it compared to our database history of all college CBs, with a focus on which CBs went on to be good-great-elite in the NFL. We found characteristics/data points that the successful NFL CBs had in common in college, that most other CB prospects could not match/achieve.

Scoring with a rating over a **7.00+** in our system is where we start to take a CB prospect more seriously. Most of the future NFL successful college CBs scored **8.00+**, and most of the NFL superior CBs pushed scores more in the **9.00+** levels...and future NFL busts will sneak in there from time to time. **10.00+** is where most of the elite NFL CBs tend to score in our system analysis.

COVERAGE -- A combination of on-field data/performance and physical profile data

SPEED -- Measurables from a perspective of straight-line speed, burst, etc.

AGILITY -- Measurables for lateral movements, quick cuts, body type, speed, etc.

POWER -- A look at physical size, tackling productivity in college, other physical measurables. One of the side benefits/intentions here, is to see which CBs may be more of a model for a conversion to playing



safety successfully in the NFL. Also denotes CBs who are more physical/will have higher tackle totals...over pure speed/coverage CBs.

2014 NFL Draft Outlook:

Most draft projections show **Justin Gilbert** as a 1st-round Mock Draft pick, and usually within the top-15 picks. He is almost assuredly going in the 1st-round. I cannot envision a scenario where he does not...and he should.

If I were an NFL GM, with a top 15-20 pick, I would probably pass. Here's why: It's no slam on Gilbert. It's just that CBs like him are flooding into the NFL like crazy. Young people are moving away from wanting to be RBs, and shifting toward WR and CB. There is more money, and more longevity in those positions. Gilbert would be a freak CB prospect 5-10 years ago. Now, he's just another one of those CBs who ran a sub 4.4 40-time. He's not overly physical or agile. He's super fast and has a great CB size...that is not the rare event that it used to be.

I see other high-end athletic CBs who I like that could be available in the 2nd or 3rd-round in 2014. **Desmond Trufant** and **David Amerson** were better prospects last year. **Will Davis** (3rd-round 2013 pick of MIA) is a talent. Gilbert is not so unique that I have to make this move...unless I am desperate for CB help, then I would consider a move on Gilbert in the top-15. Outside of that, not overly motivated by his overall profile as a high 1st-rounder. He's a higher 1st-round talent in this draft, I just like other prospects at other positions more.

NFL Outlook:

I just have a funny feeling that Gilbert will struggle a bit early on, maybe even 2-3 years, and then kinda grow into the position. He could/should be a very good, Pro Bowl caliber CB. We just do not think he will be elite, or a notable 'lock down' CB. He might be, but we are betting against it...slightly.

