



## NFL Draft 2014 Scouting Report: QB Johnny Manziel, Texas A&M

*\*Our QB 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.*

### NFL Draft 2014: Statistical Analysis of QB Johnny Manziel, Texas A&M

**Johnny Manziel** is such a popular/polarizing figure that most everyone has a personal and football opinion of him--and the two usually coincide.

Full disclosure: Manziel, from my viewpoint, is a rather unlikeable personality.

The casual, non Texas A&M, fan is bent toward a dislike of him. From the party-boy mentality, to the on-field taunting, to his autograph-gate...there is not much to love here. When you don't like the man it's hard to like the football player. When you're against Manziel it is easy to see him as a nice scrambling college QB who will be crushed in the pros.

There is another side of the Manziel scouting. Most football analysts are kinda fan-boys at this stage. Assuming it was mostly positive on the field, they become suckers for whichever QB they've seen most highlights of. Typically, the QB prospect(s) they love early are from the SEC--as the SEC has more 'important' games happening on TV...that's just a fact of life. Most of the best teams in the SEC are top-10 ranked, and championship contenders. Whether Texas A&M was in the title hunt, or whether they were playing a team in the hunt, the Aggies/Manziel have gotten a lot of eyeballs the past two years. The Manziel persona isn't hurting that scenario either--he moves the ratings...even if just to hate on him.

When football analysts, and fans, 'see' a lot of a player it warps their perspective. The ESPN-like push makes everyone a **Johnny Manziel** expert. ESPN will loop the highlights, and mostly all amazing plays, giving Manziel an extra (unintended for NFL scouting) push. Most casual NFL Draft rankers and bloggers have not witnessed a moment of QB tape on **Jimmy Garoppolo**, or **Tom Savage**, or **Casey Paschal**, or **Dustin Vaughan** (to name a few). Yet, the media, the draftniks, and the fans are convinced **Johnny Manziel** is a top-3 QB prospect (currently ESPN's #3, and CBS Sports' #2) for the NFL. It's a ridiculous process, but we all fall for it none the less.

Last year, the "it" SEC QB, who was thrust into the top-3 early was **Tyler Wilson** (after **Aaron Murray** was ranked up there, but passed on the NFL Draft last year). This year, right now, the "it" SEC QB is Manziel. The sad part of that is Manziel was tracking between #4-8 in many QB draft rankings a week or two ago, but then he had the 'cool' comeback effort on national TV during New Year's Eve against Duke, complete with a neat looking jump into a pile and bounce away to throw a pass (shown a



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minimum of 1,000 times a day on ESPN)...and 'blam' he's a star again. QBs having big games against Duke this past season is nothing new, but apparently we liked some performances better than others.

30-38 for 382 yards, 4 TD/0 INT = **Johnny Manziel** in a 52-48 shootout win over Duke on New Year's Eve

23-33 for 424 yards, 6 TD/0 INT = **Tom Savage**, PITT in a 58-55 shootout win over Duke...and no one cares.

Those who are against Manziel look at his (1) diminutive size and (2) poor attitude. Those that like/love him point to (3) **Russell Wilson** and (4) his gaudy college numbers. Let me address all four of those points:

1) I think the attitude, or off-field issues speak for themselves. You can argue about the autograph thing or the taunting thing, I could kinda overlook that (but I personally don't with him). The tell-tale event for Manziel, for me, is when he blew off the honor, prestige, and highly visible Manning Passing Academy event. He missed early meetings because (he said) his alarm clock didn't go off (his parents were called, and they said he was sick). The QBs double up and room together at the Manning Passing Academy, so **A.J. McCarron** (his roommate) got up and with total silence and went to the first early meeting on time...Manziel slept through an apparent tiptoeing McCarron and a dead cell phone battery. OK, got it.

I know that every time I have ever had a critical early morning meeting, corporate training, or interview event--I set my phone, tell my wife to call and check with me, and then set the radio alarm, plus call the front desk for a wake up call. I go 3-4 deep in wake up options when something critical is happening. In addition, I sleep so lightly, because I am jumpy that all four alarms will fail, that I'm up 2-3 hours ahead of my needed to time anyway. Manziel blew through or did not consider all his options...not good judgment.

Manziel is larger than life, and no self-respecting NFL organization is going to give him a high draft pick chance. Low self-esteem, poorly runs NFL franchises will, but not the smart/good teams. If a 'smart' team gets involved it will be in the 3rd or 4th-round, at best.

2) His size is troubling. **Russell Wilson** is short, and built like a powerful Free Safety. **Johnny Manziel** is short, and looks like a skinny shooting guard for a junior college basketball team. I often comment that he looks like a small punt returner playing QB. Manziel's size is an issue because his feet are his primary weapon, and unlike Wilson, he wants to run/scurry. Given the physics of NFL size and speed; Manziel's body type does not project well long-term. If **RG3** running makes you nervous for his long-term health, then it should be tenfold thinking about Manziel (two inches and 10-20 pounds lighter than RG3) on the loose in the NFL.

3) This is my main reason for being negative on Manziel: He is not **Russell Wilson** as a passer...not at all. When I watch Wilson, I see a QB who moves the ball down the field, and picks apart defenses in a



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traditional drop-back passer sense, and using his great escape ability to buy extra time. Wilson works the field and the defense like a pro (and did this back when he was in college).

Manziel, on the other hand, is more of a gimmick QB. I stopped tracking the data after awhile because it was so silly. The heavy, heavy majority of Manziel's passing plays against top competition (not against weaker ones) are one-step quick passes, bubble screens, and/or slants. There is no thought or reading of defenses; just pre-designed extended hand-offs. Which is great for winning a college game, and Manziel has the arm for it, but he does not have the QB mind for it (in my opinion). When Manziel has to go deeper, or over-the-middle he gets into trouble. He often gets out of trouble with feet, and causes chaos while scrambling, and finds an open man during the confusion. If the defense makes Manziel a pocket passer, then he is in trouble. Take away his slants and bubble screens, and you don't have much left with Manziel--just like how **Terrelle Pryor** got figured out after a few weeks this past NFL season. But for awhile the chaos worked with Pryor, and then it didn't...

You may think that I hate Manziel as a QB prospect. I don't. I think he has NFL-talent, but more as a backup for a team that runs a 'pistol' offense. Manziel would not embarrass himself in the NFL, but he does not possess the key elements, I feel, to be an NFL elite. He has an NFL arm. He has great feet. He causes chaos. In spurts, he may even be great for moments in the NFL. It won't last because teams will figure him out in time, and he hasn't shown the QB mindset, training, or work-ethic to evolve beyond that.

4) As far as gaudy numbers...let's allow the computer analysis to speak. Next...

### Johnny Manziel, Through the Lens of Our QB Scouting Algorithm:

Here is why I think my eyeball scouting is coming through in the metrics. Our computer models hone in on seven specific games for Manziel over two seasons; his toughest opponents (Alabama 2x, LSU 2x, Oklahoma-2012, Florida-2012, Missouri-2013). Here are his per game performance numbers against that group:

62.4% Comp. Pct., 267.4 passing yards, 1.6 TD/1.1 INT, 2-5 record = Manziel against his seven toughest opponents

The passer numbers are OK, but not overly special. His TD pass pace drops radically, and turnover rate jumps up against this group--at a troubling rate. To be fair, he did gain a lot of yardage on the ground against that group: 83.0 rushing yards and 0.4 TDs per game. However, most of that came in one game against Oklahoma (229 yards rushing) in the Cotton Bowl.



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In his career against SEC teams that had an overall .500 or winning record that season: 22 TD/14 INT in 12 games, and 1.8 TD/1.2 INT. Not a bad pace, but if we remove one game against Vanderbilt, then he had 18 TD/13 INT (1.6/1.2 per game) in the other 11 games. Take out this year's game against Auburn, and he has 14 TD/11 INT (1.4/1.1 per game) in the remaining 10 games. The point being: against better competition, spare 2-3 games, Manziel struggles as a passer (thinking in terms of top prospects), and has become more prone to turnovers against this group (decision-making and his height come into play). He holds up on accuracy/completion percentage, but his bread and butter throw is simplistic passing/extended hand-offs...his accuracy numbers are always inflated for his offensive style.

Manziel's passing deficiencies can be glossed over in the NFL because of his stellar scramble and running ability. QBs with mediocre passer ability can be good/OK passers in the NFL because of the fear of them taking off to run. Defenses lay back with less pressure to contain the mobile QB, and thus gives them more relaxed time to throw the ball. When Manziel runs he creates all kinds of opportunity, but I just don't know if that is sustainable for Manziel with his body frame type.

Manziel is likely going to measure at/under 6'0", and possibly at/under 200-pounds--and that would not be a good thing for NFL translation. The height issue brings trouble to an already limited passer. The slender frame is begging to be leveled, and who won't want to mash *Johnny Football* in the NFL preseason?

### The Historical QB Prospects to Whom Johnny Manziel Most Compares Within Our System:

Manziel has proven to be one of the most difficult QBs we've had to compare back to history. He is highly mobile with decent passer metrics (like **Tim Tebow**), but much of the quality is coming from more of a "system" of simplistic passes (like **Case Keenum**). He has great accuracy numbers (like **Robert Griffin**), but is much more turnover prone when taken out of his "system" (like **Nick Florence**).

I guess I'd call Manziel a highly-mobile **Case Keenum** (whereas Keenum is a moderately mobile Keenum). Both had exciting numbers in college. Both played in run & shoot kind of offense. Both started to get exposed as passing frauds in games with tougher competition. Both are smaller QBs...troublingly diminutive for the NFL. Both have a role in the NFL, but neither as a franchise QB.

None of our QB comparisons below are a proper profile fit, so I would say he is a hybrid combination of Cameron-Tebow-Keenum.



<u>QB Grade</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Yr</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>Adj. Comp. Pct.</u>	<u>Adj. Yds per Comp</u>	<u>Adj. Pass per TD</u>	<u>Adj. Pass per INT</u>
7.388	Manziel, Johnny	2014	Texas A&M	72.0	200	70.2%	13.3	11.4	27.0
4.747	Cameron, Colby	2013	La Tech	73.3	205	68.1%	11.4	16.9	48.2
5.505	Tebow, Tim	2009	Florida	74.8	236	66.9%	12.9	20.1	40.5
5.214	Keenum, Case	2012	Houston	72.5	210	64.6%	10.8	22.0	86.8
10.032	Griffin III, Robert	2012	Baylor	74.1	220	69.3%	15.6	11.7	57.3
5.771	Florence, Nick	2013	Baylor	72.1	205	60.8%	14.4	17.1	32.0
2.605	Smith, Troy	2007	Ohio State	72.0	225	58.3%	12.4	15.4	35.4

\*“Adj” = A view of adjusted college output in our system...adjusted for strength of opponent.

\*\*A score of 8.5+ is where we see a stronger correlation of QBs going onto become NFL good-to-great. A scouting score of 9.5+ is rarefied air—higher potential for becoming great-to-elite.

QB's scoring 6.0–8.0 are finding more success in the new passing era of the NFL (2014–on). Depending upon system and surrounding weapons, a 6.0–8.0 rated QB can do fine in today’s NFL—with the right circumstances...but they are not ‘the next Tom Brady’ guys, just NFL-useful guys.

**2014 NFL Draft Outlook:**

Again, you may think I hate **Johnny Manziel**. I admit, he's not my favorite kind of QB. However, at a certain value, I would draft him because he is a unique football specimen. I especially want him as a bargain if I am the GM of Washington or San Francisco--someone to back up my starter, and run the same offense. Manziel has football skills, but I am not giving up a high pick/big money just to watch him put it up his nose or in his liver--and embarrass my franchise. As a 4th+ round pick...who cares? You take chances in life...one that can't destroy everything.

Where will Manziel be selected in May 2014? I am going to lean that he will be a 1st-round pick (betting today), unless he does something publicly tragic to his personal image (again). I personally, cannot believe an NFL team would do such a thing, but I say that all the time and they still do. With Manziel already listed as a top-3 QB it means the media is onboard with this too. 'Smart' NFL teams are going to push this Manziel bubble as well. 'Smart' teams will try to sucker Jacksonville or Oakland or (insert usual suspect here) into taking him. If I had to bet money, I would say he'll be a 2nd or 3rd-round pick. However, playing a hunch, I think an NFL team will get suckered into taking him in the 1st-round.

