



NFL Draft 2014 Scouting Report: WR Kelvin Benjamin, Clemson

**WR grades can and will change as more information comes in from Pro Day workouts, Wonderlic test results leaked, etc. We will update ratings as new info becomes available.*

**WR-B stands for "Big-WR," a classification we use to separate the more physical, downfield/over-the-top, heavy-red-zone-threat-type WRs. Our WR-S/"Small-WRs" are profiled by our computer more as slot and/or possession-type WRs who are less typically physical and rely more on speed/agility to operate underneath the defense and/or use big speed to get open deep...they are not used as weapons in the red zone as much.*

Kelvin Benjamin has an NFL WR body you would kill for. I guess we would kill for his body non-NFL-wise as well: 6'5" and 240-pounds. His body type is perfect for the NFL. The kind of body that has propelled him to 1st-round status for the 2014 NFL Draft. There is one small issue along the way, though: Benjamin is a very un-athletic WR...in NFL terms. Big does not equal 'great'...or even 'good' in the NFL. It's a nice start; a nice foundation, but I didn't realize until we ran him through our system analysis...he's just not that great of a WR. I say that in terms of potential NFL stardom and being sought after as a high draft selection.

I thought for sure Benjamin was going to be a star in our system; a great NFL prospect. I had seen a highlight here and there with Benjamin leaping up and snatching TDs over course of the 2013 season. My mind had been programmed to think Benjamin was unstoppable...just from highlight clips.

When I watch all the game tape of Benjamin, I for sure see a massive WR prospect. Scary big. All eyes on him. Then, I watch him running his routes, and battling DBs; and I am wildly unimpressed. He's not very agile-looking on tape (which the NFL Combine confirmed). He's kind of a robotic-moving WR, not a fluid, dominating athlete (which, again, the NFL Combine confirmed). He's very stiff when he runs and cuts...which showed in a slow 4.61 40-time and poor agility measurements at the Combine. He'll work just fine at the college level, but it's not going to play as well in the NFL.

There is something else that jumps out watching all the tape. Benjamin does not 'receive' ball well. In scouting terms, he fights the ball into his hands a lot. He makes some neat catches, but there are a few too many flat-out drops on simple passes. You are buying the body here with Benjamin, and you may not necessarily realize you're getting the added bonus of a mediocre athlete who struggles a bit catching the ball. There is a value in the body, no doubt. Just realize you also get some negatives along with it. This is not the next **Randy Moss, Calvin Johnson**, etc.



I could understand that you're not ready to believe my contrarian stance on Benjamin, and I can't blame you. I was already sold on him going into this too. I think, if you are going to switch over to our side, the numbers below may have better impact.

Kelvin Benjamin, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

I want you to consider, again, how big **Kelvin Benjamin** is. He's a 6'5" and 240-pound monster with some great highlight plays. When you have a WR that size, playing on a team that just rolled most opponents (34 or more points scored in every game) led by a Heisman QB, you would figure that Benjamin might set the record books ablaze. He did not. In fact, he barely mattered in most games in 2013.

Consider the following about his 2013 season: Benjamin had an awesome statistical game against Florida with 9 catches for 212 yards and 3 TDs. Do you know what he averaged in all of his other 13 games combined in the 2013-14 season? 3.5 rec., 61.5 yards, 0.92 TDs.

Benjamin had either 2 or 3 catches in 8 of his 14 games. Only twice did he have six or more catches in a game (six vs. Syracuse, and nine vs. Florida). In his 27 game career, he was under six catches in a game in 25 of 27 contests. That is fairly pedestrian output...and pathetic when you consider the team he was on, and the body we are all craving after for NFL Draft purposes.

Benjamin had 75 yards or fewer in 11 of his 14 games in 2013. In his two year career at Florida State, Benjamin went over 75 yards just three times in 27 games. He essentially had one awesome game (vs. Florida), and a couple nice TDs in key TV moments (got the Championship winning TD in the last minute). Outside of that, he was lukewarm, mediocre, and uninspiring.

Guess what? I re-watched the Florida game...the game he had his best output of his college life in...and it wasn't that awesome. A couple nice plays, but nothing that made me jump out of my seat.

Benjamin posted a 4.6+ 40-time, which isn't prospect death for a WR his size, but the weaker agility numbers to go with it profile a very stiff, un-athletic, non-star like NFL WR...a good one, or useful one in the NFL, but not a star. Not transcendent. To go along with poor speed-agility we have a wimpy 32.5" Vertical and 9'11" Broad Jump. Of the 6'2"+ WRs at the 2014 NFL Combine, Benjamin was ranked last in almost all athletic measurables.

The more we dig, the more we turn on Benjamin. Life was much easier when I relied on his 30-second highlight package. If you trust your eyes here, you might/will get burned.



The Historical WR Prospects to Whom Kelvin Benjamin Most Compares Within Our System:

I love the **Ramses Barden** comparison our system offers up. By all rights, Barden fits the "should have been great because of his size" scouting model. Barden ran a slightly faster, but similar 40-time than Benjamin with slightly better agility and a flimsy bench press and vertical as well. Barden was super-tall (6'6"), he dominated weaker opponents, but that was about it. Barden has been a ghost in the NFL for five years. He was supposed to be a star. If he had gone to a D1 school, I suspect he would have had numbers like Benjamin...and a draft enthusiasm to match.

The **Plaxico Burress** comparison is one I've seen a few times, and our computer models see it too. However, people compare him to Plaxico as if that's some 'winning' argument. Burress was a solid NFL WR, but never lived up to the hype he entered the league with. Only twice in 12 seasons did Plaxico hit double-digit TDs. In the 10 seasons where Burress played most/all of the games, he averaged 6.3 TDs per year. He was under 7 TDs and under 1,000 yards for a season in more seasons than not. Burress was supposed to be an "A+," but wound up a "B" at best. Burress did most of his damage when 6'5"+ and 220+ WRs were like Bigfoot...very rare, only seen in fuzzy photos. Now, the Burress-Benjamin size is a little more common, and doesn't instantly mean NFL success.

We could miss this scouting call because Benjamin's size is still rather rare commodity, and he could go on to have a much better NFL career than the poorer one we are foreshadowing. Here is what I trust the computer is saying, "He is not an 'A' WR." We think he is more of a 'C-D' grade, but could see him achieving a 'B-C' level. What we are more sure of is that he has a very low probability of becoming an 'A' because there are too many red-flags.

<u>WR Score</u>	<u>Draft Yr</u>	<u>Last</u>	<u>First</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>Power Strngth Metric</u>	<u>Speed Agility Metric</u>	<u>Hands' Metric</u>
3.50	2014	Benjamin	Kelvin	Florida State	6	5.0	240	13.48	-0.75	7.32
5.80	2000	Burress	Plaxico	Michigan State	6	6.0	231	10.93	1.17	8.18
7.32	2009	Barden	Ramses	Cal Poly	6	6.0	229	10.29	3.29	14.55
1.87	2012	Mason	Rashad	Georgetown	6	5.3	230	10.54	-1.60	4.43
1.65	2012	Bostick	Brandon	Newberry	6	3.4	244	16.17	1.78	6.51
0.22	2009	Williams	Jaison	Oregon	6	4.1	237	13.14	-2.00	4.70



**A score of 7.0+ is where we start to take a Big-WR prospect more seriously. A score of 8.50+ is where we see a stronger correlation of a Big-WR 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 Big-WR.*

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

Overall WR score = A combination of several on-field performance measures, including refinement for strength of opponents faced. Mixed with all the physical measurement metrics, rated historically in our database.

“Power-Strength” = 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.

“Speed-Agility” = 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/to create separation.

“Hands” = 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 overall this projects the combination of performance and physical data for the next level.

2014 NFL Draft Outlook:

Kelvin Benjamin is going in the 1st-round of this draft. His size is too appealing...like when Kansas City shocked everyone with **Jonathan Baldwin** in the late 1st-round a few years ago. He too had several red-flags, but the physical metrics were beyond tempting. Here's the thing...I see the same performance pattern with Benjamin as I recall with Baldwin. Physically dominant, but leaving you wanting when really detailing their performance on-field. Only here's the thing: Baldwin was 10x the athlete (on paper) that Benjamin is. With Baldwin I have some kind of hope he is the next **Calvin Johnson**...with Benjamin, I know that is not possible. The physical metrics just are not there. Benjamin is getting the Florida State hype treatment so he will become a 1st-round pick for someone...it happens every year in the NFL.

If I were an NFL GM, I have Benjamin on the board, but I have no interest for the price that will be required. I have a little more interest wondering if I could turn him into a TE, but I don't see the frame or aggression for that turn. He's a slower, un-agile "big-WR," but he would be a faster-than-average TE with OK agility. Whatever the possibility, I'll let someone else use a 1st-round pick here. I'll wait four-years when he hits free agency as a disappointment and maybe try a conversion if the price is right...I doubt it.



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NFL Outlook:

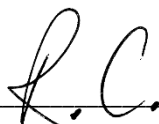
Benjamin could have a solid-ish NFL career. He is NFL-worthy, and even starter-worthy just because of his size. He is a big target for a QB. He might be a 7-10 TD guy...a specialist around the red-zone of sorts. However, he is not going to radically change your offense because of limited NFL athleticism. He could have **Malcom Floyd** moments, or a really good **Plaxico Burress**-like moment/season. What I argue is that he is not dominant, but I see one (**Jordan Matthews**) possibly two (**Mike Evans**) WRs who are. One of them (Matthews), I can get for the same price or lower as Benjamin in the draft.

Benjamin could have a solid, niche career as a red-zone guy, but even then he is not much of a vertical guy, so the alley-oop play might be a struggle. However, he is already tall with long arms so he should do a little red-zone damage. I just never saw on tape, or in the numbers where he dominated worthy competition. He will never be an All-Pro, but he can hang around the league as useful for years...I just don't think that is worth a 1st-round price.

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