NFL Draft 2019 Scouting Report: WR Steven Sims Jr., Kansas

*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" <u>are</u> profiled by our computer more as slot and/or possession-type WRs who are typically less 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.

I rarely/never do a non-QB scouting report before the NFL Combine numbers are available to run our computer scouting model's formulas. I'm making an exception here. Sims was brought to my attention by someone with a good eye for such things, and when I saw the 3+ minute highlight reel I was hooked…I wanted to know more.

I was then stunned to find out that Sims was not invited to the NFL Combine…which puts a serious dent in his ability to get drafted in the top 150…or drafted at all. I've preview scouted all the East-West Shrine, Senior Bowl, and NFL Combine WR prospects…Sims more than deserves to be among them.

I am doing this scouting report early and I am releasing this scouting report for free instead of keeping it behind our subscriber paywall (although I will give my private clients and subscribers a few days to see it first). Why? I hope that I can help draw attention to Sims' NFL prospects/talents and introduce him to various scouting contacts and media types to help get him a deeper look and a better rating on their draft boards. As I wrote this, I checked two scouting websites that do early rankings – Sims is ranked #90+ among all WRs in one ranking, and not even listed among the top 100 WRs nor in the top 350+ overall prospects in another.

Because he did not receive an NFL Combine invite, we won't know his speed-agility, etc., measurables until his Kansas Pro Day. It's dangerous, for any analytics type of scouting, to make a big deal about a WR prospect, especially one based on how impressed I was with his speed (among other things), from just an eyeball scouting 'feeling'…but I watch/study tape on over 100+ WR prospects each year. I know when I see something a little different, a little special. I will wait for the Pro Day numbers to get more excited, or cool my jets, but I would implore up and coming NFL scouts – go get on this guy…go to the Kansas Pro Day and see what you can see here. It's not your typical 'good' college WR 'sleeper' I'm talking about here.

Now, before I type the story of Sims in more detail, I thought I'd introduce you to him the same way that I was. I think you'll properly get your juices flowing this way – watching a quick highlight

reel. *Caution…* Take me seriously on this advice for watching this YouTube highlight reel. Don't get distracted by life going on around you. Take an uninterrupted 3+ minutes to watch every play, and then probably play it back on some of them. The first 2-3-4 plays shown are just a warm up for what's to come. Don't judge him by the first 2-3-4 plays because you're likely to start out thinking…"*Yeah, smaller college wide receiver who is pretty fast, I've seen that before. What's the big deal?*" Let the first couple plays warm you up because you are going to see something at the 0:49 second mark that is going to change your attitude…and it will probably make you stop and play it back on the spot. The play you see at 0:49…that's not a normal thing from a college wide receiver…most college players cannot do 'that'. The hits keep coming after that particular play…a lot of subtle speed-agility plays, and Sims makes them look so easy you could easily miss how brilliant they are. Really take a moment to watch all this unfurl before your eyes, and then I will lay out more of the story as I know it today.

0:49, 1:12, and 2:29 are three plays to really savor.

YouTube Highlight Reel: https://youtu.be/98hX18Gqn-k

OK, if you are righteously impressed, your next question has to be – *why isn't he on any draft radars and no Senior Bowl or Combine invite?*

My two initial thoughts are:

1) The Kansas program has traditionally sucked and no one cares all that much about their players/prospects, especially on offense. A quick search for 'Kansas Jayhawk players in the NFL' will rapidly show you a handful of defensive players and not one offensive skill player. Sims is trying to be a legit prospect from a college football graveyard for offensive prospects…and a college football graveyard in general. I imagine Kansas has no people to sway football committees, etc., like they do in college basketball. Backup wide receivers from Alabama will get invites before the best WR prospect on Kansas.

2) No eyepopping raw totals/numbers in college.

In 2016 (Soph.): 72 catches, 859 yards, 7 TDs. That a solid season, right? But not a 'wow' tally. What if I told you his 7 TDs represented 44% of the Kansas QB's TD passes that season? Yes, Sims best statistical season happened with three bad QBs combining for 16 TD passes and 22 interceptions.

Sims caught 6 TD passes in 2017…the team threw for a miserable 14 TDs. In 2018, 4 TDs for Sims from the QB's 17 TD passes total.

Like I said – the Kansas program for football has been nonexistent. Over the past three years for Sims, Kansas has gone 2-10, 1-11, 3-9.

When I watch Sims on tape… well, you saw what I saw just in the highlights. He's fast…super-fast…like maybe 4.3+ 40-time fast. Not just long distance fast, he also has great short-speed/acceleration as

well as exquisite agility. Watching his footwork off the snap and the routes he could break off…it's excellent. The problem is he's working like a pro around a bunch of FCS-level talent on his own team…at a major conference school! There was no help from QBs or coaching staff to propel him to prominence. Had Sims played at Oklahoma, he might be a top 50-100 prospect today and getting '*Tyreek Hill'* speculative comps. At Kansas…today…crickets.

What's impressive to me is not only Sims' high-end speed-acceleration, but his route running ability (he's an ankle breaker to try to cover) and his hands/concentration on catches. He made some pretty sweet grabs in-between all those speed plays on his highlight reel…and some stellar stop/change of direction on a dime moves that left DBs stuck in the mud trying to do the same. Sims has the whole package for the NFL, in my estimation…and not just 'he belongs' – more like '*he's dangerous, he's a real weapon, he could be a star*' (and could be a UDFA open for any team at rock bottom prices).

Sims's 2018 game against Oklahoma State is essentially all you need to know about his career. His team down big right away, and eventually behind 34-14 going into the 4th-quarter in a laugher. Sims is obviously the best wide receiver/player Kansas has, so he's drawing double coverage a lot…but still managed 10 catches for 89 yards and a TD with one jet sweep early for 23 yards (one of two carries on the season…great offensive planning, Kansas!!). It was hard for Sims to grab attention/compile stats when he got all the coverage attention from opponents and his team is down so much opposing defenses are playing the flailing pass game comeback desperation to contain any deep balls…where Sims would thrive. Watching every Sims snap…he was open at will in one-on-one coverage – but his quarterback was likely to get sacked or near-sacked every known passing down, and if they weren't pressured immediately the QBs were not talented enough to hit Sims as often as he was open.

I really believe Sims is a gem totally hidden by circumstances and surroundings that camouflaged how good/great he might be.

Not only is Sims an athletic talent, he's also a smart, thoughtful young man. Watch him in interviews…he's always humble, always about team. He was an All-Big-12 Academic Rookie Team and made the Honor Roll a few times in his academic career.

I don't know if we've got a 'B' prospect here, or an 'A' just waiting to be unwrapped…I see signs of that 'A' prospect ahead of his Pro Day. What I do know is – he deserved to be at the Senior Bowl and the NFL Combine, and that he's better for the NFL than most of the WR prospects who will be there.

Steven Sims Jr., Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

We hit on the weak QB play and Sims's high percentages/share of the offense…he could have been so much better at a better football school. But note that he had good numbers/share of the passing game despite not only the QB issues, but with opposing teams realizing he was the one guy to try to stop.

For Kansas, the annual K-State game is their Super Bowl…because Kansas barely beat any team, never goes to a bowl game, and obviously it's an instate rival. It's a huge thing/game each year. The past two games/seasons vs. K-State for Sims: 7.0 catches, 173.0 rec. yards, 1.0 TDs per game.

K-State, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, and Texas are arguably the best opponents Sims would have faced the past two seasons. His team went 0-8 against them the last two years, but Sims produced: 6.9 catches, 82.1 yards, 0.50 TDs per game…again, with all the attention on him.

My estimates on his Pro Day…

4.35 40-time (maybe a 4.30 that needs bumped to a 4.35 because of the Pro Day fudge factor)

1.49 10-yard split

6.7s for a three-cone

5'9"/5'10" and 180 +/- pounds. Hoping he has 9"+ hands.

The Historical WR Prospects to Whom Steven Sims Jr. Most Compares Within Our System:

Emmanuel Sanders is a pretty good comp…below the radar, smaller speedster who built himself into a pretty good NFL wide receiver…not the best wide receiver talent but a legit starter/impact player. Sims may have a little more pop in his legs than even Sanders does. **Aldrick Robinson** has been an underrated performer for years…could've been somebody but struggled with maturity early on…and he became a really solid WR later in his career – what might have been with Aldrick had he gotten serious early on.

Tyreek? Maybe. No one could foretell that Hill could transition to a #1 WR with his hands based on his college work. Sims is ahead of Hill as a WR technician coming out of college, but Hill had more production (rush, rec., returns).

This comp table is based off our estimates on Sims's measurables, we'll see what happens when

WR Score	Draft Yr.	Last	First	College	H	H	W	Power Strngth Metric	Speed Agility Metric	Hands Metric
8.337	2019	Sims	Steven	Kansas	5	9.5	180	5.49	15.02	7.97
7.773	2010	Sanders	Emmanuel	SMU	5	11.0	186	6.40	13.75	8.25
6.158	2011	Robinson	Aldrick	SMU	5	9.6	184	8.21	15.49	6.47
6.853	2015	Dorsett	Phillip	Miami, Fla	5	9.6	185	6.52	15.52	6.92
7.020	2016	Hill	Tyreek	W. Alabama	5	8.1	185	7.16	14.34	4.37
9.595	2014	Cooks	Brandin	Oregon St	5	9.6	189	8.09	15.22	10.45
10.629	2016	Coleman	Corey	Baylor	5	10.5	194	9.08	12.36	9.76
4.209	2009	Knox	Johnny	Ab. Christian	5	11.4	185	5.02	13.93	6.47

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

All our 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/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.

2019 NFL Draft Outlook:

If Sims can run a sub-4.4 40-time at his Pro Day, he's got a shot at a day-three late draft pick. Not going to the Senior Bowl or Combine is a draft status killer, especially for a physically smaller wide receiver. My guess is, he will not get drafted…or go 7th-round…maybe 6th-round if I can get people's attention, but I've been doing this for a long time and I know the NFL is usually asleep and/or fearful to make radical picks – we thought we had **Kyle Sloter** drafted in 2017 with more push – and then Denver chickened out last second and went with **Chad Kelly** in the 7th-round instead. *Another Elway moment of brilliance*. I couldn't get the NFL interested in drafting Western Oregon's **Tyrell Williams** either.

If I were an NFL GM, I'm making this pick before someone else gets him...if he's as fast at his Pro Day as I think he will be. In this era of speed wide receivers becoming full-fledged weapons in the modern passing game and on jet sweeps…I want in on one of the best bargain WR prospects of 2019. I'll let NFL teams waste money and time taking **D.K. Metcalf** and his one-route (fake right, jump to the left and sprint down the sidelines) in the 1st-round. *Hey, bad NFL team…why don't you sign **Laquon Treadwell** in free agency and draft Metcalf and make them your #1-2 punch wide receivers?* The media and analysts loves/loved both these guys…and doesn't know who Sims is unless they're from the state of Kansas.

NFL Outlook:

Drafted late or not at all, an uphill battle for playing time/recognition in camp…but the NFL training camps usually are futile grounds for guys like this to get noticed and get pushed. I think Sims will make an opening day roster and slowly or quickly become a weapon, and then become a main starter/weapon. I hope, Let's see if his pro Day confirms some of this.

I'll update our numbers/report on him after his Pro Day.

-- R.C. Fischer, College Football Metrics and Fantasy Football Metrics