



MARCH 26, 2019

NFL Draft 2019 Scouting Report: RB Trayveon Williams, Texas A&M

**Our RB 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.*

**We use the term "Power RB" to separate physically bigger, more between-the-tackles-capable RBs from our "speed RBs" group. "Speed RBs" are physically smaller, but much faster/quicker, and less likely to flourish between the tackles.*

After a deeper study on **Trayveon Williams**, I'm ending up torn. In my preview scouting of him, pre-Combine, I thought Williams was the best-looking RB talent I'd watched...albeit in a weak RB group in 2019. I didn't believe he was a future superstar, bell cow type RB...just the most all-around talented – best instincts as a runner, best jump cut/agility, 'plus' talent as a receiver, and an impeccable character...a better RB prospect than **Josh Jacobs**, and whomever else was thought to be top guys in February 2019.

I would have bet on Williams to run in the 4.4s at the NFL Combine but more importantly post a sub-7.00 three-cone with low 4's in the shuttle. I would have bet a nickel that he would have posted the best agility times among the RBs at the Combine. I saved a nickel, because not only was he NOT the best agility timed RB prospect...he was the 2nd-worst time (7.44) of every RB who participated (16 of them). Only a 228-pound bull dozer RB was worse (7.53). The one fullback prospect in Indy, who ran a 4.89 40-time...he had a better three-cone time (7.35) than Williams.

How can this be?

Do my eyes deceive me?

Am I losing it as a scout? Did I never really have it as a scout?

Trying to write about a running back's agility is not easy, so let me show an example of **Trayveon Williams's** feet...the video that runs in my head, the guy I saw consistently doing subtle things like you'll see here in this video clip I'll direct your attention to. It's one play on a highlight reel, the video will open up to that one play/example...I just want you to watch this one play, starting at the 5:27 mark vs. LSU/2018. Please watch it at least twice, the first view goes by fast as you try to focus on what I'm asking...the second and third watch with laser focus will help:

YouTube clip: <https://youtu.be/pbmlg1Gl1sM?t=327>

Now, I know it is dangerous to pick one play of a million and go 'see'...because that's every hackneyed internet scouting report on a player there is. I realize the internet scout's parlor trick is much like a



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fortune teller's or psychic's, etc., to take a small thing and convince you (and ourselves) that it proves the overall reality (is there someone in your life whose name starts with an 'A' or 'S'...or any other popular letter?). It's like whatever QB internet scouts want to push, they'll show the same 2-3-4 throws, great ones, and go bananas over it as if it the overall reality of that happens every throw. With some QB prospects, a great throw is like a bad shooter hitting a half court shot in basketball...it doesn't mean he's a great shooter, that was just a great/lucky shot.

I show this one play on Williams, hoping not to con myself...but I watch a lot of tape on a lot of players at all positions...year-in-and-year-out, and that play/run by Williams is not 'normal'...on several fronts (and I see Williams with a lot of moments like this). Allow me to count the ways in which this play matters to me/Williams' scouting...

1) That cut to the left was done running up the middle first and after almost coming to a full stop because the line was clogged where he was going. To go from three-quarters speed to almost zero, and then just plant and go left like he's floating on air...so much so that the D-Lineman about to tackle him looks stupid when TW just bounces away, evaporates from his grasp so quickly.

Guys like a **Josh Jacobs**, for example, solid RB prospects, they have quick feet when they have a full head of steam into the hole or out in space. But it is RARE for a running back to almost come to a full stop and just bounce/glide away without any real effort. I see Williams making those subtle moves time and time again on running plays of all varieties against all types of talent-level of opponents (not just against FCS defenders).

2) Watch the play again and keep it handy for this next part. After watching again, you might think – well, that was a good move, but I've seen it before by others (not as much as you think) and thinking maybe I'm overlooking the good blocking on the play. Please watch it again and think that, I beg of you – because in real time it is great blocking and Williams has the hole BUT ONLY after he created it/found it with that move after most RBs would have been tackled for a loss or just run straight and hope for the best.

OK, good blocking was the catalyst...you think...maybe?

Please run the tape and pause it at exactly 5:31 and just stare at the situation. Is there any way that a 205+ pound RB is going to get through six LSU defenders in great position between him and the goal line 8+ yards away? I mean seriously...you see he can't go left and definitely not to the right...and there are four guys directly in front of him, LSU defenders not FCS defenders – and Williams is about to go through all of them to score a TD.

It's another thing I see with Williams – he constantly finds openings and races through them, like he has a sixth-sense...leaving defenders grasping at air. The last two RBs who I thought had that same knack for finding space where there was none were **Kareem Hunt** and the best I've ever seen – **Jordan Howard**. You know what Williams-Hunt-Howard have in common? Great college performers, super-shitty shuttle and three-cone times (and 40-times)...so much so they fell in the draft.



3) So how did Williams get through those 4+ LSU defenders, straight through them, and score? Three functions from the start, three functions that I keep seeing over and over again with Williams...(1) Was that jump cut, and it wasn't a jump as much as he just started moving his feet sideways like some kind of 2019 robot technology...I didn't realize the gracefulness of it until right before I typed this because I watched the play in slow motion (go to the 'settings' icon bottom video and change speed to 0.25) and re-watched it that way. (2) He blasted through guys with sweet speed/burst...Williams has NFL speed and a fearlessness between the tackles, a very unusual combo for a 205+ pound RB. But, #3 is another key, (3) Williams finishes the run by getting tackled short and taking two defenders 2+ yards with him into the end zone.

I am continually amazed by how tough a runner Williams is for his size. Tape after tape, Williams is slamming smartly into SEC-sized, future NFL defenders on the D-Line and at linebacker and just moving them back. Williams is rarely caught for a loss or knocked backwards or halted without going forward. He didn't rush for 1,760 yards, post 18 TDs, and have 2,000+ all purpose yards in 2018 because he was lucky or 'system' or whatever – in fact, he did all that in a season where he played both Alabama and Clemson and was stuffed by both (I'll hit on that in a minute).

Williams, to me, is just a superior RB talent (instincts, vision, athleticism, toughness)...and his weaker measurables at the NFL Combine are a distraction from it. AND I'm a 'measurables' guy/scout. That's why analytics scouts need to study tape (not just watch 2 minutes of highlights) to confirm or question the analytics -- and 'numbers are for nerds' scouts need to understand the historical context of the measurables and their potential meanings and outliers. Usually, tape confirms data/data confirms tape. Not so with Williams.

But, although it is dangerous to go by 'vision' on such things, I've been doing this for nearly a decade...I have a decade of history in my mind and in my computer models. I know 'it' when I see 'it', and I see some 'it' here with Williams...more so than his measurables would suggest.

Character-wise...you won't find much better than **Trayveon Williams**. He is a workout fiend. He is dedicated to his craft and has won all kinds of team awards for workouts/hard work, and you can see his videos and listen to him talk about it – he's serious about football and being great. As human, super-nice, humble, and happy in his interviews and discussions.

Williams is a lot more than 'possible third down back' for the NFL in my opinion...I'm just having a hard time comparing him. **Phillip Lindsay** comes to mind but not perfectly.



Trayveon Williams, Through the Lens of Our RB Scouting Algorithm:

Nine 100+ yard rushing games in 2018 (13 games played). Six of them 150+ yard rushing games.

Two or more TDs in five of his last 9 games.

Last two bowl games: 13.0 carries, 149.9 yards rushing, 2.0 rushing TDs per game.

The bad...

vs. Clemson 2018: 17 carries for 31 yards

vs. Alabama 2018: 8 carries for 31 yards

What happened in the Clemson and Alabama games...why wasn't he using his superpowers against them?

My notes: Alabama and Clemson played the run primarily/well and forced Texas A&M to throw – against Alabama, they were blown out and against Clemson they had a frenzied comeback attempt in the 2nd-half. The running game was reduced, and the passing attempts were pushed. Against Alabama, Williams nearly popped a 50+ yard run, but stepped out of bounds on a tight rope effort. Against Clemson, he was just stopped by their great D-Line over and over but he did put in a couple great screen pass type plays for 1st-downs (3 rec. for 40 yards vs. Clemson).

In those two tough games, I thought Williams ran with toughness...tried to (and succeeded) in pushing the line back on his runs most cases, even when met with resistance right away as he was. You could use the Alabama and Clemson games to say Williams is *not that special*, and that might be the right call. I just see this 'art' differently...I'm leaning towards he's better than that, more like the guy that blew up LSU, Kentucky, and NC State. However, his Alabama and Clemson struggles show more human than superhuman...which his measurables also say.

2019 NFL Combine Measurables:

5'8.1"/206, 9.25" hands, 30.38" arms

4.51 40-time, 2.63 20-yard, 1.58 10-yard, 4.44 shuttle, 7.44 three-cone

19 bench press, 33" vertical, 10'1" broad jump



The Historical RB Prospects to Whom Trayveon Williams Most Compares Within Our System:

If you recall, **Dalvin Cook** had a nice college career and then a terrible NFL Combine set of results...and it dropped his stock. If I also recall, I mocked Cook as a top prospect when I saw those measurables...but now I'm defending Williams in some similar light. I would say this...I watch for the running styles, the performance against top opponents, the overall performance metrics in-games, and compare to the measurables. Cook never really impressed me all that much me from the first time I watched him. Williams impressed me from the first moment I saw him...before I had the Combine data, and then after the Combine data was in -- same with Cook.

There's just something about Williams, but there's also plenty to balk at with his measurables, size, and weaker Clemson-Alabama games. I won't diss anti-Trayveon scouts, they have some ammo to support their case. I just think there's something in the tape and some nice performance data against an SEC schedule that doesn't doom Williams fully with his measurables and keeps hope alive.

If **Dalvin Cook** makes it in the NFL...than Williams should because he's better...better runner, player, and character off the field.

In general, I don't love any of these computer comps for Trayveon. Either the computer is right, and Williams is 'good enough' or my eyes/sense are right, and I see a little something more in TW.

RB Score	RB-Re	RB-ru	Last	First	College	Yr.	H	H	W	Speed Metric	Agility Metric	Power Metric
7.100	7.48	7.29	Williams	Trayveon	Texas A&M	2019	5	8.1	206	2.93	5.43	7.32
6.755	7.56	6.53	Cook	Dalvin	Florida St	2017	5	10.3	210	4.78	-2.50	8.39
4.067	4.44	2.62	Banyard	Joe	UTEP	2012	5	10.7	213	3.64	3.33	9.37
1.332	4.82	1.04	Gray	Cyrus	Texas A&M	2012	5	10.2	206	4.45	1.29	7.89
3.697	2.13	1.75	Meggett	Davin	Maryland	2012	5	8.1	211	1.47	0.00	8.06
4.991	8.24	4.13	Mathers	I'Tavious	Mid Tenn. St	2017	5	10.7	203	2.85	-1.36	7.99
5.955	3.28	4.52	Todman	Jordan	UConn	2011	5	8.7	203	6.92	0.07	9.89

*A score of 8.50+ is where we see a stronger correlation of RBs 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 RB.

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



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Overall rating/score = A combination of several on-field performance measures, including refinement for the strength of opponents faced, mixed with all the physical measurement metrics – then compared/rated historically within our database and formulas. More of a traditional three-down search – runner, blocker, and receiver.

**RB-Re score = New/testing in 2019. Our new formula/rating that attempts to identify and quantify a prospect's receiving skills even deeper than in our original formulas. RB prospects can now make it/thrive in the NFL strictly based on their receiving skills – it is an individual attribute sought out for the NFL and no longer dismissed or overlooked. Our rating combines a study of their receiving numbers in college in relation to their offense and opponents, as well as profiling size-speed-agility along with hand size measurables, etc.*

**RB-Ru score = New/testing in 2019. Our new formula/rating that attempts to classify and quantify an RB prospect's ability strictly as a runner of the ball. Our rating combines a study of their rushing numbers in college in relation to their offense and strength of opponents, as well as profiling size-speed-agility along with various size measurables, etc.*

Raw Speed Metric = A combination of several speed and size measurements from the NFL Combine, judged along with physical size profile, and then compared/rated historically within our database and scouting formulas. This is a rating strictly for RBs of a similar/bigger size profile.

Agility Metric = A combination of several speed and agility measurements from the NFL Combine, judged along with physical size profile, and then compared/rated historically within our database and scouting formulas. This is a rating strictly for RBs of a similar/bigger size profile.

2019 NFL Draft Outlook:

I see projections all over the place for Trayveon. Some had him top five in the RB class pre-Combine but have since dropped him down outside the top five and into the top 10, towards 8-9-10. Some never had him top 10 and they definitely aren't moving him up after the Combine numbers. I think NFL teams will like Trayveon more than the NFL analysts/media types, who are paying him no attention. I have a source that tells me Dallas is on Trayveon as an Ezekiel complement and 3rd-down RB. If Dallas 'Wizard of Oz' GM **Will McClay** is on Trayveon, if that's true – then I feel better about what I'm sensing. In the end, I think Williams is taken 4th-5th+ round...more Day 3 than Day 2 type prospect right now.

If I were an NFL GM, I'd be happy to land Williams, but as a GM...I would never pay much at all for an RB from the draft – instead collecting a cheap trio+ and rotating them...like what **Bill Belichick** and **Doug Pederson** do. I'd want Williams on my team/in my backfield, but only if he fell 5th+ round. Too many other talented bargain RBs all over late in the draft or as UDFA's to waste draft picks on 'good' ones.



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NFL Outlook:

I'm guessing Williams is drafted to be a complementary RB and/or 3rd-down back, and is a great add to an NFL team for years. However, if something happens to the starter and Trayveon is pressed into action – he could steal hearts and jobs with his unique instinct and vision, and (dare I say) 'heart' as a runner. Williams will be a quality RB in the NFL for years...just not sure if he'll hit 'star' level, but man do I hope he does. He puts in the time and effort to do so and has enough skills.

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Signature _____

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.C." It is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and a smaller "C" next to it.

Date _____ 3/26/2019