



NFL Draft 2019 Scouting Report: CB Isaiah Johnson, Houston

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

If you look in the right places, you can find articles and charts on the internet that claim **Isaiah Johnson** is the best athlete at cornerback to ever be measured at the NFL Combine (speed-agility-size, etc.). Despite that label, you'd be hard-pressed to find Johnson in the top 100 prospects for the 2019 NFL Draft for most analysts. How is that possible?

How is it a 6'2"/208 high-end athlete with long arms is NOT a top 100 draft prospect, in this day and age?

Johnson is in the argument for our computer scouting model's #1 rated cornerback prospect in 2019.

You'd think this is because we rely on numbers/metrics/analytics a lot... and you'd be right. He's also, personally, one of my favorite prospects in the 2019 NFL Draft...and we'll get into why in a moment...it's not just the numbers.

We do have to examine his abilities, and that's where the argument is – he's a great athlete, but is he a great cover corner? The answer is 'no'...he's not a great cover corner, not that I see right now...but I'd still advocate for him as a top CB prospect. We'll break this down, but let's start at the beginning with Johnson...

Johnson arrived to Houston as a wide receiver. He played (sparingly) as a WR for two seasons (2016-2017). He was asked about a conversion to corner, and he jumped in with open arms and became a top corner back prospect for the NFL in no time with his size, athleticism, and reach – getting invited to the Senior Bowl and NFL Combine. Physically, he's almost like a cornerback you'd create in a laboratory or for a video game.

On paper, he's great. On tape, he's 'good'. On tape, he shows some flaws. Anyone watching him might dismiss him as not a great cover guy because he tends to play way off the ball and allows catches in front of him too much. He tries to rely on his closing speed, and it doesn't work as well as he thinks. You can/could get to him by throwing quick passes in front of him...and it looks unpleasant on tape, and I get that.

Here's the thing – when I see Johnson playing up man-to-man, getting into a receiver's face off the snap...he looks great. He puts one of his long arms out and just walls off the receiver from getting into his route immediately, and he's fast enough to stay with them when they break away. He's excellent in zone coverage as well...a fast, rangy corner that closes on deep passes quickly.



There are a lot of things you cannot teach a corner prospect...like to run fast, to grow their arms longer, but you can correct their penchant for playing too far off the ball. If Johnson tightened that up and/or challenged himself more playing press (or it could just be the coaches wanted him playing that way) then maybe his tape would be top 20 draft material – because he is a good man-to-man shadow/fighter. Don't forget – this is the Houston head coach who thought **Ed Oliver** wearing a jacket on the sidelines was an issue worth trying to remove it off him mid-game...and he may have dictated his talented, athletic CB (Johnson) playing 10+ yards off receivers and not letting his talent go to work up close. The zone style didn't help Johnson's stats/numbers/coverage metrics or tape.

Not only does Johnson have all the tools to be a great cover corner, and has flashed those skills, he's also a willing hitter – one of the best tackles per game cornerback in the 2019 NFL Draft class. So much so, teams have talked about his safety potential.

Not only do you get an off-the-charts physical freak corner prospect who is a willing/good tackler, but you also get a laser focused employee dedicated to his craft...a notorious film studier and workout guy. Johnson is smart, focused, and has a strong leadership aura about him in interviews. I love everything he's about off the field and his upside potential on the field.

You almost get it all with Johnson...except for some so-so tape because he plays the position working one-on-one in a more of a zone way. Fix that one thing...and you could argue he's the clear #1 CB prospect in this draft.

Isaiah Johnson, Through the Lens of Our CB Scouting Algorithm:

Registered 10 or more tackles in a game twice in the past two seasons. Seven or more tackles in a game 8 times. Greedy Williams had 7 or more tackles in a game twice the past two seasons.

At the NFL Combine, Johnson registered...

- the 4th-fastest 40-time among all DB prospects (4.40)
- tied for 3rd-best broad jump (11'1")
- the 5th-fastest three-cone (6.81)
- the 2nd-fastest shuttle (4.06)
- the 3rd-longest arms (33.0")



-- tied for the third tallest DB (6'2.1")

2019 NFL Combine Measurables...

6'2.1"/208, 8.75" hands, 33.0" arms

4.40 40-time, 4.06 shuttle, 6.81 three-cone

9 reps bench press (tore pec during this event, and still tried to power through)

36.5" vertical, 11'1" broad jump

Johnson has better Combine/measurable's numbers in every way than **Greedy Williams**, except Greedy ran 4.37 vs. Johnson's 4.40.

The Historical CB Prospects to Whom Isaiah Johnson Most Compares Within Our System:

When I saw **Eric Rowe** on here, I got scared – I loved **Eric Rowe** like this...physical freak, and NFL starter at points in his career, but never really made it big (yet). Rowe was a converted safety to corner but never became the CB star I thought he might. Seeing **Jalen Ramsey** on here, perks me up. He's not as good as Ramsey was as a cover guy...but Johnson has the tools to become that, I think.

<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>
8.660	Johnson	Isaiah	2019	Houston	6	2.1	208	7.93	8.22	8.07	9.48
8.879	Amerson	David	2013	NC State	6	1.0	205	10.86	9.01	6.68	8.90
8.468	Ramsey	Jalen	2016	Florida St	6	1.2	209	8.94	6.85	7.34	9.24
8.700	Rowe	Eric	2015	Utah	6	0.6	205	8.73	2.77	10.85	9.83
7.807	Asomugha	Nnamdi	2003	Cal	6	2.3	213	8.49	-0.08	8.54	8.73
7.752	Cook	Chris	2010	Virginia	6	2.0	212	9.29	6.78	5.47	7.71

**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-



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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.

2019 NFL Draft Outlook:

Tracking as a #100-150 overall draft prospect right now, but I think he'll find his way to the top 100. No one with his measurables and body of work should fall past #100 in any draft.

If I were an NFL GM, he's the kind of value player I want. A top 10-15 potential going for a #100 +/- price.

NFL Outlook:

I think he either gets drafted into a zone concept team (like Carolina) and flourishes or he goes to a more man-to-man scheme and could get coached into a great cover corner, maybe...hopefully, for his sake.

Bill Belichick recently said, about this draft, in a rare moment of conversation, to a reporter – Who's going to cover all these big receivers coming in? **Isaiah Johnson** is a prototypical, potential answer.

