



2020 NFL Draft Scouting Report: QB Jordan Love, Utah State

**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.*

Jordan Love's scouting is a microcosm NFL scouting. **Jordan Love** is the embodiment of what scouts, and thus fans, love – big body...quick release...and a big arm. And, as usual, with 'big arm' you also get 'overlook the issues'. With Love, one issue you're going to have to overlook - 17 interceptions in 13 games in 2019 season (and just 20 TDs) is a concern... even more concerning is the distribution of those 17 picks – it was driven by big turnover numbers against any better competition he faced in 2019. Three INTs thrown in each of the losses to LSU, Wake Forest (a game they led in 2nd-half), and BYU.

The curveball in this story...the season prior, 2018, Love threw 32 TD passes and just 6 INTs in 13 games. Scouts and fans who want to back Love will point to 2018. Scouts and fans who are concerned will point to 2019. There is also the fact that Utah State changed coaches for 2019 and graduated some key players. Still, a great/superior QB working the Mountain West Conference has to do better in their final season than the mess Love put up.

So, does **Jordan Love's** college production and tape reveal an issue for a transition to the NFL game or not? Let's go through it...

First, the positives...

It's true. **Jordan Love** may have the best arm strength and release in this draft. He has a cannon for an arm and can throw passes from all angles. He's like a great baseball 3rd-baseman playing quarterback...in a good way – good mechanics and improv/throw at all angles ability. When he takes the shotgun snap, identifies (or predetermines) his target on a slant or flare out of the backfield, and makes his quick throw...the ball explodes from his hand to the receiver. It happens so fast defenders can hardly react...and that is a crucial asset to have. Buffalo Bills' QB **Josh Allen** is as erratic/inaccurate a quarterback as there is, but in the pros, playing a simplified game plan, he can throw bullets on timing passes and defenders can hardly stop/cover it. Where Allen, and Love, get into trouble...they predetermine their throws and if a defender guessed the play right, the ball will be thrown right to them for pick potential.

Love has decent feet. He's not a stiff, though he isn't looking to run, he's not shown to be a great RPO guy but he can move if he needs to. He looks like he has more to give as a runner but holds himself back some. He doesn't have blazing speed but he's fast enough and athletic enough to move around and avoid some sacks, and even pick up some yards at times.



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Now, the negatives...

Love does have a penchant for turnovers. It's not that he is aggressive and takes risks. It's more like he just doesn't see the field all that well. He throws the ball into traffic, inexplicably, at times. He is mostly an already decided where he is throwing pre-snap, get the ball quick off the snap, pivot and fire. Six out of 10 times he throws timing passes...he's probably completing the pass. He's talented enough. His ball jumps out of hands and is on the receiver in a hurry. The other four times...well, you hope they are just misfires or throwaways or dropped passes. All too often they are thrown into danger as if he didn't see the defense at all. Make Love improvise outside the pocket and the turnover potential rises as he tries to make throws he shouldn't, trusting his arm more than reading the situation.

A big negative on Love for me – he seems a little too passive, on the field or in an interview. Love does not give off a vibe as a leader of men. He doesn't play with a ton of energy...but it might be he's just super smooth. He's very monotoned to talk to and to watch play. He doesn't usually run the ball with any effort or aggression...he dances more than chews up turf, if that makes any sense as a description – but he's big enough to knock some people around. He's got the big-time physical/arm skills and he knows it...almost bordering on arrogant in his play. I think he thinks he can big arm his way through any and all circumstances...more just getting rid of the ball (avoiding a sack/hit) rather than being too aggressive with his bad throws. The NFL is complex, and it requires more than just a 'big arm'...and Love turned the ball over too much when he played more complex teams in college.

When things are down I don't get the sense Love is attacking or believing the team will come back...when I watch him play I couldn't tell you if he is winning by 20 or losing by 20, and that's not a terrible thing, per se. It might be an issue or a blessing. What worries me is he won't command a huddle, a locker room, a city...and when he does have some issues with his play, like a bad stretch of turnovers, will he bounce back aggressively or will he get more protective and conservative? Love doesn't come off as a bad personality, just not much of one...that I have witnessed so far.

So, can big arm with some mobility trump a mild personality and extra turnovers? You'd think the turnovers would be a concern, but in my history of scouting college talent, over a decade now, turnover issues in college are never much of a concern when scouts like/love your arm. Now, in this era, add in that it's acceptable to be a turnover-laden quarterback as long as the media is with you and you have stats otherwise, even if they're just junk time numbers. **Jameis Winston** could throw 50+ picks in a season and the media would still excuse it. **Josh Allen** cannot complete medium and deep passes well enough to win big games or come from behind to win them...but he's well liked so it's OK. But the same media tried to run **Kirk Cousins** out of Minnesota after Weeks 2-3 of the 2019 season when things weren't going so well. Why? Well, because... I don't know why...they just don't like him. **Jared Goff**, a QB the media has hated since day one, made them all hold their tongues during his great 2018 season... but when he threw a lot of picks in his subpar 2019, they pounced on him– he's just noted as *a good QB if the blocking is perfect*, they say (well, aren't they all?). Turnovers matter for QB prospects the media is not behind, but the football media loves Love, so he has got that cushion/grace.



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What the media thinks of a quarterback matters greatly. **Jordan Love** is a QB scouts and coaches will adore because watching him throw is poetry (just don't focus on where the ball went to sometimes). The media all likes to jump aboard the same bandwagon, plus throw in that media people and analysts will think they discovered a mid-major QB prospect in hiding to show they are smarter than everyone (because most didn't watch **Jordan Love** play a game ever). **Jordan Love** is going to get the push from the right places. **Joe Burrow** is a boring, average-armed guy who had a lucky/blessed/great year – this is embedded in football peoples' minds, and I believe he's their next **Jared Goff** to try to tear down...they're just waiting for the right time, and it's not now/after his 2019-20 CFB season. **Jordan Love** is a much sexier QB prospect for them. **DeShone Kizer** drew a lot of this type of 'big arm' love from football people early in his draft process as well...and the media hated the fact that **Mitchell Trubisky** was getting more football organization attention than Kizer back in their draft.

My opinion, overall on Love, I have concerns but I'm also intrigued and excited. I mean, I respect his arm...it's a thing of beauty, and I know it can work to a degree in the NFL. Once I get past the arm, I have some red flags lining up for me to hesitate to get fully on the train – a train where some/many will think (though not many will say it out loud) that Love is a sure fire top 10-20 prospect and probably better than Burrow for the next level. I see Love as unpolished as a thrower, worrisome as a reader of defenses, and someone who gets more inaccurate the more pressure and competition is elevated. Love also doesn't possess the running skills/elusiveness of **Joe Burrow**, and Love does not have the lionheart for running like **Jalen Hurts** or **Lamar Jackson** or **Joe Burrow** possess.

Josh Allen succeeds at the pro level with his big, inaccurate arm, to some degree because of his nifty feet and ability/willingness/toughness as a runner. I don't see that with Love as much, but I see that the potential is there...he's built like a great power tailback – 6'3"/223 and muscular. I've seen him lean into a tackle and blow back the tackler, but his college career has just shown a lack of willingness to run. Not that it is a crime, but it's worth noting.

I could not advocate for **Jordan Love** as the top QB prospect in this draft, but he has some traits that are 'best in class'. I'd rather have **Joe Burrow**...a sure thing. If I wanted more mobility/run-first in my quarterback, I'd look to **Jalen Hurts**. If I wanted a proven, well trained, successful college passer and good leader – I'd look to **Justin Herbert** (after Burrow). After those things...if I wanted to take a shot on a college-flawed QB that if my staff could coach up/unlock we might have a great QB prospect on our hands, but also knowing this could blow up in my face...then I'd roll dice on Love. I get it. I just wouldn't want to bet my career on it if I didn't have to, but there are worse/far less talented QBs to bet a career on.

I have a feeling the draft price tag of Love will be high, attention-getting, and will put the onus on his first coaching staff for his outcome. He's a 1st-round talent gamble, I admit...but it is a gamble.

*I completed this report pre-Senior Bowl and held it to see how Love, a major curiosity for me (and others), would fare – he kinda lived up to my initial studies – nice arm in 7-on-7, 1-on-1 throwing but wilted away to not-a-standout in 11-on-11 action. Showed the arm skills here and there in safe drills, but



did nothing electric or with energy and the Senior Bowl week came and went and it hurt Love's standing as the days clicked on – no electric play, little energy, no real 'buzz' besides people thinking about what NFL team will try and 'fix' him at the next level and get this possible great-armed bargain.

Jordan Love, Through the Lens of Our QB Scouting Algorithm:

Troubling numbers...

The past two seasons, Love has faced major conference teams Michigan State (2018), Wake Forest (2019), and LSU (2019). His output in those games...

0-3 record, 63.1% Comp. Pct., 313.0 pass yds per game, 3 TDs/8 INTs

On the positive side...

Love has made three bowl games, lower tier ones, and his output in those games:

2-1 record, 60.3% Comp. Pct., 310.0 pass yards per game, 7 TDs/2 INTs

You'd like for Love to be a better runner, to use his decent athleticism more to his advantage...and maybe he will at the next level (?). But to show you my concern with his hesitancy to run that I see on tape, take a look at these numbers:

Final two seasons of play in college (and, yes...sacks are negative run plays in college):

9.2 yards rushing and 0.26 rushing TDs per game, 1.92 yards per carry = **Love** (2018-2019)

27.4 yards rushing and 0.43 rushing TDs per game, 3.16 yards per carry = **Burrow** (2018-2019)

8.0 yards rushing and 0.21 rushing TDs per game, 1.67 yards per carry = **Hebert** (2018-2019)

29.1 yards rushing and 0.48 rushing TDs per game, 3.11 yards per carry = **Josh Allen** (2017-2018)

8.6 yards rushing and 0.29 rushing TDs per game, 2.58 yards per carry = **Tua** (2018-2019)

You can see that Love wasn't a high-end runner in college, but not a disaster/stiff. He had zero rushing TDs in his 13 games in 2019, which is rather odd for sure...and gives more mild concerns on his mindset.

Senior Bowl Measurements: 6'3.5"/223, 10 5/8" hands, 33 1/8" arm



Projected Combine measurables: 4.75-4.80 40-time, 7.10+ three-cone

The Historical QB Prospects to Whom Jordan Love Most Compares Within Our System:

Jay Cutler is a great comp for **Jordan Love**...

Had Cutler grown up in the passing game era, and been better schooled all along the way, he might have gone to a passer factory college team and really had great numbers. Cutler was made for the quick passing/catch and fire shotgun game but was raised in the more stuffy era of passing games. Cutler would have been amazing at the short/quick passing game and was a better runner of the ball in college than people realize.

Love has the cannon arm and possibly the better than advertised feet. Like with Cutler, there were signs of a great QB prospect sitting there for all to see with an explosive arm -- but also had the numbers/turnovers that mystified and scared people away. Also, Cutler was not a great personality...one of his downfalls in the NFL, a nice NFL career I might add. Love has some of that Cutler personality in him, in my opinion.

<u>QB-Grade</u>	<u>LJax Rating</u>	<u>Last</u>	<u>First</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>
7.134	4.33	Love	Jordan	2020	Utah State	75.5	223	60.7%	12.0	20.5	33.8
4.548	4.59	Cutler	Jay	2006	Vanderbilt	75.3	226	51.3%	11.3	26.7	26.1
7.797	1.80	Nassib	Ryan	2013	Syracuse	74.1	228	61.4%	12.2	21.1	38.4
5.726	1.85	Lock	Drew	2019	Missouri	75.6	228	58.5%	11.7	22.6	33.7
6.940	2.16	Winston	Jameis	2015	Florida State	76.0	235	63.7%	13.5	17.3	30.2
4.660	4.05	Tannehill	Ryan	2012	Texas A&M	76.1	222	58.5%	11.2	19.6	27.6
3.962		Lovelocke	Jerry	2015	Prairie View A&M	76.5	240	57.5%	12.2	21.9	39.0

**'LJax rating' – new for 2020, as we re-do our grading systems to better identify/reward the spread offense QB prospects...looking for the runner-passer talents.*

***“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 on to become NFL good-to-great. A scouting score of 9.5+ is rarefied air—higher potential for becoming great-to-elite.*



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QBs scoring 6.0–8.0 are finding more success in the new passing era of the NFL (2014–on). Depending upon the 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.

2020 NFL Draft Outlook:

I bet **Jordan Love** has a meteoric rise to the top 10-20 in analysts mock drafts and is eventually a top 10-20 pick. As of this writing, more people are hesitant in the Utah State/mid-major QB that CFB/ESPN didn't pump all year and who had a weak 2019 season. It won't be long before everyone just so happens to discover him at the same time, and he rockets up the mock drafts and QB rankings.

I think people will love, in their loins, Love better than Burrow but they'd never say it too loud. I bet there will be a vocal, public Love vs. Tua debate. I also think Love will jump past **Justin Herbert** (and **Jacob Eason**) among the 'big arm' QB debate for some and it might cost Herbert draft stock/money. I would not be shocked if Love had a good pre-draft showing at the Senior Bowl and NFL Combine that was drafted as the 2nd QB off the board this year...it will be a debate of 'big arm' vs. 'Alabama guy with a hip issue' for 2nd QB taken in this draft.

I think NFL teams are too coached and influenced by the CFB hype to pass on Tua (unless his medical check is bad). So, I'll bet, at this stage, Burrow #1, Tua top 5-10, and Love top 10-15 jockeying with Herbert for the 3rd QB taken.

NFL Outlook:

Love could be a star, could be a radical disappointment at the next level. All the tools are there. Many top QB prospects with inferior tools and red flag worry now hit the NFL and do just fine...**Dwayne Haskins, Daniel Jones, Sam Darnold, Josh Allen**...so, I assume Love will also work at the next level to some degree.

What did you think of **Jay Cutler's** NFL career? People loved his arm, and eventually hated his turnovers and attitude. So many coaches were brought in to 'fix' him. We tend to think he had a bad career...and then you see he played for 12 years and for three different organizations who wanted him. Could've been worse? Love may be a better Cutler because he was schooled in the passing game era. In the right quick tempo offense...Love is going to work more likely than not in the NFL.

If Love fails, it's probably because he doesn't have the heart for it -- too timid with weak QB instincts hiding behind that explosive arm.



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