



NFL Draft 2020 Scouting Report: WR Justin Jefferson, LSU

**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 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 can't do it. I just cannot get behind **Justin Jefferson** as a top NFL WR prospect.

I'm not against him.

He's good.

He'll 'work' in the NFL, but I have a feeling that unless he gets reconnected with **Joe Burrow**, and that reconnection is in Carolina with **Joe Brady** – we're going to forget about Jefferson in about a year or so.

I don't want to be cliché, but this just looks like, on watching Jefferson in games/on tape, way more about **Joe Burrow's** brilliance than Justin Jefferson's brilliance. Had Burrow never gone to LSU...Jefferson would be a Day Three prospect. But Burrow's magic took a really fine, capable, NFL-fast wide receiver prospect and made him a legend at just the right time – in the CFB playoffs, with the most people watching.

I wanted to turn on the tape and see Jefferson playing/showing skills as well as **CeeDee Lamb**, because they have a similar size/athleticism numbers and both gained attention for producing numbers in big playoff showcases. I wanted to reinforce a notion that I pushed in writing my Lamb report...a simple parallel on -- *what's so different about Lamb vs. Jefferson, anyway?* I'm still not as high on Lamb as anyone in the football business, but after conducting this deeper Jefferson study -- I cannot push Jefferson past/over Lamb as an NFL prospect after watching them and looking over our computer model grades.

Jefferson had a lot of the same college benefits as Lamb...they played in highly functional offenses with #1 pick QBs, which allowed them to shine brightly...somewhat a head fake/an unfair sway in our minds. Former LSU WR **D.J. Chark** was way better and bigger and faster than Jefferson or Lamb, and way better in my opinion – but Chark played in a dysfunctional offense and had to fight for everything/anything...and he was punished in his draft stock for it, unfairly so...wildly unfair to him.



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Lamb and Jefferson have had a much more beneficial platform compared to Chark. Chark wasn't drafted as highly as he should have been because of the lack of a nice platform (which more proves how terrible NFL scouting is/has been for years). When I really looked deeper/scouted Chark for his draft, after his great Senior Bowl week and NFL Combine, I could see the NFL ability hiding in the bad passing game...it's not easy to do, you have to watch a lot of plays of his where he didn't even get thrown to. But you could see his routes, size, speed over his defenders...and his ability to catch poorly thrown balls from a terrible quarterback(s). You had to actually study to see Chark hiding in plain sight...you also have to watch/study 50-100 WR prospects every year for years to have mental baseline comparisons to work with. To me, Lamb and Jefferson are candy for dinner for a five-year old...it's too easy, too pleasing a platform/showcase they were on and it makes them seem like something awesome...when they may be more plain ole 'good'...WRs you wouldn't care less about if they played for Kansas State or Nebraska or Virginia or LSU (in 2017 or prior).

With that said, Jefferson got a sweet/bigger bump from his college surroundings and it's artificially inflating his draft value.

Jefferson is NFL-capable for sure. Good hands+. A tough receiver...willing to work the interior. He has 4.4+ speed. There's a really nice WR here. If I ran my computer files looking for 6'1"/200 range WRs who ran a 4.4s 40-time, I'd have dozens of guys over the past few years that hit those marks. This year, within an inch and 10-pounds of Jefferson's measurements (either direction), there are four guys who hit those marks. Florida's **Freddie Swain** is one of them. He's nearly identical to Jefferson, physically...but he played at Florida and not with **Joe Burrow**. If he were at LSU and Jefferson at Florida, what would their draft stocks be?

When I watch Jefferson on tape, I just see a guy slipping out of a backfield alignment a lot (nice LSU play designs for him) catching almost RB flare-like passes and then running for what he can run for (and as a 4.4+ runner, he's going to do nice work against college defenses). I also see a guy mainly drifting into the middle and deep of the field on patterns and trying to find a spot in the zone of the defense for Burrow to find him...and there is a lot of Burrow evading sacks, buying tons of time, Jefferson adjusting around and Burrow finding him in the gaps. What I don't see as much with Jefferson -- amazingly sharp route running/burning defenders on timing routes or beating with bubble screen speed or bombs away speed. I just see a good wide receiver available in a great passing game.

I never once watched a play from Jefferson where I was like *"Whoa! This is the next great NFL wide receiver!"* But several times, watching his work, I just shook my head and thought *"Man, Joe Burrow is magic!"*. Jefferson was just a sound, fast, smart, reliable guy for Burrow to destroy defenses with...and Jefferson had the benefit of his teammate WR **Ja'Marr Chase** being the (arguably) better receiver/getting coverage attention as well. You think Chase will score 20 TDs next season without Burrow? You think Jefferson would have 1,500+ yards and 18 TDs going back to LSU without Burrow in 2020?



Jefferson is a nice kid. A good football player. A handy WR prospect. He might be a 'B' player in the NFL...a **Sterling Shepard**-ish guy or a 'C' player like a **Kenny Stills** or **Dede Westbrook**. Jefferson is going to work...he's just not going to be 'special'...and not worth whatever some NFL GM dolt pays for him in the draft in a WR economy that's inflated with options. But he won't be a bust either.

Justin Jefferson, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

How do we truly assess how Jefferson performed, what output he produced in college, if we consider/theorize that **Joe Burrow** and his radical numbers and talent in 2019 (and late 2018) are to blame for much of this?

In reality, the 2019 numbers from Jefferson were amazing tallies but if you look at them from a percentage/share of the passing game...Jefferson's output was at/less than 30% share of Burrow's passing yards, TDs, or completed passes – and that's lesser 'share' of the team's passing game than most top college WRs will hit.

For example, Jefferson's 18 TDs in 2019 are amazing but they are 30% of Burrow's 60 TD passes.

In 2016, **D.J. Chark** had 3 receiving TDs...which is terrible, on the surface, but represented 27% of awful starting QB **Danny Etling's** 11 TD passes for the entire season. Which is more impressive...Jefferson catching 30% of the, perhaps, greatest college QB of all time's 60 TD passes in a season...or **D.J. Chark** catching nearly 30% of his awful QB's limited TD passes? What if Chark were on the 2019 LSU team...would you rather have him or Jefferson? Yet, Jefferson will likely be taken higher in the draft even though Chark is as super high-end/a better athlete than Jefferson in every measured way. Why? Scouts and analysts are lazy and dazzled by 'totals', and what team they saw in the CFB playoffs or on TV all year. It's a crime.

NFL Combine Measurables:

6'1 1/8"/202, 9.13 hands, 33.0 arm

4.43 40-time, skipped agility drills

37.5" vertical, 10'6" broad, skipped the bench



The Historical WR Prospects to Whom Justin Jefferson Most Compares Within Our System:

There’s nothing wrong with a **Robert Woods**-like career – a professional WR who was decent but underwhelming in Buffalo for 4 years and then broke out with **Sean McVay** in L.A. Woods’s career was getting killed by his surrounding offense in Buffalo, and then went to the much more effective Rams and put up numbers. Same as Jefferson might with **Joe Burrow** and without. A lot of solid not special NFL WRs on this board...but they made it in the league to various degrees of success, nonetheless. Jefferson reminds me of that type of good-not-great future NFL hand.

<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>
6.873	2020	Jefferson	Justin	LSU	6	1.2	202	8.12	7.77	8.78
6.010	2013	Woods	Robert	USC	6	0.4	201	8.27	7.11	8.96
6.047	2017	Henderson	Carlos	La Tech	5	11.0	199	8.69	5.29	8.07
6.009	2016	Payton	Jordan	UCLA	6	1.1	207	8.81	5.98	9.01
6.427	2004	Henderson	Devery	LSU	5	11.4	198	9.43	12.40	6.13
6.897	2015	Agholor	Nelson	USC	6	0.1	198	7.80	10.05	8.29

*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 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/create separation.

