NFL Draft 2020 Scouting Report: WR Lawrence Cager, Georgia

*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.

Maybe in a parallel universe, **Lawrence Cager** is a top 5-10 WR prospect for the 2020 NFL Draft among the football analysts this day. However, in this universe, heading into the NFL Draft, Cager is not ranked among the top 40 WR prospects for most draft rankers and analysts.

He's in our current top 15, and he might deserve to be in the top 10…but I also won't be shocked if he never comes to fruition in the NFL.

Why are we so high on Cager? It's a long story. Let's start at the beginning…

Cager was a 4-star high recruit in 2015. He was being pursed by **Nick Saban**/Alabama and Ohio State among others, including his home state team – Georgia. He was a coveted WR recruit in football, and a potential scholarship basketball player, and professional baseball draft prospect. Cager appeared headed for a baseball path at one point but he put his energy into football and became one of the most pursued WR high school recruits his senior season.

At the last moment, because of coaching changes and rumored changes…he ended up committing to Miami, Florida almost out of the blue. He had never officially visited the Hurricanes when he committed. He then visited Alabama after the Miami announcement, but took his Miami visit after…and stuck with the Hurricanes.

Cager played as a true freshman for Miami in 2015…and gained plenty of attention for his size (6'4+/220) and skills. He was on some All-American watchlists going into the 2016 season but at the end of the 2016 preseason he tore his ACL and lost his 2016 campaign.

Cager returned in 2017 but was never 100% right (according to him) and played in 8 games and was rotating with the starters but not breaking out like he had as a freshman.

In 2018, Cager got back to being himself…played in 12 games, and had his best season (21-374-6) but not a great, attention-getting season working in a bottom tier passing game that barely averaged 13

completions (and just above 50% comp. pct.) and 162 passing yards per game…an offense that got head coach **Mark Richt** bounced out of Miami.

In 2019, Cager used his graduate transfer to jump back home to play for Georgia…where that promising young star finally started to fulfill the promise – 32-470-4 in half a season/7 games before Cager suffered an ankle injury that required minor surgery and he couldn't make it back in time for his bowl game. Another flash of something that ended in disappointment. Cager had been improving and producing as the season progressed and had just posted his two best statistical games prior to the ankle issue.

Cager, when healthy, garnered enough attention to draw an NFL Combine invite…but he didn't participate due to the ankle issue recovery.

On tape, Cager has it all…

 -- Very quick feet off the snap, is able to get open on any corner.

 -- The size you love with those nimble feet…6'4"+/220.

 -- Great start/run and stop ability. Cager runs routes downfield and then just stops on a dime to turn for back shoulder throws and the covering corner is still running past him unable to match the stopping skills.

 -- Everything he does is smooth…he just looks and moves like a fine-tuned athlete (from the basketball, baseball, track, and football recruit out of high school).

 -- Not afraid to work inside and does a nice job on contested catches.

 -- Watching him against Notre Dame/2019…top 10-15 CB prospect **Tony Pride** was unable to lock him down. Cager had no issues getting open on him. Cager posted a 5-82-1 game on Notre Dame (not all on Pride). However, there was a stretch in the 4th-quarter where Cager just abused Pride several plays/catches in a row.

 -- Watching Cager against Florida/2019…top CB prospect **C.J. Henderson** also had some struggles covering Cager, who had a career best day (7-132-1) against the Gators, though not all against Henderson.

 -- Keep in mind all this Cager production increase was happening with weak-armed, talent-**lacking Jake Fromm** at QB. Fromm was the master of the screen pass/check down pass – which didn't help Cager's game much at all.

Watching Cager work…it's really nice. Really efficient. Just a solid WR who is confident, can get open on top corners, and moves effortlessly…almost so smooth he looks like he might not be trying. Without the

injury history – Cager might have been one of the better prospects at WR in this draft. But Cager never logged one season without missing some time, even if just a game. And it wasn't just nagging injuries. He had an ACL surgery. An ankle surgery. Shoulder and rib issues. He's a fine-tuned athlete, but also a fragile one. He doesn't play fragile, but his history would appear to indicate fragility issues.

There's talent here…it's just hard to properly valuate with the partial seasons and injury issues.

Lawrence Cager, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

Taking Cager's 2019 seven games and extrapolating to a typical 13-game season: 61 catches, 884 yards, 7.5 TDs…that would have gained more attention.

Cager's last 18 full games played…10 TD catches.

Toughest games in 2019 (Notre Dame, Florida, Tennessee, Missouri), 4 games, Cager averaged: 5.7 catches, 91.3 yards, 0.75 TDs per game.

2020 NFL Combine Data:

6'4.6"/220, 8 7/8" hands, 33 7/8" arms

No drills done

The Historical WR Prospects to Whom Lawrence Cager Most Compares Within Our System:

Two names on here really jump out at me – **Kenny Golladay** and **Equanimeous St. Brown**. Underrated, physically big/smooth WRs. Golladay went on to become a star in the NFL. St. Brown was showing signs, but injuries have dragged him down some the last year+.

Cager could be one of these two guys in the NFL…and that would be either really exciting or really disappointing.

WR Score	Draft Yr	Last	First	College	H	H	W	Power Strngth Metric	Speed Agility Metric	Hands' Metric
7.034	2020	Cager	Lawrence	Georgia	6	4.6	220	7.61	5.87	7.66
7.164	2017	Golladay	Kenny	No. Illinois	6	4.0	218	6.94	4.52	8.81
8.085	2006	Colston	Marques	Hofstra	6	4.6	224	8.69	5.90	7.15
7.108	2018	St. Brown	Equanimeous	Notre Dame	6	4.6	214	7.15	6.51	8.51
7.366	2018	Weathers	Caylon	Tenn-Martin	6	4.4	216	4.59	7.79	8.14
6.027	2012	Quick	Brian	App State	6	3.6	220	6.80	2.64	8.31

A score of 7.0+ is where we start to take a Big-WR prospect more seriously. A score of 8.50+ is where we see a stronger correlation of a Big-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 Big-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, and 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/to 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. Everything combining to project catch-abilities for the next level.

2020 NFL Draft Outlook:

I see 5th-7th-round rankings on Cager, with some UDFA projections. The final medical checks will tell the tale on whether he's a 6th-7th-rounder or goes undrafted. His size and movement skills probably sneak him into one of the final rounds.

If I were an NFL GM, I'd have Cager on my late-round list – he has top 100-150 overall talent but comes with a lot of injury risk/history. I'd only spend a very late pick on him…he's what acquiring late picks is all about – guys who COULD be very good in the pros because of their size, skills but have things that dragged them to the later rounds.

NFL Outlook:

Either Golladay or St. Brown…it's a proper way to project him. Surprising productive/star or always forgotten backup who has moments in the preseason but not much in the regular season.

He's more St. Brown, I suppose, if you had to make a bet…but I liked St. Brown…still do, but not sure he'll ever really matter in the pros. There is hope here…and fear/risk with Cager.