



## 2021 NFL Draft Scouting Report: QB Cole Kelley, SE Louisiana

*\*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.*

A four-star high school recruit QB who signed to play for Arkansas – they were, at one time, thinking he was going to be the next big thing at QB for the Razorbacks. Kelley ascended to a starting role mid-freshman season and showed a little spark...a big 6'5"+/240+ guy who could throw the ball all over who'd also put his big frame into motion running the ball – a hard dude to bring down.

Kelley got on a roll for his first four games as a freshman starter for the Razorbacks. He took a two-game win streak into their annual, high profile battle with LSU... where he stumbled (3 of 10 passing, 0 TD/1 INT), and was replaced/pulled in the game.

After the game, Kelley was arrested for a DWI and he was suspended by the team. A football career spiral was underway.

Kelley came back in 2018 to compete for the starting job, which he lost/ended up splitting time with **Ty Storey** for two games, played well (3 TDs/0 INTs) enough those first two games to win the job back for the 3rd game of the season vs. North Texas. Arkansas lost to UNT in a blowout with Kelley going 16-of-35 (45.7%) for 185 yards, 0 TDs/4 INTs and he was, once again, benched. This time his career at Arkansas was effectively over.

He transferred to SE Louisiana in 2019 and battled for the starting QB job but did not get it...he ended up splitting time with the established starter. Seemed like the end of his NFL prospects. But Kelley, rotating in and out, completed 74% of his passes with 10 TDs/2 INTs...he also ran for 10 TDs in part-time play in 2019.

When Kelley got a shot at full time play, one game, vs. a solid Central Arkansas team...Kelley completed 83% of his 24 passes for 273 yards, 1 TD/1 INT, but ran for 4 TDs in a 34-0 blowout victory and was named Conference Player of the Week. What was his reward? Right back to the backup/rotation the new week as SELA went back to their old QB starting and Kelley rotating in and out again as a backup/gimmick.

So, what are we even talking about here for the NFL?

Well, at one time Kelley was pretty well thought of. He obviously ran into issues at Arkansas, not totally damning ones but damaging for sure. He went to SE La. and lost 10+ pounds, got in better shape, and made the most of his opportunities. He got himself back on the radar a bit.



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2020 season got delayed for SE La. The season will go in the spring. Kelley is battling to become the starting QB and get his career really on track again. As of this writing, it is unknown whether he can topple the incumbent.

The NFL is interested because he has great size...I say 6'5"+, but he's listed at 6'7". He's a big dude with a big frame and throws with the mechanics and arm strength of a legit pro. I've seen some tape that really got my attention (positive)...but then a few plays later there would be some trouble. The best-case excuse is that Kelley was a young/dumb SEC player pushed into the starting lineup and wasn't ready. But there's elite size and some coachable tools to develop here.

At Arkansas, he made the All-Conference honor roll...so, he's not a problem child, per se. Just seems he was a bit naïve at Arkansas and had to grow up, and might have done so transferring to SE La.

There are enough signs, flashes, clues for an NFL team to take a look at putting him on the practice squad and seeing if he can work his way up. He has a prospect package of tools and talent that says it's worth a cheap investment to see.

I watch him on tape, and I see NFL vision, patience, mechanics and throws. Then, out of nowhere, a terrible throw that ruins the vibe. But he has more good tape than bad...more promising tape than bad. I'm intrigued and it's hard to fully scout him because he went from young SEC QB over his head to hidden backup at the FCS level but was way accurate and dominant running the ball when rotated in his one season at SE La.

There could be a good/promising QB hiding here...or a bust. Hard to tell with certainty given his journey – but with his size and arm, for the price, you want to go find out if he is promising/developmental.

We will update this report and grading as his spring 2021 season plays out.

### Cole Kelley, Through the Lens of Our QB Scouting Algorithm:

-- Four games at SE La with 9 or more passing attempts. His numbers in those games: 47-of-62 (75.8%), 54 TDs/1 INT, 6 rushing TDs.

-- Four games with 20 or more pass attempts his freshman 2017 at Arkansas, vs. Alabama, Auburn, Ole Miss and Coastal Carolina, and he was 73-of-123 (59.3%) 204.0 pass yards per game, 5 TDs/2 INTs, 2 rushing TDs – considering the competition it wasn't bad at all, as a thrown into action out of nowhere



freshman. Nor did he wilt in the face of the competition he was thrown in against so young, so out of nowhere in a sense.

**2021 Pro Day Projections:**

6'5.5"/230, 10"+ hands, 33" arm length

4.8+ 40-time, 7.25+ three-cone

**The Historical QB Prospects to Whom Cole Kelley Most Compares Within Our System:**

Hard to put a profile on Kelley because he has had such a bizarre college journey...and there exists and upside no of these other guys had.

<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>
<b>5.148</b>	3.52	Kelley	Cole	2021	SE La	77.5	233	65.2%	10.9	24.2	40.9
<b>5.590</b>		Sorensen	Brad	2013	So. Utah	76.2	237	58.8%	11.5	29.6	37.5
<b>4.239</b>		Smith	Colter	2014	C. Missouri St.	76.5	240	61.2%	10.7	22.3	38.5
<b>4.616</b>		Belton	Clay	2013	Findlay	76.4	230	60.1%	12.2	21.1	36.1
<b>4.060</b>	0.92	Morgan	James	2020	Fla. Int'l	76.0	229	60.4%	11.9	28.1	47.8

*\*'LJax rating' – new for 2021, 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.*

*QB's 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.*



### **2021 NFL Draft Outlook:**

Very likely undrafted. If he's been working out with handlers/pro preppers and been shocking and they've tipped off some teams...maybe, because of his size, someone reaches in the 7th-round. It would make sense vs. most of the trash NFL teams take in the 7th-round. But he's almost assuredly a UDFA prospect.

His spring 2021 season has the chance to put him on the map. If he can win the job and put up some radical numbers...maybe win an FCS award of some kind, then he can move more strongly into the draft conversation. Or, he could lose out to the incumbent QB again in 2021...and really be a hidden prospect.

If I were an NFL GM, at this stage, I might consider calling him for a UDFA look. I'd hope I had a more loaded QB room to begin with...but if I just arrived to work for my new team and we needed QB lottery tickets – **Cole Kelley** would be on my UDFA list for sure.

### **NFL Outlook:**

Going to take 2-3 seasons of scrapping and grinding and then hoping he gets a shot, and that he is ready for it, and capitalizes on it. Most likely the forces of NFL-nature are against him, as with most UDFA QBs, but we'll keep a candle lit for him if he's willing to grind after it.



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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.C." with a stylized flourish.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1/21/2021