



NFL Draft 2021 Scouting Report: DE Jaelan Phillips, Miami, Florida

**Our DL 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.*

I haven't really focused on **Jaelan Phillips** much throughout the draft scouting process to this point. He seemed 'good', but not good enough to demand an immediate deeper dive. However, over the past couple of weeks Phillips has slowly been rising up the draft board and has now surpassed everyone's previous #1 edge guy, 2020 teammate, **Greg Rousseau** and is now challenging **Kwity Paye** and recent riser **Azeez Ojulari** to be the #1 ranked (mainstream/consensus) EDGE rusher prospect for 2021.

Why has everyone in football analysis turned on Rousseau and now endorsed Phillips as 'the guy'? What could have happened in like a month to change the ENTIRETY of the football intelligentsia's mindset ALL at about the same time?

It was a two-fold process, I believe:

- 1) People started realizing what we (CFM) saw with Rousseau months ago, back when he was THEIR top edge guy (with Kwity) – Rousseau's got a lot of flaws and is not a slam dunk prospect.
- 2) Phillips had a nice Pro Day...and the very same people who are so quick to point out how dangerous or dumb it is to fall in love with any prospect's Pro Days – used the Pro Day results to dunk on people/celebrate their newfound love (Phillips) on Twitter, etc.

...but the thing is – the early reports on the Pro Day, as usual, were all 'fake news'. The Twitter mob, led by 'names' in the football analyst community, claimed the Pro Day numbers locked Phillips in as the top edge rusher in the draft.

They celebrated his low 4.5s 40-time before the official time turned out to be 4.58 (still good)...but it didn't matter, the first hype/twitter news already had all the lemmings rushing headlong toward the cliff.

They were wowed by his low 7.0s three-cone, but then we find the official three-cone was 7.13...which, again, is good but not as rare as the low 7.0 almost sub-7.0. Only higher end edge rushing prospects post three-cones at/under 7.0. What Phillips posted in the 40-yard dash and three-cone were definitely impressive, but not 'elite' impressive. It's like if I said a 220-pound running back prospect clocked in the 4.3s, but then a few days later you found out it was 4.46 not the 4.3s. It seems slight, but at those levels the slight change changes one from 'radical'/'elite' to merely 'very good' – and that's a huge shift in this judging art both analytically and economically.



APRIL 20, 2021

But let's say Phillips' Pro Day is 'impressive'. It's like a 'B+' grade impressive, which means NFL-worthy for sure. Let's go with that. OK...but do you know the rest of the story on Phillips? I saw analyst **Chris Simms**, randomly, pop up on my YouTube page when researching Phillips. It was a segment where he was claiming Phillips as his top edge rushing prospect and explaining why. I had already completed my scouting, so I was interested what Simms was saying (because Simms has a fresh take on players, not that he's great at scouting...but he is good and he doesn't just run with the herd all the time).

Simms boasted of Phillips' 'get off' in the pass rush and went on about how relentless he was, yada-yada.

I agree, Phillips has good feet, very good athleticism. He's NFL-worthy off the edge. But he didn't destroy opposing blockers on tape nor did he destroy the stat sheets. Most his sacks (6.0 of 8.0 in 2020) came in a three-game stretch late 2020 vs. NC State, Va Tech, and Duke. He was a bit quiet otherwise. I see the quickness, but it's 'B+' grade – BUT, watching the tape detail, he has little/no pass rush 'moves' and doesn't use his hands to beat blockers. Trying to explain the visual, to me -- he's literally trying to run past the blocker every time, with his arms almost like they're tied behind his back. He's a terrible hand fighter, to my eye, and he has no array of moves – he's just trying to out-fast a blocker. The better blockers just flowed right with him and neutralized him. But if the QB tried to scramble, or if the play broke down...Phillips was good at chasing the loose animal.

However, here's the deeper thing...

Do you know Phillips' background? Are you comfortable with it (from a 1st-round pick risk analysis)? His background story is something that often gets crafted/shaped/edited into a short sob story. There's reason for concern within it to be explored – but no one is looking/reporting/theorizing on it (to me). Here's what you may not know...

2017 = Very promising CFB splash, a solid freshman campaign at UCLA.

2018 = Hit by a car riding his moped, broke his wrist/arm badly. Healed in time for his 2018 season but his play fell off and he ran into issues with concussions and missed the rest of the season (after 4 games).

2019 = Retired from football, went to a tiny college to focus on music and music production.

2020 = Transferred to Miami to study music production and to rejoin/play football.

What I see in Phillips' background is a concerning lack of passion for football (no matter what words he belches in an interview). I worry about a lack of grit, a 'softness'/entitlement off the field – wealthy parents/upbringing, has a passion for music and was willing to walk away (some say 'forced') from football to pursue it. Phillips is a slight bit arrogant, a bit 'above it all' type of personality in interviews (my take). I don't see a life-or-death born football player. I see a great body who is good at football and that's his meal ticket, but he wishes it were something else – and there's nothing wrong with that (many



sleepwalk through football for the paycheck...why not if you could?) but typically the NFL is looking for crazed football monsters as 1st-round picks. I don't think Phillips comes off the way NFL people like. He has a ton a physical talent, but I don't see him as schooled, technical on the field – just a fast guy trying to play fast and not fully dedicated to his craft.

What happens when he runs into players at the next level who eat, sleep, drink, and breathe football? Will he crank it up another notch to be as good/better than the competition – or is he content to get that 1st-round pick money and never really become dominant.

I think it's a legit question.

Yes, he has the football athleticism for the edge in the NFL...a 1st-round athlete/prospect. Yes, he can correct his mindset and technical skills. All of that makes him a top 20-50 prospect, I agree – but would I put millions of dollars in his pocket with so many other similar options out there? I don't think so...and I think the NFL will be a bit turned off by him in meetings/interviews as well. Just a hunch/what I'm hearing a bit among the underground sources.

It doesn't mean he cannot be really good or get better/great, that's certainly on the table – I just say there are some red flags here to stop and consider.

Jaelan Phillips, Through the Lens of Our DE Scouting Algorithm:

-- Phillips has had such a bizarre career, it's hard to get a real read...nice freshman year (3.5 sacks in 6 games). 2018 all the injuries. 2019 'retired'. A great 2020 season (statistically) but his stats/output could be considered too concentrated/occurring in a small cluster of games.

In his 3-game stretch late 2020 season, against NC State, Va Tech, Duke he accumulated...

9.5 (or 61%) of his 15.5 TFLs in 2020

6.0 (or 75%) of his 8.0 sacks in 2020

-- 23.5 TFLs in 20 career college games...that's pretty nice. Phillips is great at chasing down ballcarriers. I see him chasing more than I see him dominating as a pass rusher – but he's got the athleticism to be a good chaser.

-- No forced fumbles despite all the TFLs and solid amount of career sacks...because he's more chaser than destroyer and high-pressure pass rusher. More of a speed rusher who gets through every so often with that speed.



2021 Pro Day:

6'5.4"/260, 9.75' hands, 33.25" arms

4.58 40-yard, 2.69 20-yd, 1.59 10-yd

4.18 shuttle, 7.13 three-cone

21 bench press, 36" vertical, 10'5" broad jump

The Historical DE Prospects to Whom Jaelan Phillips Most Compares Within Our System:

Seeing **Clelin Ferrell** and **Marcus Davenport** on this comp list would scare me to death as an NFL evaluator, because they are great representations of the feared Phillips' issue: good size, talent/athleticism, mainstream acceptance...but 'soft' and failing to live up to any expectations in the next level.

Danielle Hunter on the list is the reason why you draft Phillips 'anyway' – you chase 'the dream'. Phillips' issues are more mental and technical, not athletic. He's a B+ athlete with a 'C-D' concern on his true ability for the NFL. Maybe a coach or just a mindset change/maturity can unlock his full potential?

<u>DE Score</u>	<u>Last</u>	<u>First</u>	<u>Yr</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>Bull Rush</u>	<u>Speed Rush</u>	<u>Pass Rush Metric</u>	<u>Tackle Metric</u>
7.442	Phillips	Jaelan	2021	Miami, Fla	6	5.4	260	8.65	6.49	7.05	5.07
8.055	Ferrell	Clelin	2019	Clemson	6	4.3	264	8.37	4.45	6.34	5.15
5.331	Hunter	Danielle	2015	LSU	6	5.1	252	8.38	10.64	5.09	4.84
3.848	Webster III	Larry	2014	Bloomsburg	6	5.6	252	9.35	4.47	7.57	4.61
2.563	Anderson	Mark	2006	Alabama	6	4.2	254	7.37	9.40	5.27	5.98
8.428	Davenport	Marcus	2018	UTSA	6	5.6	264	8.71	8.13	8.36	5.98
2.453	Frazier	Marcell	2018	Missouri	6	4.5	256	7.98	5.04	5.12	4.62

**A score of 8.00+ is where we see a stronger correlation of DEs 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 DE.*



All of the DE ratings are based on a 0–10 scale, but a player can score negative, or above a 10.0 in certain instances.

Power-Strength Metrics = A combination of several measurements. An attempt to classify the DE prospect as more of a battle-in-the-trenches type of DE, a 'bull-rusher', and/or a DE prospect who has some DT capabilities.

Speed-Agility Metrics = A combination of several speed, agility, size measurements. A unique measuring system to look for DEs who profile more as speed-rush, stand-up DEs, and/or possible OLBs.

Pass-Rusher Rating = A combination of physical measurables, and college performance, graded historically for future NFL profiling. In the simplest of terms, this is an attempt to classify whether a particular DE is likely to achieve high sack totals in the NFL. We know the 'system'/scheme the DE goes on to play in has a part in future success...but so do the player's skills and performance history. "You can't keep a good man/DE down," we'd like to think.

Tackling Rating = A combination of physical measurables, and college performance, graded historically for future NFL profiling. In the simplest of terms, this is an attempt to classify the DE as one more likely to be involved in a heavy amount of tackles, tackles for a loss, and forced fumbles. Lower-scoring DEs in this subcategory tend to be more pure pass-rushers/specialists. This is also our attempt to quantify, if it's possible, the 'toughness' of a player.

2021 NFL Draft Outlook:

Phillips has gone from fringe 1st-rounder around the draft rankings globe a few weeks ago, to now a for-sure top 20 pick – the only debate being...is he the top edge guy in 2021 or just #2-3? He's going to be a top 3 edge off the board, I'd guess, possibly the first one taken.

If I were an NFL GM, I respect what Phillips is bringing to the table...but I see enough reasons to 'pass' (for the price) because there are plenty of talents like him (Paye, Ojulari, Rosseau, Oweh, Ossai, Basham, Turner, etc.) who are similarly athletic yet flawed...and many will come cheaper than Phillips (in the draft).

NFL Outlook:

Going to be interesting...

1) He might be just a mildly disappointing edge rusher who hangs around the league for 5-7 forgettable seasons.

