NFL Draft 2022 Scouting Report: OLB Nakobe Dean, Georgia

Our LB 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.

Nakobe Dean was the Butkus Award winner for 2021…a 1st-team All-SEC…a unanimous All-American…a national title winning linebacker, a former five-star recruit out of high school, and a very smart young man/a mechanical engineering major. After looking over this impeccable resume -- all I can wonder is how Dean is not a top 10 prospect across the board for everyone?

After I finished watching several game tapes and looked over his college output, I was left wondering…how did this guy win any of these awards? And how could anyone take this guy in the first two days of the draft?

Obviously, I'm a big dissident here. Most analysts have Dean as a top 25-50 prospect, and I have no doubt he'll go top 50, if not top 25. So, where do I come off being the lone idiot on Dean's scouting?

Well, this one is simple for me… I watched the tape, several games, fully ready to embrace 'the resume' and watch a 1st-round talent. Instead, I watched a slightly undersized linebacker half the time run/pass blitzing…because he could…because the deep, talented Georgia D-Line created the paths and the other half of the time Dean drifted back into coverage. Dean was not a real linebacker in 2021…more so he was a gimmick. And how that gimmick apparently wasn't obvious to every CFB observer is beyond me but is 'typical' of the echo chamber media.

I stopped right here, in this writing, pinged **Ross Jacobs**, and asked him to watch the Dean vs. Alabama tape and tell me what he sees that Dean is doing (without telling him what to look for or whether it was good or bad)…within five minutes, he's like "*Oh, he just drops into coverage and keeps blitzing.*" Once you see it…you can't unsee it in all his tape.

Dean was either given the freedom to pick a space and run/pass blitz…which is a gimmick, and 'sweet' looking, and 'star making' work if you can get it. But it's definitely NOT special…a hundred college guys could've played the same role and been as productive/disruptive and been as/more productive doing so.

Or…he was given the freedom or made the play call to drop back into a zone type coverage instead. Dean didn't hardly play any traditional linebacker. He is a college gimmick player…not an obvious NFL translation. Sure, he has an NFL body…but slightly undersized for the NFL at linebacker, an OLB in a 3-4 for sure at the next level…probably a backup OLB + special teamer.

And it's not even like Dean was great or good at the gimmick role. If you (a supposed 1st-round NFL talent) were allowed to blitz the backfield 50% of the time behind that Georgia D-Line, in 15 games, you

would hope you'd have more than 10.5 TFLs and 6.0 sacks. Those are OK numbers but nothing special in 15 games, for sure.

Dean wasn't top 10 in the SEC in tackles, TFLs, or sacks…but somehow was a unanimous All-American and the Linebacker of the Year? It's a joke. It's the power of the SEC.

Just for some 'top guy' comparisons…

72 tackles, 36 solo, 10.5 TFLs, 6.0 sacks = **Dean 2021** (15 games)

111 tackles, 66 solos, 22.0 TFLs, 7.0 sacks = **Lloyd 2021** (14 games)

115 tackles, 62 solos, 18.5 TFLs, 8.0 sacks = **Leo Chenal** (just 11 games)

Nakobe Dean is a nice, smart young man. Quality human. NFL-worthy on-field talent, but more of a day three of the draft talent/prospect…not top 25-50 overall.

Nakobe Dean, Through the Lens of Our OLB Scouting Algorithm:

 -- Not top 10 in the SEC in tackles, TFLs, sacks…in any of his three seasons.

 -- 0-2 solo tackles in a game in 10 of his final 18 college games.

 -- no TFLs in 14 of his last/final 21 college games.

He's just not a playmaker…but he played in the ultimate playmaker role!

2022 NFL Combine:

Knee and Pec injuries, so he didn't work out at the Combine or Pro Day. Had a special Pro Day workout mid-April, but just did basic on-field drills…didn't get times, smartly…because he's nothing special (that I see).

The Historical OLB Prospects to Whom Nakobe Dean Most Compares Within Our System:

Darron Lee would be a most likely case. A **Patrick Queen** path would be a best-case (and we're not high on Queen to this day)…pushed to play linebacker on name/draft stock, but is not a real interior linebacker more a chaser/blitzer linebacker.

OLB Grade	Last	First	Draft Yr	College	H	H	W	Tackle Strgth Metric	Spd Agil Metric	Pass Rush Metric
5.124	Dean	Nakobe	2022	Georgia	5	11.2	229	5.49	7.35	4.81
5.434	Lee	Darron	2016	Ohio State	6	0.6	232	7.02	8.39	6.67
4.575	James	Cory	2016	Colorado St	6	1.0	229	5.61	7.74	7.79
4.503	Queen	Patrick	2020	LSU	6	0.2	229	5.87	7.85	5.96
2.390	Jones	Joseph	2017	Northwestern	5	11.6	231	4.96	6.40	5.95
3.087	Fokou	Moise	2009	Maryland	6	1.1	233	6.65	6.86	6.14
2.811	Smith	Emmanuel	2018	Vandy	6	1.3	235	5.36	5.13	5.06
4.703	Jumper	Colton	2018	Tennessee	6	1.5	235	4.96	5.97	5.27

*A score of **8.00**+ is where we see a stronger correlation of LBs 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 NFL elite LB.*

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

Tackle-Strength Metrics = A combination of several physical and performance measurements. An attempt to classify the LB prospect's ability to stop the run, as well as a gauge of how physical the player is and the likelihood of higher tackle counts in the NFL. All based on profiles of LBs historically.

Speed-Agility Metrics = A combination of several speed, agility, and size measurements…as well as game performance data to profile a LB for speed/agility based on LBs historically. A unique measuring system to look for LBs that profile for quickness, pass-coverage ability, and general ability to cover more ground.

Pass Rush Metrics = A combination of the physical measurements, but also proven on-field ability to get to the QB/backfield in college.

2022 NFL Draft Outlook:

I see some 1st-round heat for Dean and some 2nd-round projections. I wanna say 2nd-round but **Patrick Queen** got his way into the 1st-round, so anything is possible. If I had to bet, I'd say early 2nd-round for Dean.

If I were an NFL GM, Dean is barely on my board. There's 10+ linebackers better than Dean. When/if **Leo Chenal** and **Chad Muma** go later than Dean in the draft, I'll be pitching a fit on the live stream draft coverage…and continuing on all summer. Your team is horrible at drafting when you see them take Nakobe Dean top 50.

NFL Outlook:

Will likely get a playing time push due to reputation and draft stock. Will underwhelm and will be bouncing around the league year 3-4 of his career. Best case, he is a liked backup LB and special teamer that has a solid, quiet career.

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