



NFL Draft 2017 Scouting Report: TE George Kittle, Iowa

**Our TE 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.*

***Our TE formulas had some slight changes in the offseason—an adjustment to better identify and value TE prospects that are smaller physically and are primed for the era ahead...the era of Jordan Reed and Delanie Walker-type TEs. Our historical grades will have changed some on various prospects as well, to show their grades by comparison.*

It doesn't make any sense.

You watch **George Kittle** on tape, and then you look at this pre-draft workout numbers...and it doesn't compute. Based on the speed-agility times...and broad jump, you could argue Kittle is the most athletic tight end in this draft class.

O.J. Howard (4.51) was an eyelash faster than Kittle (4.52) at the NFL Combine in the 40-yard dash (**Evan Engram** was the fastest TE at 4.42, but he's not a real TE). Kittle's Pro Day three-cone was faster than any other TE prospect at the Combine (Kittle was DNP on it at the Combine). Track and field star, TE prospect **David Njoku** set a broad jump record for TEs at 11'1", and then TE prospect **Bucky Hodges** broke that at 11'2". Quietly, **George Kittle** was third best of all-time for a TE prospect – 11'0".

So how is it you never really hear about Kittle among the top 5 TE prospects? There are two issues...

1) You don't see Kittle with amazing receiver numbers in college, so he gets overlooked from a 'stats' standpoint. Nothing he did catches your eye.

However, I think you have to account for the fact that Iowa had a 'challenged' passing game...and a run-heavy, conservative offense.

2) Kittle just doesn't jump out on tape. You see flashes, glimpses...but he has an overall 'optics' problem. He looks like a fullback/H-back more than a classic tight end. In reality, he's a better athlete than **Jordan Reed**, on paper – he just doesn't look like he is when you watch him. He's a little stiff and choppy moving around the field.

Most NFL coaches go by their eyes...and they'll take one look at Kittle and see an H-back.

I don't know that I could disagree, because he moves around like one. His measurables have me confused. However, I think there are enough green flags to want to take a shot on him being better than the optics. Kittle is a pretty good blocker – he will move people in the run game. He shows some



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athleticism slipping out into the passing game. What he lacks – he doesn't have great hands for the passing game nor does he move/act like he's comfortable in the passing game. He's good for a surprise target here and there but not a guy expecting/demanding a workload. He fits Iowa – conservative, blocker, occasional pass option. He has the measurables of something better, but his training/mindset is that of a fullback/TE.

I don't think Kittle is a top 5 tight end prospect, but it's not out of the question. There are enough green flags on him that warrant a top 150 draft pick. He can work as a TE, FB, H-back, and on special teams. Heck, he might be a potential convert to linebacker. There's enough with Kittle that he should be a target for NFL teams mid-draft.

George Kittle, Through the Lens of Our TE Scouting Algorithm:

Most of Kittle's receiving statistics are pretty flimsy: 1–2 catches for less than 40 yards in nearly every game. He had one breakout game in 2016 – 5 catches for 110 yards...against FCS North Dakota State. Other than that, very quiet.

Had one 2 TD game in his career, in 2016...2 TDs on 2 catches for 7 yards against Nebraska. Kittle just does not light up the stat sheets, but neither did Iowa's passing game in general.

NFL Combine data...

6'3.6"/247, 33.1" arms, 9.3" hands

4.52 40-time, (Pro Day) 4.50 shuttle, 6.78 three-cone

18 bench reps, 35.0" vertical, 11'0" broad jump (3rd best among Combine TEs)

Kittle's college stats on Fox Sports: <http://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/players/george-kittle-1.html>



The Historical TE Prospects to Whom George Kittle Most Compares Within Our System:

George Kittle is **James Hanna**...only Hanna went to a better passing game school (Oklahoma), so he had more TDs with his flimsy amount of catches in his career than did Kittle. Hanna is a great athlete and has hung around the NFL for years now as a backup TE and key special teamer. That's likely Kittle's lot in life as well.

<u>TE Grade</u>	<u>TE-Reed</u>	<u>Last</u>	<u>First</u>	<u>Yr</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>Spd-Agil Metric</u>	<u>Strgth Blxing Metric</u>	<u>Hands Metric</u>
6.536	7.34	Kittle	George	2017	Iowa	6	3.6	247	11.68	8.64	7.53
5.334	5.65	Hanna	James	2012	Oklahoma	6	3.7	252	13.26	9.42	4.52
7.652	10.79	Carrier	Derek	2012	Beloit	6	3.3	238	13.23	5.05	10.01
9.094	12.45	Keller	Dustin	2008	Purdue	6	2.1	242	11.95	7.97	9.17
4.722	6.07	Brown	Les	2012	Westminster	6	4.0	238	11.89	4.36	4.69

**A score of 7.0+ is where we start to take a TE prospect more seriously. A score of 8.50+ is where we see a stronger correlation of TEs 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 TE.*

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

***The 'TE-Reed' score is in honor of Jordan Reed's 2015 season...looking at TEs in a different manner—the smaller, speedy receiving threats.*

“Speed-Agility Metric” = 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.

“Power-Strength Metric” = 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.

“Hands Metric” = 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, and project the combination of data for receiving success at the next level.



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2017 NFL Draft Outlook:

Kittle is mostly a 5th+ round projection, and that's logical. Given his size and speed, I'd say fifth round with a chance to sneak into the fourth round.


NFL Outlook:

Backup tight end and nice special teamer. Some upside potential, but it would need to be developed – he's not a natural receiver.

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