



NFL Draft 2015 Scouting Report: WR Chris Conley, 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 less typically 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.*

Chris Conley may wind up with two distinct labels as we look back in history:

- (1) "One of the most dangerous weapons to come out of the 2015 NFL Draft."
- (2) "One of the smartest picks made in the 2015 NFL Draft."

Notice I didn't say, "The BEST WR out of the 2015 NFL Draft." There is a large distinction to be made between the 'most dangerous' and 'best'.

Conley is not a #1 WR in the NFL. He's not a guy you draft highly, and try to ride him to fame and fortune—a la **Calvin Johnson**, or **Dez Bryant**, or **Julio Jones**, etc. What Conley can bring is the potential of being one of the most unique, complex-to-cover weapons in all the NFL.

I've not seen many WRs like **Chris Conley** in my time studying football players—a near 6'2" WR who runs a low 4.3s 40-time with a jaw-dropping 45" vertical. What Conley did at the NFL Combine should have electrified the football world. All he got was a nice blip of excitement for a moment, and not much else nationally...and became a hot Draftnik/metrics 'curiosity'.

I had no idea who **Chris Conley** was before the NFL Combine...because I don't pay attention to college football until the season is over, and then I study the draft prospects in-depth. Conley's name never came up in any early January pre-studies, nor in Senior Bowl discussions that I had in Mobile. I suspect, that most folks had the following journey with Conley (like me): I didn't think much of him/didn't know he existed. Then I saw the NFL Combine results and got excited. I glanced at his 2014 numbers (36 catches for 657 yards), and then went back to sleep on him.

It's easy to write Conley off as a "*Combine wonder.*" Before you lock in that 'final answer', here's what I would like you to consider...



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I can only find four instances in my database where a 6'1"+, 205+ pound WR ran a 4.35 with a 40"+ vertical. One is Conley. Two of them are **Randy Moss** and **Calvin Johnson**. Sadly, the other is **Chaz Schilens**—Oakland Raiders bust. I'm not displaying this group to equivocate Conley as the 'next Calvin' or 'next Moss'. I do it more to try to put into context—what Conley possesses athletically is rare, and 'special'.

What couldn't you do in the NFL with a near 6'2" WR who can run a 4.32 40-time and possesses a 45" vertical? Will defenses put their fastest CB on him? Conley will be as fast/faster than that CB with 2-4 inches of height differential, plus he has a huge wingspan with his near 34" arms. If the opposing defense has a CB who is just as fast and 'big'/long as Conley...then Conley can probably out leap that CB by a foot+; just throw it up for grabs.

Will a defense try to counter Conley with a more physical, taller CB/Safety to pressure him? That DB had better bump Conley hard at the line, or Conley is going to burn that DB deep in a hurry. Play off him, and I like Conley's chances with the ball off a bubble screen.

In a sea of similarly good and bad college prospects across all positions and spectrums, Conley is unique...almost never seen before. That equates to higher-level NFL value.

If Conley is so explosive, then why did he ONLY catch 36 passes for 657 yards in 13 games last season? I would like to advance this theory: The Georgia QB in 2014 was awful, and barely ever looked downfield, much less threw it deeper. Go read my **Hutson Mason** scouting report—the guy is a joke for an SEC QB. Conley's gift to football-kind is his ability to be an epic deep-threat...abut he played on a college team where the QB barely threw the ball past five-yards. There may be a lot of untapped **Chris Conley** potential that was sitting left in the tank at Georgia—a total shame.

Now, you might exclaim, "*If Conley was that good, Georgia would have used him more—somehow, someway.*" You would not be crazy to make that statement. However, you have to consider the Georgia offense in 2014. They had three outstanding RBs, and a woeful QB (by SEC measures). They ran the ball 42.6 times per game, versus only 24.8 passing attempts per contest. When they did pass, it was mostly short dump-off passes—with Conley as a diversion racing deep. This was not a high-functioning, pass-happy aerial attack.

What happened opening-day 2014 with Georgia against Clemson is a great example of Conley's Bulldogs-career lot in life...

In a defeat of Clemson, Conley had 2 catches for 14 yards...that's it. He sucks, right? Very early in that game, I would watch the QB make 'stare-down' passes to one receiver, while Conley was streaking wide-open down the other side...**Hutson Mason** had no idea and wasn't interested what was happening to anyone besides the receiving option he locked on to. A ton of opportunity for Conley was potentially wasted...often.



Also, in the 1st-quarter of the Clemson game, Conley was sprinting deep down the middle--open and moving quickly about 30-40 yards downfield. Mason under threw a 'floater' to him by several yards. Conley had to stop and adjust, allowing the DB to come over and run into Conley for a pass interference. In another world—that's a 50+ yard TD. In reality, it was nothing (statistically) for Conley.

We don't know how good Conley really might be. We do know he is an athlete constructed like none other.

Conley's just not 'all athlete' either. He was the 2014 SEC Scholar-Athlete of the Year. He also won a Community Spirit Award for his charitable work. You are getting a highly intelligent, hard-working, jaw-dropping athletic specimen—one that leaves you to determine whether his college stats were because he is a flimsy WR, OR did his surrounding circumstances put a lid on showcasing his full capabilities?

Chris Conley, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

We've pretty well hit the measurables vs. output topic to death on Conley. Our computer models obviously see it and try to make sense of it—which is complex. He is the best athlete among all 2015 NFL Draft WR prospects but has mostly mediocre output on the field. Is it him or his circumstances? I think it was more the QB/circumstances.

In 2013, with **Aaron Murray**, Conley was coming on. He had five or more catches in a game in six of his 11 contests with Murray. He popped a 112-yard effort against LSU that season. In 2014, he only produced one game with five or more catches...and it was just five catches. With a real QB in 2014, Conley could have projected output of 1,000+ yards and 10+ TDs easily. If he had those lofty numbers, we might be talking about a 1st-round WR today, instead of ESPN's #41 ranked WR and CBS's #21 WR (as of this publish date).

The Historical WR Prospects to Whom Chris Conley Most Compares Within Our System:

You'll see **Torrey Smith** listed twice, because we calculated him as a prospect two ways: One as a smaller, speedy, slot, #2-3 type WR (Small WR). Another as a pure physical, deep threat, red-zone #1 type WR (Big WR). Our computer models thought Smith worked much better as a small-game WR, not as a '#1' type WR. Smith did fine/solid as the Ravens' #1, but we think he could have been explosive working across from a **Calvin Johnson**, etc.—which never happened in his whole time in Baltimore.



With Conley we see more as a better deep ball, red-zone type WR who can go over the top of people medium and deep. Not that he can't work in a smaller game, but you really want Conley working deep—it's where his magic can come to life. He is more straight-line fast, than a weaver through traffic.

We compare to Torrey, but honestly—we've really not seen anything like Conley's profile.

<u>WR Score</u>	<u>Draft Yr</u>	<u>Last</u>	<u>First</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>Power Strngt h Metric</u>	<u>Speed Agility Metric</u>	<u>Hands Metric</u>
8.460	2015	Conley	Chris	Georgia	6	1.7	213	7.79	8.38	7.07
7.710	2011	Smith (Big)	Torrey	Maryland	6	0.9	204	4.87	10.81	7.44
10.990	2011	Smith (Sm)	Torrey	Maryland	6	0.9	204	11.91	12.70	8.51
4.600	2011	Lockette	Ricardo	Ft Valley State	6	2.1	211	7.20	6.29	3.94
7.280	2006	Jackson	Chad	Florida	6	0.8	213	6.86	11.92	7.37
5.840	2009	Heyward-Bey	Darrius	Maryland	6	1.5	210	5.95	11.57	7.02
6.770	2005	Williamson	Troy	South Carolina	6	2.0	203	3.01	8.12	8.19
2.500	2012	Calvin	Michael	Cal	6	2.4	210	5.54	9.54	2.84
7.370	2007	Sims-Walker	Mike	C. Florida	6	1.8	209	5.91	9.80	8.90
1.570	2006	Aromashodu	Devin	Auburn	6	2.5	201	1.33	7.39	1.61

**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, 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, and overall this projects the combination of performance and physical data for the next level.

2015 NFL Draft Outlook:

Chris Conley is a 4th-5th-round projection for most scouting services...which I think is a massive mistake. If you are going to reach for a WR—this is the type of 'thing' to reach for. I typed 'thing' on purpose. He is unlike any WRs we've studied...he is a 'thing' from another planet. He might bust. He must be a Hall of Famer. The fact that you can make that statement means he should be valued higher...more draft risk taken, but I think he'll likely go in that 4th-5th-round range on draft day.

If I were an NFL GM, I would break my anti-'reaching for WR' policy here. You don't see weapons like this every day, and I want in on it. I'd pay a late 3rd-round pick for him, easily. I trade in to do it if needed.

NFL Outlook:

This could be an interesting NFL journey. I could see Conley as the kind of guy I'll be whining about for several years—wondering why he doesn't get more play. Because he won't be highly drafted, and thus teams are not forced to do anything with him. If a clever GM places him onto an unimaginative coaching staff...he could just sit idly by for years wasting away. If Conley lands in the 'right' spot, I'm looking at you New England, then it's time to get excited for what the future holds.

Conley will not lead the league in catches, but he could lead it in receiving yards one day.

