



NFL Draft 2018 Scouting Report: WR Christian Kirk, Texas A&M

**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 typically less 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.*

When people consider the 'smaller' WRs in this draft they're looking at three guys primarily – **Calvin Ridley**, **D.J. Moore**, and **Christian Kirk** (not running at the Combine keeps **Anthony Miller** off this list for now). I listed the three WRs in that specific order because I think that's where the general sentiment is on these guys post-Combine. Kirk was running #2 but he's falling -- because Ridley and Moore 'won the Combine' over Kirk...supposedly.

Ridley-Moore-Kirk are very different NFL prospects; similar in size but different in what they bring to the table. I might argue that Kirk takes some of the better features of Ridley-Moore and is even better at them...but he also has some flaws to worry about. Let's discuss/scout Kirk but we'll do it through the Ridley-Moore-Kirk lens...

All three guys are about the same height. Ridley is a little thinner-framed and Kirk is more muscular, thicker-framed (and he out-benched both Ridley and Moore 20-15-14 reps). Kirk is sturdy of frame like **D.J. Moore**, but stronger and not as fast.

All three guys tested 'fast'...all three in the 4.4s for a 40-time. The speed/quickness difference comes into play in the three-cone times. Moore and Ridley went under 7.0 three-cone, while Kirk disappointed a little at 7.09. Not damning, just not a great time. Ridley-Moore may test faster/more agile, but Kirk was the only one of them who was a quality kick and punt returner in college...7 return TDs for Kirk compared to zero for Moore (used more sporadically in returns) and Ridley was 'too good' for the return game.

All three guys were the best WR on their respective teams but played in more limited/weak QB passing games. All three displayed good hands with Kirk maybe showing me the best hands of the three. The most productive of three over his career was **Christian Kirk**.

All three of these guys are good, and legit NFL prospects...but how do you differentiate them or rank them?



I would separate Kirk from Ridley...they are not alike to me. Ridley is a thinner-framed, speed guy we worry how well he'll do with physical, tight coverage in the NFL. Kirk is the opposite of all that – he's very tough, very strong, and makes plenty of catches with guys draped on him or nearby.

You want to send a guy deep for a bomb...send Ridley. You need someone to catch a 3rd & 3 pass over-the-middle between linebackers and safeties – you go Kirk without hesitation.

D.J. Moore...to me...you're hoping he becomes like a more athletic Kirk. That's the interest in Moore...you hope he combines the talents of Ridley and Kirk into one. Kirk already displays some of the best attributes of Moore-Ridley, and Kirk is more ready to go day one in the NFL than Ridley-Moore.

Kirk is not the athlete that Ridley-Moore are. He's not going to light up a bunch of 50+ yard TDs. He will, however, be way more reliable catching the ball in traffic or breaking free of a tackle for extra yards with his sturdy frame and physical style. He also has a good sixth-sense on the football field...he gets open, he avoids tacklers...he gets the most mileage out of his talents. Kirk does not look that fast on tape, but 6 punt return TDs and a kick return score in his college career – Kirk knows how to play. I think the little he lacked in high-end athleticism pushed Kirk to be a better route runner than the other two.

I hate to say it but '*Kirk's a football player*'. **D.J. Moore** is an interesting, speculative 'hope' for an upside. Ridley is a little 'princely', a little more finesse that probably gets knocked on its ass in the pros...and not sure how he'll respond to it. Kirk is more 'the one who knocks' -- the knocker of people on their asses. He's not the breakaway speed athlete the other guys are, but he's not far behind...but what he is – is the toughest, most sure, most ready to start as a #2 WR in the NFL among the three of them. Five years from now, Moore may be the best of the three, but right now – it's **Christian Kirk**.

Kirk has a clean off-field record and is a pleasant, affable enough personality to fit in any locker room. He's more of a leader than Ridley or Moore.

Christian Kirk, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

When I look through Kirk's college output and individual game performances, I see a mixed bag of solid outputs but nothing 'next level'. It's like **Calvin Ridley** – weaker QB play and tough opponents...did not make for a lot of 'wow' games or seasons, statistically. I think Kirk is affected more by the weak QB play than Ridley. Kirk's gift is getting slightly open in tight spaces and being tough enough to make the catches in muddy waters. He didn't have a QB in 2017 that could roll like that. When he had 'OK' QB play in 2015 and 2016, he had two 80+ catch seasons and 1,009 yard season as a freshman.

Watching Kirk play against Alabama for three seasons, he was clearly at a disadvantage on pure athleticism versus top-flight Alabama cover guys, but he produced regardless – 7-90-0 (and returned a punt for a score) as a freshman and 9-58-1 and 4-52-1 the past two campaigns...a TD each



season against Alabama. **D.J. Moore** and **Calvin Ridley** almost disappeared against top defenses in their conference...not Kirk. He was always a factor.

In three bowl appearances, Kirk averaged 9.7 catches, 119.7 yards, and 1.33 TDs per game as a receiver.

In Kirk's first ever college appearance as a freshman, facing Arizona State...6 catches for 106 yards and 1 TD, and also returned a punt for a TD.

When I look at Kirk's body of work...he's just a better football player than Ridley-Moore. He just is. Not a better athlete but a better football player. The '*just like **Antonio Brown***' accolades should maybe be reserved for Kirk, not Ridley.

The Historical WR Prospects to Whom Christian Kirk Most Compares Within Our System:

I'm pretty excited about this list for Kirk. Yes, the most likely matches are successful NFL WRs. Yes, we didn't grade them very well in their respective draft years but we're starting to adapt and understand the shifts in the pattern of what makes better WR prospects in the last 2-3 years – on guys without 'off the charts' athleticism. College football changes we have to adapt with it.

Things we didn't give enough credit for it to for Bennett-Cobb-Diggs we're valuing more with Kirk. I'd say Kirk reminds me more of Bennett-Cobb and not as much Diggs when I watch on tape.

<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>
8.390	2018	Kirk	Christian	Texas A&M	5	10.3	201	11.49	5.92	9.40
5.513	2008	Bennett	Earl	Vanderbilt	5	11.5	209	8.98	5.40	10.91
5.180	2011	Cobb	Randall	Kentucky	5	10.3	192	7.90	6.35	8.20
5.160	2015	Diggs	Stefon	Maryland	6	0.0	195	7.50	7.12	8.36
5.154	2012	Blackmon	Justin	Oklahoma St	6	1.1	207	10.14	4.54	10.22
7.568	2016	Carroo	Leonte	Rutgers	5	11.7	211	8.89	6.16	9.58

**A score of 7.0+ is where we start to take a Small-WR prospect more seriously. A score of 8.50+ is where we see a stronger correlation of a Small-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 Small-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/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.

2018 NFL Draft Outlook:

Kirk is projecting with 1st and 2nd-round grades...like a top 50 overall type player. I'm going to project him going around pick #45...but #25-30 isn't out of the question.

If I were an NFL GM, I don't think I would spend a top 60 pick draft pick here. Nothing against Kirk but there are other WRs in his talent range either later in drafts or in free agency. When I think that there were several 2017 WR prospects I liked better...then I don't want to pay up for Kirk on that front either. This isn't a banner year for WR prospects, so Kirk will probably go a bit higher than he would in other draft years. I'm a fan but he's not in the 'special' zone for me to chase top 50-60.

NFL Outlook:

He's going to be a very solid starting NFL WR for years. He's ready to go out of the box. Put him with a quality offense and he'll have nice numbers. Put him in a stiff, garbage offense with a QB who cannot hit WRs over the middle...then Kirk will fade from the spotlight for a few years until free agency. I think he's a really good, solid, quasi-can't miss WR prospect but he's not a stud...just 'good', and there's nothing wrong with that.

