



## NFL Draft 2018 Scouting Report: OLB Roquan Smith, 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.*

I'm not as high on **Roquan Smith** as the rest of the scouting community. I believe he is a 1st round prospect and will work fine in the NFL...I just think there are questions about his game and his tape that concern me. My inclination is – this could be another case where 'speed' is mistaken for 'great football player' because if you cherry pick/watch a 3-4-5 play look of Smith's best-ever plays, you'd swear he's the fastest linebacker you've ever seen.

Let's talk about the positives and then hit the negatives...

The first time I watched a sample of Smith's work, pre-Combine, before I really knew who he was/his status in the draft...I thought he was a 'C' grade linebacker. Athletic, but didn't show much as a player. NFL athleticism to get drafted, but not a top 100 overall talent.

After watching him again, in a deeper study, and wanting to find the evidence of where I was wrong and everyone else was right...I still walked away feeling shorted. I think Smith is a borderline terrible interior linebacker. So many analysts have him as the best interior linebacker in the draft...I don't think that at all. He's a very poor, almost disinterested tackler. I saw where PFF had him graded as this never-miss tackler...I must have gotten some bad tape to watch then, because I saw plenty of misses.

Smith's whole game is like **Myles Jack** or Jets' high-pick 2017 safety **Jamal Adams** – great speed, but that's their only thing and they tend to run right past ballcarriers too often – their speed can be a liability but can look cool when they do connect. A quick shuffle or move from a ballcarrier leaves Smith grasping at air way too often. For every speedy, cheetah attack from behind by Smith comes a blatantly missed tackle straight up the middle. Smith shows me no instinct and no real desire to patrol the middle of the field as a interior run stopper...he wants to be on the prowl on the outside and that leaves problems up the middle.

I watched Smith against Oklahoma in the CFB playoffs...and he was borderline terrible. They played Smith like a fiddle. Smith has slow reaction times and is easily suckered by misdirection. Most of the tape of Smith in that game is of him wandering around aimlessly or in the wrong place and missing on tackles. He's not a classic 'hit them at the waist with a shoulder momentum' tackler...he's a chase from behind and grab or a dive at feet guy. *He played inside linebacker, for Georgia like a below-average tackling safety...* was the exact note I wrote myself after watching him against Oklahoma and Alabama in the CFB playoffs last season.

A team taking Smith as an interior linebacker...they have work to do on him. The physical tools are there...but the skillset and mindset are not. Smith's like taking a 'big arm' QB with obvious accuracy



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issues (like **Josh Allen**). The NFL is still suckered by 'big arm'. They are also suckered by 'look how fast' linebacker. They look past the QBs accuracy and past the LBs tackling and positioning awareness/skills.

There is an upside with Smith, however. He is very fast/quick...cat-like quickness. One of the quickest LBs in this draft...if not the quickest. He's great in coverage with his quickness...and you can tell it's where his heart is. He likes dropping back and roaming the field...he doesn't like being stuck in the middle tackling 220+ pound RBs head-on, but he does like chasing them side-to-side and grabbing them from behind.

Smith's quickness/game is perfect for a 3-4 OLB...or even a 4-3 OLB. A guy who just chases things, and occasionally blitzes the backfield. Use him as an under-sized, surprise pass rusher...and he might have 8-10+ sacks in his rookie season. Use him on the outside to shadow RBs in the passing game or hang with TEs in coverage...nice. Plop him as a middle linebacker...you are putting him in his least favorite, least talented spot. You're taking his gifts away using him in the interior.

The NFL needs guys like Smith...guys who have the recovery speed to chase RBs in the short passing game and to shadow mobile QBs, etc. In that role...Smith is more of an 'A' prospect. Smith is definitely a top 30 prospect because of his movement skills, but there is some concern with his tackling skills and his instincts for positioning himself in the right places/reading plays. Again, I thought **Baker Mayfield** played him like a fiddle in the CFB playoffs...and that tape is sticking with me as I think about him at the next level. Great tools to work with but not necessarily ready to start day one in the NFL. Most rookie defenders aren't.

Smith seems OK enough off the field. He's pretty focused and personable in interviews. He had a mild dust up with marijuana in a dorm room once, but he was never charged/implicated.

### Roquan Smith, Through the Lens of Our OLB Scouting Algorithm:

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Here's what's really scary...

Smith played in 38 games in college. Let's ignore his freshman season. So 28 games in the past two years. In the first 21 games of that 28-game stretch, as a starter...6.5 TFLs and 1.0 sacks. Let that sink in. Top OLBs can get 6.5 TFLs and 1.0 sacks in 2-3 games. Smith, who has super-human speed and is 'awesome'...got 1.0 sacks in 21 games as a starter, and just 6.5 TFLs. To me, it's a red flag on his ability to be in the right place, his effort, and his interest level.

In his final 7 games, it looked like it dawned on him that he would be leaving for the NFL and suddenly his numbers kicked in -- 11.0 TFLs and 5.5 sacks to end his 2017. Did he just happen to 'get it' late...or something else? Someone with his physical talents getting 6.5 TFLs and 1.0 sacks in 21 games...and then kicking in late -- to me, it's an issue.



Smith's performance, his output...doesn't warrant the draft accolades but his physical tools do.

2018 NFL Combine measurables...

6'0.7"/236, 32" arms, 10.0" hands

4.58 40-time, 4.58 40-time, 2.63 20-yard, 1.58 10-yard

33.5" vertical, 9'9" broad (all at Pro Day)

DNP bench and three-cone...more concerns for me.

**The Historical OLB Prospects to Whom Roquan Smith Most Compares Within Our System:**

**Kwon Alexander's** appearance on here makes me stop in my tracks. Another athletic SEC LB prospect with some 'lacking' performance numbers in our system analysis. He went on to convert/bulk up to a very good interior linebacker with Tampa Bay...and we didn't see it coming. He had red flags all over for us coming out of LSU, but we were wrong it appears. However, he's also been suspended a couple times for PED usage...so, who knows how good he really is naturally?

DT Grade	Last	First	Draft Yr	College	H	H	W	Tackle Strgth Metric	Spd Agil Metric	Pass Rush Metric
8.201	Smith	Roquan	2018	Georgia	6	0.7	236	8.04	8.41	6.76
8.929	Washington	Daryl	2010	TCU	6	1.6	230	8.90	7.33	6.47
4.923	Riley	Duke	2017	LSU	6	0.4	232	7.05	8.58	7.76
5.824	Bradham	Nigel	2012	Florida St	6	1.5	241	8.18	5.78	4.81
3.412	Alexander	Kwon	2015	LSU	6	0.6	227	7.47	6.72	5.49
6.113	LaRocque	Joey	2008	Oregon St	6	1.3	226	7.92	8.13	7.09
6.683	Hoffman-Ellis	Alex	2012	Washington St	6	0.4	232	10.40	6.52	5.66

*\*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.*



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*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 an 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.*

### **2018 NFL Draft Outlook:**

Smith is going top 20 overall, probably top 10 overall as people seem to be talking themselves into Smith as the answer as a middle linebacker. I'll project he goes between #10-15.

If I were an NFL GM, I'd consider Smith in the top 20...just for his OLB coverage range and raw skills. However, after watching the tape and seeing the holes in his performance output...with such a valuable thing as a top 20 pick, I don't think I could pull the trigger.

### **NFL Outlook:**

Going to an NFL team with huge expectations...and he is likely to semi-fail at living up to them right away, like **Myles Jack**. And like Jack, he'll probably start as an ILB but get moved from it quickly when it's obviously not working. But, maybe, eventually, it will fit. Smith is intriguing but not 'assured' as an NFL prospect.

