NFL Draft 2018 Scouting Report: WR Caylon Weathers, Tenn-Martin

*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.

I'm going to make a pitch to you that **Caylon Weathers** is one of the top 5-10 wide receiver talents in the 2018 NFL Draft. I'm not joking. I'm not trying to get a rise or be super-clever scouting guy. I'm not paid by his agent. I'm not just saying, "*Keep an eye on this kid*." I'm drop-dead serious, he's one of the 5-10 best WRs in this draft...my gut tells me more top 5 with a chance to develop into the top 2-3.

That's a pretty serious claim.

Pretty serious...since you will not find him among the top 100 ranked wide receivers prospects for 2018 anywhere of note.

Let me add more gravitas to my claim if you are a new reader of my work...

In 2015, I projected **Tyrell Williams** as one of the 5-10 best WRs for his NFL Draft...and he went undrafted, and well...you see what happened when he got his shot. I was all in from the day I scouted his work after his Pro Day – and backed him every day while the Chargers tried to ignore him – until they could no longer, and he was the breakout star out of nowhere in 2016 (and back to semi-ignored in 2017).

In that same draft year, 2015, I liked **Cameron Meredith**, but I wasn't as totally sold as I was with **Tyrell Williams**...and then I saw Meredith's work in the NFL preseason with the Bears and I proclaimed he was on par/better than **DeAndre Hopkins**. Meredith also went undrafted, like **Tyrell Williams**...and was also ignored by his NFL team/the Bears – until they couldn't keep him down and he became their top wide receiver in 2016...and their planned #1 WR for 2017 until a gruesome preseason knee injury took that away.

Last season, I promoted small school WR prospect **Keelan Cole** as potentially the most gifted WR in the draft class, an Antonio Brown-like prospect – and he too went undrafted, but forced his way onto the Jags roster and was an opening day starter in 2017...and was one of the top 3 producing rookie wide receivers last season.

I'm not coming to this scouting party empty-handed.

I have a major track record of success with non-D1 WR prospects pushed heavy and then them becoming NFL successes soon after going undrafted. And I'm not claiming 'sleeper' on 74 different small-school prospects and then going 'see!' when one pays off. There may be 0-2 WR prospects like a **Tyrell Williams** or **Keelan Cole** I encounter each draft season – **Caylon Weathers** may be the only WR prospect I anoint this way in 2018.

Why Weathers? Why is it no one else is pushing him as a sleeper?

He's not even a sleeper anywhere right now because he's not tripping any of the usual scouting alarms. His Pro Day times were good but not great (4.49 40-time, 7.01 three-cone, 4.51 shuttle and a weak 4 reps on the bench at 6'4.4"/216). He's not registering anywhere via crazy output…no great 'market share' of his team's passing game numbers the past few years (on the surface). He played at a school with no real coverage/attention paid, and he didn't win any awards or make a 1st-team anything last season. He is completely under the radar.

After I write this report, you'll see him magically pop up on various websites without one mention of where they were tipped off from – that's why I am releasing this report for free…so, I can be on the record ahead of the crowd. Like we tried to do with Northern Colorado QB **Kyle Sloter** last season.

Generic football fans will read some or all of this report and completely discount/ignore it because a Mel Kiper or whomever isn't mentioning Weathers as a possible star. The national draft analysts have little/no clue about Weathers, or how good he is. To me, Weathers is a better prospect than **Calvin Ridley** – and me typing that would make mainstream analyst's heads explode, and it causes generic football fan to click off this internet article right about now.

My regular audience will tattoo this name onto their brain for hopeful use in handicapping and fantasy profiteering down the road.

My real reason for making this a free view report is because when NFL personnel people scan the internet on this guy, considering him as an undrafted free agent post-draft – I want them to consider what I'm am writing here, because **Caylon Weathers's** talent deserves notice and consideration. My existing NFL personnel department subscribers…sorry, I'm sharing this with the world because I'd like to get him in the public view to get a better shot in the NFL and making a roster this year.

Weathers is not 'ready to go' as much as **Tyrell Williams**, **Keelan Cole**, or **Cameron Meredith**…or QB **Kyle Sloter** were when hitting NFL training camps as UDFAs. There is some work to do, but for the NFL team that makes the investment in Weathers – you're seriously looking at a possible #1–#2 NFL starting WR profile for a team, for the price of almost nothing in 2018. There's some risk to be discussed, but let's set the stage for the upside to begin with…

First, you need to watch the highlight tape of Weathers (it's all he's got on YouTube). I'll provide the link in a moment, but before you do watch, let me share what I see, because I'd like to be sure you catch/consider the opportunity here.

When you watch Weathers's highlight reel, you're going to see several 'highlight reel' catches – i.e. high-pointing for TDs, diving grabs, one-handed delights. The eye-catching grabs are a reason to love Weathers for sure, but not the main/only reason. Here's what else to look for…

The very first thing I noticed about Weathers, two plays into watching him work – he has excellent burst and movement off the snap. He pops off the line and he moves so fluidly, effortlessly – he just glides past defenders like they're standing still sometimes. They just don't make 6'4"+ guys that can move like this.

He's not just 'tall, fast guy down the field', he also runs excellent routes. He can stop on a dime and make a cut in or out to get open for a timing pattern or use a double move to leave a defender in the dust on a deep ball. He runs routes and stops/starts like a high-end D1/pro WR. You'll see evidence of that on his highlight tape.

Weathers can get open with the best of them, but he can also catch the ball with the best of them. He has very smooth hands. One thing to notice on his highlight reel – most of Weathers's catches are him leaping or diving or stopping to adjust to miss thrown balls. One of the reasons his career numbers don't jump off the page is that he didn't work with a lot of great offenses…and if he had had a QB who could hit him in stride, he would have doubled+ his yardage and TD totals – which reminds me of **Tyrell Williams** – when I scouted him I noted the same issue…a lot of opportunity wasted with an elite WR prospect teamed with inferior QB play/an unimaginative FCS/D2 offense.

Weathers pops off the line. He can make any cut with total fluidity. He catches most passes thrown his way with ease…and he'll one-hand them if needed. But another benefit of Weathers – he's 6'4+", he has a 37.0" vertical, and he might have like 35+" arms (I have no arm measurement data). He might have the biggest catch radius of any WR in this draft. You'll see some of his catches on his tape…he's just impossible to overthrow.

When I saw his Pro Day work and looked at his bench press (4 reps), I got worried. I envisioned a very thin-framed, upper body weakling who would get killed by press coverage and who would wilt into traffic. You'll note on this highlight reel – Weathers is working all over the field and he takes on some big hits and bounces right up for the next play. And there's one play against D1 Arkansas (in which he posted a 6-111-0 game in his first season as a real starter against them) where Weathers catches a slant inside and literally takes 11 guys on and carries them 5+ extra yards. Don't believe me? You'll see it in a moment.

The last thing to mention about the highlight tape…watch every time the Arkansas plays pop up on the reel. Watch how deftly he runs routes and takes on D1 defenders. Watch how smooth, how confident taking on the big boys.

I implore you…set aside 17 minutes and watch this reel all the way through. You'll instantly be attracted, but the more you watch, the more you'll see a really professional WR at work here. His potential greatness will grow on you as this tape rolls on…you might get bored of how excellent he's working after 10+ minutes. Don't, because there's magic moments around every corner.

Make sure that you check out the 7:13 mark where he takes the Razorback team for a ride.

Also, check out the play at the 8:18 mark – it may be his best catch of all.

6:07, 7:02, and 10:37 on the tape…watch the footwork for his size. Unreal.

I would ask – don't hopscotch around checking out the plays I mentioned…just open this bottle of wine and let it breathe. Start at the beginning and watch it all the way. Then, come back to these specific moments for extra enjoyment.

Caylon Weathers YouTube reel (link): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30jaDuwJ-Vg&t=71s

OK, I've made him into a Hall of Famer…but I need to discuss the risks here – economically, there are virtually none considering he's likely to go undrafted. The potential drawbacks are minimal and are either correctable or not real. *And I need to follow up more because I was tipped off to Weathers recently and did all the background I could in short order to get this out ahead of the NFL Draft. There may be more to worry about…or nothing at all.*

Risks…

 -- You see a '4 reps' for a bench press at his Pro Day and several things come to mind as a scout…like – is this guy serious about playing at the next level? Did he ever visit the weight room in college?

I'd counter the bench reps with this – Weathers may very well not be working as hard as he needs to. I don't have any connection to find out (yet), but I also see that he has incredibly long arms which makes the bench reps figure a little problematic. I see him very tough on the field/on tape. I've seen pics with his shirt off/a half shirt – he's all muscle with six-pack abs, so I don't think he's lazy or a do-nothing. He was a team captain.

It's legit to worry that the low bench press is a bad sign, but not enough to not draft and develop as a UDFA. The upside is he could add 5–10 pounds of muscle and be a 6'4+" monster. His body has upside.

 -- I've seen a note or two that he missed some games with asthma, and I cannot confirm the depths of his asthma issue. This too can be dealt with, not a deal breaker, per se, but note that comes along with the package. It could kill the story at some point.

 -- Low college production in general…for what you'd expect if Weathers was this terrific performer. Of the games that I watched, I saw an offense (especially in 2017) that was less imaginative than my local

high school team runs – and I think the local high school team has a better QB than UTM did for Weathers.

I saw these same issues scouting **Tyrell Williams** at Western Oregon – the offense is built for awful QB play…thus, a heavy run game, screen game, and no-read timing throws short to pre-determined receivers. Weathers, like **Tyrell Williams** was a guy they sent deep to clear out space and then they worked simple underneath passes to others or ran the ball. These small-school team possessed this amazing asset…and didn't fully know how to use it. I see it too often with FCS or D2-D3 teams – poor QB play, unimaginative offenses…and it kills the upside of any neat WR draft prospect they might possess.

In 2015, Tennessee-Martin ran the best offense during Weathers's tenure there…which was his first real starting opportunity season – wait until you see those numbers in the next section when we examine the number trends.

I'm concerned Weathers wasn't a dominant star in FCS, but I see reasons why he wasn't…and I see evidence of hidden dominance in his career details (more on that next section).

With Weathers, you are getting an NFL-sized+, NFL-athletic, natural WR talent with upside to upgrade his body. By all my accounts he's a decent kid – has his college degree, has a solid family unit/relationship, and his dad played pro ball for the Cleveland Browns 30+ years ago. He has some lineage. Everything I see screams great NFL prospect…if he can get to the right place and get the right development.

What I don't know – how bad is the asthma? How bad does he 'want it' to someday make it in the pros? Is he willing to face/tackle a massive uphill battle in an NFL system biased against small-school UDFA WRs? He's been a team captain. His personality shows him to be humble, soft-spoken in interviews. I don't see any major red flags besides whatever it might be that I don't know (because I'm rushing this report and may have missed a clue).

Sometimes you make a blind bet in a hurry when you see this kind of talent and knowing the cost of the gamble is almost nothing as a UDFA.

Caylon Weathers, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

In 2015, as a sophomore, Weathers was an in-and-out starter/3rd WR for UTM in the opening game against D1 Ole Miss (a 76-3 blowout). He then played a more major role the next 10 games…10 games where he worked with the best QB play of his four-year stint in college. His numbers per game the final 10 games of 2015:

6.0 catches, 70.0 yards, 0.8 TDs per game = Weathers/2015 (final 10 games).

That's a 13-game pace of – 78 catches, 900+ yards and 10+ TDs for a season. Not bad for his first season 'starting'…playing with a very limited offense/QB.

In that 2015 season, he posted a 6 catch, 111-yard effort at D1 Arkansas.

In fact, Weathers played D1 teams a number of times after his Ole Miss game in 2015. He faced Arkansas/2015, Cincinnati/2016, Hawaii/2016, and Ole Miss again in 2017.

Ole Miss set out to shutdown Weathers, I read some Ole Miss accounts of the 2017 game from the D-C, who was pleased they shutdown Weathers…and they did – no catches for him. In the other three D1 games I just mentioned for Weathers – 4.0 catches, 66.3 yards, 0.33 TDs per game…not bad considering bad QB play and an overwhelming opponent.

Weathers's freshman debut game (2014) – at D1 Kentucky in 2014…2 catches for 23 yards and the 1st TD of his career.

Weathers caught just 3 TDs in his final season, but his team only threw 14 TD passes last season…and 10 TDs in the 8 games Weathers played in (he missed some time midseason). It's hard to pin the low stat output issue on Weathers…and, again, I watched tape of some 2017 work…that's a bad offense.

2018 Pro Day measurables…

6'4.4"/216 (I would project 10" hands, and 34+" arms)

4.49 40-time, 1.65 10-yard, 4.51 shuttle, 7.01 three-cone

4 bench reps, 37.0" vertical, 10'4" broad jump

The Historical WR Prospects to Whom C. Weathers Most Compares Within Our System:

It had to be **Tyrell Williams**. I feel like Williams was the better athlete over Weathers coming out of college, but that's not a crime because Tyrell is on a **Julio Jones** level of athleticism. However, I think Weathers is the better pure WR talent over Tyrell.

Caylon Weathers is like taking **Tyrell Williams** + **Jordan Matthews** + **Cam Meredith** + **Stephen Williams** (who I liked as he hung on the fringes of the pros for a while, but injury did him in) and put them in a blender…you'd have a WR-smoothie called **Caylon Weathers**. I just don't know how physically ready Weathers will be right away.

WR Score	Draft Yr	Last	First	College	H	H	W	Power Strngth Metric	Speed Agility Metric	Hands Metric
7.508	2018	Weathers	Caylon	Tenn-Martin	6	4.4	216	4.59	7.79	8.94
8.003	2015	Williams	Tyrell	W. Oregon	6	3.4	204	3.34	9.09	8.13
11.160	2014	Matthews	Jordan	Vanderbilt	6	3.1	212	6.89	7.65	11.56
6.589	2015	Meredith	Cameron	Illinois St	6	3.3	207	3.17	5.56	7.69
7.040	2011	Matthews	Chris	Kentucky	6	4.8	218	6.67	5.13	7.26
7.061	2015	Taylor	Jordan	Rice	6	4.3	209	2.96	6.85	8.44
5.943	2010	Williams	Stephen	Toledo	6	4.5	210	4.42	7.50	6.64

*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.

2018 NFL Draft Outlook:

There's no way **Caylon Weathers** is getting drafted, or so it appears. He is on no radar screens at all that I see. We don't know how much of an issue his asthma is, etc.

If I were an NFL GM, based on what we know right now – I draft him 7th-round so that I am assured I have him and no one else can get to him. I draft him and immediately get 5+ pounds of muscle added to his frame.

NFL Outlook:

If Weathers does not have any medical setbacks, he's pacing right along for an NFL career arc like WR prospects we've identified like him – **Tyrell Williams**, etc. Meaning…Weathers doesn't get drafted, is a long shot to make a roster, but flashes so well in the preseason that he forces his way onto the 53-man and then doesn't play much at all year one…and then year two something happens which pushes him into the rotation at some point and a shocking star is born.

Maybe.

Hopefully.

He deserves a shot to prove it.

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4/20/2018