



NFL Draft 2018 Scouting Report: WR Jaelon Acklin, Western Illinois

**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.*

Seems like every year, draftniks find a small school WR that they latch on to as their top sleeper. This year, **Jaelon Acklin** stars in that role...somewhat due to the lack of small school sleeper WRs out there this go 'round, but mostly because Acklin hits all the notes for those digging for sleepers, especially the SPARQ worshippers. Acklin ran a 4.49 40-time at his Pro Day, which is good, but then set off fireworks from there with a 6.64 three-cone, 4.05 shuttle, and 38" vertical.

Take the athletic Pro Day and combine it with a high 'market share' of his team's passing game in 2017...including a 19 catch, 343 yards, 3 TD individual game...add some sweet plays on his highlight reel – and 'boom' the analytics community has its sleeper du jour.

I see the promise and potential as well, but The Computer sees some issues that make it tap the brakes a little with Acklin.

What I see on tape – a springy, lively athlete...a bounce in his step when he plays. He has good hands and concentration catching passes -- his highlight tape shows several grabs of jump balls and a few one-handed catches. He can catch the football. He's tough for a small-framed guy (6'1"/185)...he makes catches in traffic and takes on hits. He runs into trouble, doesn't dance around it. A good example of his tougher mindset, the play that has many scouts buzzing -- https://youtu.be/u_Ai2O9iBWU?t=3m39s

Acklin nearly produced half (48%) of his team's passing yardage in 2017. He also ran the ball 21 times for 255 yards and 4 TDs. He had production to match his athleticism.

There are plenty of tools to work with here – Acklin deserves a real shot to make an NFL squad this summer.

But there are some red flags...not dark red, but reddish...

I mentioned Acklin dominated his FCS competition and had a huge 'market share', etc., but that's not all the way true. There was that one game where Acklin posted the 19-343-3 line...yep, 19 catches in one



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game. Outside of that monster game, Acklin was a regular 'ol good FCS WR...not totally dominating every game -- a lot of 5-6 catch games with an occasional 100+ yard game but more 60-90 yard games. Nice, but not 'wow'. He worked with a decent enough QB, for that level, so having pretty good FCS output, aside from one massive game, takes this hype bubble down a notch.

Acklin profiles as a **Julian Edelman**-type WR...the gritty receiver who works underneath for the QB. That type of profile is undervalued in the NFL. Hell, **Trent Taylor** was as good an underneath scrapper WR prospect as you could find, and he was a 5th-round pick last year and had a hard time getting targets/on the field as a rookie. It's a specific skill that has to connect with a certain QB. 2017 prospect Northwestern WR **Austin Carr** was very similar to Acklin...and Carr was ignored, and undrafted, then was awesome in the 2017 preseason -- and was still cut by his team (NE) anyway (though later picked up by NO). I'd take **Austin Carr** over Acklin in a heartbeat. **Trent Taylor** over him too. No disrespect to Acklin, but he's not in their league (and they are really good)...so he has an even bigger NFL hill to climb.

Acklin was a nobody WR for three seasons at Western Illinois and then he dropped 20-25 pounds of fat and added back a bit of muscle in the 2017 offseason -- and came out of nowhere for a huge 2017 senior season. He's a hard worker and appears to be passionate about his pursuit of the NFL...but being 'good' at WR is relatively new to him and his next learning curve is on a pretty big stage. He's definitely earned a strong look in the NFL...maybe, even a last round draft pick.

Jaelon Acklin, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

Jaelon Acklin had that 19-343-3 game against South Dakota, outside of the that game he averaged (in 2017): 5.9 rec., 93.3 yards, 0.67 TDs per game. Not bad but not totally dominant.

Acklin's first three seasons, before he lost all the weight: 21 catches for 364 yards and 2 TDs in 32 games.

Acklin rushing the ball in 2017: 21 carries for 255 yards and 4 TDs, 12.1 ypc.

2018 Pro Day measurables...

6'1.2"/185

4.49 40-time, 1.58 10-yard, 4.05 shuttle, 6.64 three-cone

38" vertical, 10'3" broad jump



The Historical WR Prospects to Whom Jaelon Acklin Most Compares Within Our System:

Adam Drake and **Rashad Greene** garnered some sleeper interest as pretty athletic, smaller WRs...but never really made it. It's hard finding work if you're not a speed burner, or super physical, or tall/big target option. The Julian Edelman progression seems to work only with the Patriots and that's it.

| <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 Strngth Metric</u> | <u>Speed Agility Metric</u> | <u>Hands Metric</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 5.925 | 2018 | Acklin | Jaelon | W. Illinois | 6 | 1.2 | 185 | 5.32 | 6.97 | 8.28 |
| 5.477 | 2015 | Drake | Adam | E. Illinois | 6 | 1.6 | 195 | 5.92 | 3.19 | 8.45 |
| 6.214 | 2015 | Greene | Rashad | Florida State | 5 | 11.3 | 182 | 5.07 | 6.22 | 8.81 |
| 5.768 | 2013 | Wilson | Marquess | Washington St. | 6 | 2.5 | 194 | -1.57 | 10.79 | 7.70 |
| 4.892 | 2015 | Rutenbeck | Tyler | Dubuque | 6 | 1.5 | 186 | -2.69 | 6.23 | 4.76 |
| 3.674 | 2012 | Woods | D.J. | Cincinnati | 5 | 11.6 | 180 | 3.40 | 8.02 | 7.73 |
| 3.217 | 2014 | Foster | Donte | Ohio | 6 | 1.0 | 188 | 7.19 | 6.87 | 7.64 |

**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,



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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:

Very probably undrafted. **Austin Carr** and **Riley McCarron** are arguably better WR prospects, and pretty athletic -- and both went undrafted last year. Likely undrafted but 7th-round not out of the question.

If I were an NFL GM, I take note of Jaelon Acklin, and definitely call him after the draft, but I don't think he's enough of a 'wow' UDFA, deep sleeper to make specific plans for.

NFL Outlook:

He's going to get a shot. Several teams have met with him since his Pro Day...some pretty savvy teams on the list. He's going to be a priority UDFA who will have to prove himself. I fear he'll be a guy always kicking around the fringe but cannot get regular work on purpose. There is hope here but it will need a few years (and the right QB/system) to develop.

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