



NFL Draft 2014 Scouting Report: CB Darqueze Dennard, Michigan State

**CB grades can and will change as more information comes in from Pro Day workouts, Wonderlic test results leaked, etc. We will update info as it becomes available.*

By the power vested in me by the scouting 'gods', I declare that **Darqueze Dennard** is going to be an NFL 'bust'. I do not mean a complete embarrassment, and that he should never grace an NFL field. I mean that he is going to be selected in the 1st-round, the draft analysts are going to coo, and then three years from now we'll have forgotten all about him. Fans of his new team might also be rather upset when he is not the 'plug & play' starting CB you think you would get with a 1st-round selection.

The measurables really tell the story here, but not everyone buys into that thinking, and I agree that sometimes the data can lie. It's not lying here. Dennard has the profile of a mediocre NFL CB, not a starter, and by no means a 'lock down' NFL CB. We'll hit the numbers harder in the next section, but let me share what I see on tape first...

Dennard is a very capable CB. He has far better technique than the other highly-lauded 2014 CB prospect **Justin Gilbert**. He's never going to embarrass himself, especially at the college level. On the NFL stage it will be a different story. Dennard does not have the 40-time speed, or 10 and 20-yard splits of a high-end, or even a 'good' NFL CB. He is a step too slow for NFL top CBs...which means he will be exposed by all the athletic talent in the NFL. When I watch Dennard play, I can see he is a smart player. I also see he gets away with grabbing a WR's jersey more than any CB I've watched on tape. I think he grabs jersey's because he does not have the speed to stay with top speed WRs.

Dennard also has an odd, lucky break for him in that he did not face any high-end QB-WR combos in the Big-10 the past few years. I would have liked to have seen him matchup against Penn State and **Allen Robinson**, but he never drew him in his career. He did not get **Jared Abbrederis**/Wisconsin in 2013 either. The biggest talent who Dennard faced was in 2010 (as a sophomore), was against Georgia in the Outback Bowl. He had two picks (and a TD return of one) off **Aaron Murray**, but they were passes thrown right to him, not created because of awesome coverage. He was fine against Georgia, and against everyone else...I'm not sure he was amazing, but he was sound. We can only judge him on who he did face, and he has been really good in most every play of every game.

Being 'technically sound' is a good thing. Dennard is a smart defender, and a decent tackler. He can 'play ball'. However, just like there are great college QBs and great college RBs, who don't necessarily translate to the pros...it may be the same with Dennard. He can play, maybe even start at the NFL level, but he does not profile as a star CB; not at all.



Darqueze Dennard, Through the Lens of Our CB Scouting Algorithm:

His college numbers were 'OK'. He did not have an amazing amount of interceptions or passes defended, and some of that can be that QBs are avoiding him, but that happens to a lot of top college CBs...but those other guys just come up with numbers because of their greatness. Dennard doesn't have the 'numbers' like the other top CB prospects. He was solid, but not off-the-charts; not 'best in class'.

It's the measurables that have us scared to death on Dennard, from a top CB prospect perspective...

When you consider Dennard's measurables versus the other top 2014 CBs (**Roby, Verrett, Gilbert, Fuller**) you'll see what I mean:

- Dennard is the slowest in 40-time at 4.51 (and most top CBs worth their NFL salt are 4.4 or 4.3 runners)
- He was also the slowest in the 10 and 20-yard splits...by distance from the next closest time
- Dennard (5'10.7") is only taller than **Jason Verrett** among this top-5 CB group
- He had the 2nd lowest vertical (36") of the top-5 CB group
- Dennard has the shortest arms among the top-5 CBs, and nearly the shortest in the class. He also one of the smaller hand-sizes as well.

I know. I know, what you're thinking: "Who cares? He's a 'baller'." To me, if I'm going to invest big money in a player, especially at CB, I don't want a ton of red-flags physically. College football is pushing out too many high-end athletes at WR for me to counter with a slightly short, slightly slow, great technique CB. College Football is also pushing out a ton of highly athletic CBs with technique as well. Why should I chase after Dennard with the question marks?

The Historical CB Prospects to Whom Darqueze Dennard Most Compares Within Our System:

Aaron Williams has been a starter for the Bills for the past 2+ seasons. He is an 'OK' NFL DB; just like we think Williams will be. Williams also has played some Safety. I could see Dennard being moved there as



well, if he really is a touch too slow to be a starting CB, but you want his quality of play on the field. He might be a great Safety, and just an 'OK' CB in the NFL. We can only really compare him as a CB, since that has been his college position his entire career.

| <u>CB Grade</u> | <u>Last</u> | <u>First</u> | <u>Draft Yr</u> | <u>College</u> | <u>H</u> | <u>H</u> | <u>W</u> | <u>Cover Rating</u> | <u>Speed Metrics</u> | <u>Agility Metric</u> | <u>Tackle Metric</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 4.27 | Dennard | Darqueze | 2014 | Michigan St. | 5 | 10.7 | 199 | 6.45 | 1.66 | 4.68 | 9.50 |
| 6.65 | Williams | Aaron | 2011 | Texas | 5 | 11.7 | 204 | 6.44 | 4.55 | 8.60 | 10.40 |
| 5.09 | Thomas | Josh | 2011 | Buffalo | 5 | 10.2 | 191 | 7.85 | 4.91 | 4.97 | 8.30 |
| 5.09 | Aubery | Josh | 2013 | S.F. Austin | 5 | 10.3 | 199 | 6.67 | 5.01 | 4.37 | 11.96 |
| 5.06 | Tandy | Keith | 2012 | West Va | 5 | 10.1 | 200 | 8.19 | 2.95 | 2.90 | 10.16 |
| 2.05 | Martin | Andre | 2013 | No. Dakota St | 5 | 10.2 | 193 | 4.69 | -1.12 | 2.01 | 8.87 |

**The ratings are based on a 1–10 rating scale, but a prospect can score over 10.0+ and less than 0.0*

OVERALL RATING -- We merge the data from physical measurables, skill times/counts from the NFL Combine/Pro Days, with college performance data available on pass coverage/tackles, etc. and grade it compared to our database history of all college CBs, with a focus on which CBs went on to be good-great-elite in the NFL. We found characteristics/data points that the successful NFL CBs had in common in college, that most other CB prospects could not match/achieve.

Scoring with a rating over a **7.00+** in our system is where we start to take a CB prospect more seriously. Most of the future NFL successful college CBs scored **8.00+**, and most of the NFL superior CBs pushed scores more in the **9.00+** levels...and future NFL busts will sneak in there from time to time. **10.00+** is where most of the elite NFL CBs tend to score in our system analysis.

COVERAGE -- A combination of on-field data/performance and physical profile data

SPEED -- Measurables from a perspective of straight-line speed, burst, etc.

AGILITY -- Measurables for lateral movements, quick cuts, body type, speed, etc.

POWER -- A look at physical size, tackling productivity in college, other physical measurables. One of the side benefits/intentions here, is to see which CBs may be more of a model for a conversion to playing safety successfully in the NFL. Also denotes CBs who are more physical/will have higher tackle totals...over pure speed/coverage CBs.



2014 NFL Draft Outlook:

Darqueze Dennard has become a bit of a CB 'darling' since the NFL Draft. All it takes is for Mike Mayock to have an orgasm about you, and up the charts for everybody you go. It happened with **Khalil Mack** (mostly warranted), and it is happening with Dennard (to us, not as warranted). The NFL typically follows the mainstream, so you can bet that Dennard is going 1st-round.

If I were an NFL GM, all I am doing is watching Dennard being taken by someone else. I have no interest in him in the 1st or 2nd-round. Not that he is not a quality NFL asset, but he's not nearly the best CB in this draft, and there are plenty of top non-CBs I'd look at well ahead of even thinking about Dennard. He's going 1st-round, so there is no point in hoping he falls to the 3rd or 4th-round. He's just not my cup of CB tea.

NFL Outlook:

Dennard will probably work his way into a starting role, sooner rather than later. He will be taken 1st-round by a team with a CB hole to fill. Dennard will be shoved into it, and probably make his Defensive Coordinator lose years off his life. We just do not see Dennard with the athleticism to compete right away in the NFL. Perhaps, with time, Dennard is a savvy, wily CB...but that won't happen day-one; I don't care what Mayock says (he thinks he starts, and produces right away).

Dennard moving to Safety eventually is not off the table either. However, as a CB, I fear he is going to fall a bit short of the 'great' or 'good' mark. As a Safety, Dennard may have a nice, long, steady career.

