NFL Draft 2018 Scouting Report: CB Josh Jackson, Iowa

*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.

I'm having a hard time trying to figure out if **Josh Jackson** is an 'A', 'B', or 'C' grade CB prospect for the 2018 NFL Draft. The main case for Jackson as a top CB prospect is his '*amazing, WR-like hands*'. It's true, Jackson might have the best hands of any CB prospect I've scouted recently…but does that mean he can cover NFL WRs well/properly? Not necessarily.

I watched a tape that was cut up of just Jackson's interceptions from 2017…all NCAA-leading eight of them. Just one of them I would judge as 'great coverage'. A couple of them were tipped/dropped by the WR and a free ball fell in the lap of Jackson. Most of the picks were totally ill-advised throws right to Jackson who was sitting right in front of the WR – and Jackson made the catch. At times, he made miraculous catches.

One advantage Jackson brings to the table – he's going to create a few turnovers that other CBs won't because his hands are so 'sure'. 1-2-3 extra turnovers a season could mean the difference between making the playoffs and not. It's an advantage for Jackson as a prospect.

However, if Jackson is so poor in coverage that he gives up a ton of plays each game…the extra 1-2-3 turnovers a season won't matter as much. Trying to judge Jackson as a pure cover corner is where I struggle evaluating him.

4.56 40-time speed is not damning but it's not great for a cover corner. He does have the shifty feet – 4.03 shuttle/6.86 three-cone. Overall, he can move well enough 'on paper'. Not an 'A' but a solid 'B' in movement overall. What I didn't love…the on-tape movement, per se. Not great backpedaling out of press coverage…he's very susceptible to getting beat deep off the jump because he's a little slow when chasing WRs off the snap – and I believe it's why he often plays way back off receivers. He's smart…he has great closing or breaking-on-the-ball speed/instincts/feet. He gives himself the time and position to make picks as he's back further from the line, looking over the field…not with back turned chasing/mirroring his receiver. He has a **Marcus Peters** quality – he plays back, he'll give up throws short in front of him all day, but if you challenge him medium/deep, he's probably going to pick the pass off.

Is a defensive coordinator willing to give up short completions in order to have a great-hands/great zone-cover corner? Some teams that play more zone cover principals would love a guy like Jackson. Jackson has 'B' size, speed/movement with 'A' hands…and, maybe, 'C' press cover skills and 'B+/A-' zone cover instincts. Worst case, you can move Jackson to a safety spot and he'll probably pick off 10 passes in a season.

Jackson has a clean record off the field. Went to Iowa as a WR. Converted to corner in 2016, became a starter and All-American in 2017 in his first season as a starting CB. He's a soft-spoken, serious player lauded for his leadership (was a captain) and work ethic.

Considering Jackson's CB skills, possibility to move to safety, and solid character/background – Jackson has to be considered a safe/low floor pick for the NFL.

Josh Jackson, Through the Lens of Our CB Scouting Algorithm:

Teams came out and challenged new starter Jackson right away in 2017…and he responded with 15 PDs in his first 8 games of the season. They backed away from him more after that.

Jackson picked off 3 passes versus Ohio State and then added 2 more picks against Wisconsin the following week (and returned both for TDs)…he had 6 interceptions in his final five games.

Jackson placed in the upper end in many Combine drills – shuttle time, vertical, bench press…

2018 NFL Combine measurables…

6'0.3"/196, 9.38" hands, 31.13" arms

4.56 40-time, 1.57 10-yard, 4.03 shuttle, 6.86 three-cone

18 bench press reps, 38" vertical, 10'3" broad jump

The Historical CB Prospects to Whom Josh Jackson Most Compares Within Our System:

Tramon Williams and **Antoine Cason** had many solid years in the NFL. Williams is still going. **Jordan Poyer** emerged with Buffalo last season. Jackson comps mostly with prospects who went on to be good 'ballplayers' in the NFL.

CB Grade	Last	First	Draft Yr	College	H	H	W	Cover Rating	Speed Metrics	Agility Metric	Tackle Metric
8.265	Jackson	Josh	2018	Iowa	6	0.3	196	8.88	1.65	8.73	6.99
5.819	Williams	Tramon	2006	La Tech	5	11.1	194	10.30	1.69	6.37	6.69
8.403	Cason	Antoine	2008	Arizona	6	0.2	191	10.99	5.61	6.40	9.15
5.808	Poyer	Jordan	2013	Oregon St	5	11.7	191	8.43	4.38	4.63	6.06
5.279	Jackson	Chevis	2008	LSU	6	0.0	192	9.10	4.06	5.49	6.07
5.469	Desir	Pierre	2014	Lindenwood	6	1.0	198	9.73	-3.39	5.26	7.07

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.*

2018 NFL Draft Outlook:

Most everyone has Jackson going 1st round…either the 3rd or 4th CB off the draft board…some, of late, have him as the 2nd CB off the board. Jackson will likely go #15–25 overall.

If I were an NFL GM, Jackson is definitely under consideration as a CB pick after **Denzel Ward** is off the board. He's our #2 CB prospect currently. But, I'd desire him more if my team ran more zone cover concepts.

NFL Outlook:

Everything screams that Jackson will be a solid NFL player, and maybe he files a Pro Bowl season or two. His ability to catch passes/pick passes is going to get him extra attention from the fans and media, so he might get overrated at a certain point, but he's going to be solid no matter what…with upside and low downside.

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