NFL Draft 2015 Scouting Report: TE Ross Travis, Penn State

*Our TE 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.

**Our TE formulas had some slight changes in the offseason—an adjustment to better identify and value TE prospects that are smaller physically and are primed for the era ahead...the era of Jordan Reed and Delanie Walker-type TEs. Our historical grades will have changed some on various prospects as well, to show their grades by comparison.

Ross Travis is one of the two 'headline' basketball-to-football converts in this draft (**Richard Ross**, Old Dominion being the other). Obviously, Travis has no track record on the field, so we are hamstrung a bit on being able to scout him fully. However, I did watch a good portion of his Penn State Pro Day, and have looked over some of his basketball tape to get an idea of his athleticism and hands, plus we do have some rumored times and data from the Pro Day workout.

Here's what I see with Travis:

 — As a basketball player for Penn State, Travis was like a smaller **Dennis Rodman** (Travis is around 6'5") type. For those under 40 years-old, **Dennis Rodman** was the greatest pure rebounder in the history of NBA basketball, but was not ultra-tall or ultra-strong. Travis has that Rodman-like wiry-frame, bouncy legs, and knack for getting his hands on a missed shot and securing it for himself. His game was as an undersized power forward of sorts.

 — On the hardwood, Travis displayed an explosive leaping ability. He had his share of follow up dunks, some over much larger players–he just gets off the floor faster than most. He was not a pure shooter or dribbler, as much as he was a scrappy defender and rebounder—which is more the type that you want attempting to transition to the NFL.

 — He displayed pretty fluid hands at his Pro Day...the kind you'd expect from a basketball player. He had a nice segment at his Pro Day where he purposefully caught the ball one-handed alternating hands on a series of catching drills. He caught all passes his well, but he did flub a few...but the bobbles looked more like mistiming between he and the QB/coach on the different turn and catch drills. He has pretty decent hands from what I saw...and decent-sized ones as well.

 — His body is not what you envision as a power forward moving to TE like an **Antonio Gates**, etc. Travis has more of a WR's body: Lanky, wiry, and quick-twitched. He has skinny calves, a thin upper-body, and produced just 7 reps on the bench press.

— He reportedly ran 4.6 in the 40-time, which means probably 4.7+. He looked a little choppy running his time drills, but he may not have been coached up on proper technique like other prospects who have been prepping all year.

What Travis looks like to me is a 'tweener' conversion who is likely to fail in making an impact in the NFL. He's likely too slow to be a great WR weapon, but too thin-framed to work at Tight End…and doesn't appear to have a body type which lends itself to adding a bunch of bulk. He is a scrapper in basketball, and did very well in the classroom—so you have some pieces to work with, but not sure there are enough of them to craft a legit TE for the NFL—it might take years. A move to being a very tall, leaping WR weapon may be more in order…an intriguing WR/TE hybrid—heavy on the WR part. No doubt this is a multi-year project.

Ross Travis, Through the Lens of Our TE Scouting Algorithm:

There is not much concrete data we have here to examine, but here are a few minor notes of interest…

— This is a poor class of Tight Ends in 2015, so Travis's 4.6+ 40-time (if true) would have put him as the 2nd or 3rd fastest 40-time among the NFL Combine TEs.

— Travis led Penn State in rebounds last season with 6.3 per game. He scored just 5.5 PPG. He's not a serious NBA or overseas hoops prospect.

— Travis last played football as a freshman in High School.

The Historical TE Prospects to Whom Ross Travis Most Compares Within Our System:

Eric Swoope is an obvious comp for our computers—he too is a recent hoops-to-gridiron convert. He is entering his 2nd-season with Indy, after going undrafted last season—he clawed his way onto the practice squad, and impressed coaches all season with his work ethic. Travis can hopefully follow that same path.

TE Grade	Last	First	Yr	College	H	H	W	Spd-Agil Metric	Strgth Blxing Metric	Hands Metric
3.61	Travis	Ross	2015	Penn State	6	5.0	231	5.74	-0.93	6.41
3.08	Swoope	Eric	2014	Miami, Fla	6	4.6	224	5.90	-2.60	5.59
3.73	Chichester	Josh	2012	Louisville	6	6.0	233	7.86	0.23	5.71
4.24	Sperry	Kory	2009	Colorado State	6	4.6	238	6.36	3.28	9.77
0.17	Ariguzo	Ike	2014	E. Kentucky	6	4.6	235	3.31	1.32	4.89

*A score of **7.0**+ is where we start to take a TE prospect more seriously. A score of **8.50**+ is where we see a stronger correlation of TEs 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 TE.*

All of the TE ratings are based on a 0–10 scale, but a player can score negative, or above a 10.0 in certain instances.

"Speed-Agility Metric" = 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.

"Power-Strength Metric" = 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.

"Hands Metric" = 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 project the combination of data for receiving success at the next level.

2015 NFL Draft Outlook:

Ross Travis will not be drafted. He's not special enough an athlete in speed-agility or in size for the NFL to get crazy on.

If I were an NFL GM, I'd give Travis a look, but wouldn't kill myself to make it happen. He has some skills, but there are several others just like him floating around out there. These conversions are often 2-3 year timetables. I'm not sure I'd want to take a ton of time on a mediocre TE-conversion athlete.

NFL Outlook:

Travis will have to spend a few years scraping and clawing his way to the NFL. He'll need to transform his body completely, and I'm not sure his frame will allow it. There's enough to keep tabs on here, but not to get too excited about—this is not the next Gates-Graham, etc.

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