



## NFL Draft 2019 Scouting Report: WR A.J. Brown, Mississippi

*\*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.*

I think we've all been conditioned to accept the fact that **A.J. Brown** is like this great college wide receiver, and an obvious star for the pros...but the more tape I've watched, the deeper I've studied – the more I'm starting to question that premise.

I'm starting to wonder if we see his shirtless photos and because he's on the same team as ultra-hyped **D.K. Metcalf**...and we just start to assume all the pro-Brown media assumption is golden. I mean, it makes sense. He has been very productive in the SEC. He looks the part. He acts the part. There isn't even a need to really study it...just run with it – he's a great athlete and excellent interior receiver, right?

Maybe.

I was kinda getting sucked into that thought process as well. He's athletic. He has solid tape. He's like a running back size playing slot wide receiver. He's got the production numbers. What's not to love?

I watched Brown route after route after route from his 2018 work the last two days...and I'm starting to think we have a problem here. Not a fraud or a bust. I just think we've got a \$50 bill being treated like a \$100 bill...a 'C' talent getting an 'A' push for 'reasons'.

I wrote down and tried to follow the logic of what reasons the analysts were giving. It usually came down to route running, reliability, muscular/strength...and then running the 4.49 just clinched everything. However, to me, there are a bunch of nice, better-than-Brown route runners with the same height, speed, who have as-good/better hands than Brown in this draft. 10 years ago, maybe Brown is an anomaly. Today, in this era, in this loaded 2019 class...he's 'just a guy'. He's solid...but he's not special.

Not special in his speed (4.49 is good but they all run 4.4s-4.5s now with some 4.3s).

Not special in hands (they are average/good).



MARCH 4, 2019

Not special in height or reach.

His one advantage is he's 10+ pounds thicker than most guys within an inch +/- of his size. How much are 'C' routes, 'C' hands, 'B' speed, and 'A' thickness worth for a wide receiver prospect?

**Gary Jennings**, West Virginia, is a half-inch taller, and 10-pounds lighter, but still plenty big at 214 pounds...with 'A' hands, ran a 4.42, gets open better than Brown, and benched one rep more than Brown. Why is **A.J. Brown** a top 30-40 prospect overall, and Jennings lucky to be top 100?

It's not so much that Brown is a fraud, in a sense, as much as it is – why should I pay double for his skill set when I can find the same or even better much cheaper?

The more I watched, the less impressed I became. My notes on Brown – sometimes good routes, sometimes not so much. Not that sharp out of his cuts...not making high-level cuts to get open. A lot of his catches were easy screens behind the line of scrimmage or short out routes with DBs playing back off and letting him have some space...whether protecting deep or the opponent was just up by a lot of points and preventing. RARELY did I see Brown run some special route and just burn his defender in tight coverage in critical spots. He beat weaker, loose coverage...he ran by a few people...but when push came to shove against Alabama and LSU-type opponents...he was really not that great/noticeable. Nothing really stood out. He was just 'reliable' or 'available', but not 'the man'. He looked much better against Texas Tech, Southern Illinois, Kent State, and Louisiana-Monroe than he did against Alabama-LSU-Miss State, Texas A&M and even his big (tally) game against Auburn in 2018 was kinda dull.

Again, Brown isn't bad. I just don't think he's 'great'. He's 'good' at best. Possibly 'average' at being a wide receiver talent but one with a lot of bulk. 'Bulk' is not my favorite attribute in a WR prospect.

He's a seemingly good young man coming from a solid background/home. He's a hard worker. He's an athlete -- he was drafted into Major League Baseball and signed with the Padres (although no one ever questions his passion for the game like they do **Kyler Murray's**). I almost wonder whether if Brown ends up a mid/late 2nd-round pick in the NFL Draft, because this WR class is loaded, he might jump to baseball quickly himself. Monetarily it might make more sense. It's not talked about because analysts have already sold themselves on **A.J. Brown**...they've already filled in the story the way they want to believe it.

There are holes and issues here not being discussed. And this class is too deep to make a big investment with those present.



## A.J. Brown, Through the Lens of Our WR Scouting Algorithm:

---

The last two seasons against Alabama and LSU: 4.5 catches, 36.5 yards, 0.00 TDs per game (4 games total).

Brown has scored 17 TDs the past two seasons, 10 of them against non-SEC foes.

Brown has scored 2 TDs in a game five times in his college career. The teams he did that against: South Alabama, Tenn-Martin, Louisiana (not LSU), Southern Illinois, and Vandy.

I think there are some real concerns here with Brown's production and who it came against.

### *2019 NFL Combine Measurables...*

6'0"/226

9'.75" hands, 32.87" arms

4.49 40-time, DNP agility drills (and I'm thinking they are average/good when he does them)

19 bench reps, 36.5" vertical, 10'0" broad jump – All very average/good numbers.

## The Historical WR Prospects to Whom A.J. Brown Most Compares Within Our System:

---

There are a lot of correlations with **Chris Harper**, **Ty Montgomery**, and **Junior Hemingway** here...and that's not good for projecting Brown as a god. Think about **Ty Montgomery**...big, bulky receiver out of Stanford. Had great moments in college and was a return man and played some RB – **A.J. Brown** isn't as good a prospect as Ty, looking at everything. That's the issue...big, bulky, shorter in height 220+ pound WRs – they don't have a great track record in the NFL.

It's not this size range = bad because of history. It's not totally that simple, but there's also a difficulty in guys this thick getting open and making sharp moves before/after the catch to make a big impact. Maybe Brown will crack that mold, but I really didn't see anything on tape that made me think 'next great NFL wide receiver'. Good...OK...not great.



<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>
7.354	2019	Brown	A.J.	Ole Miss	6	0.4	226	12.38	4.64	7.83
6.800	2013	Harper	Chris	Kansas State	6	0.6	229	13.48	5.86	7.16
7.251	2015	Montgomery	Ty	Stanford	5	11.7	221	14.64	4.30	9.48
7.338	2012	Hemingway	Junior	Michigan	6	0.7	225	12.88	4.74	5.98
4.373	2011	Taylor	Tyrod	Virginia Tech	6	0.6	217	8.48	8.24	6.18
-0.025	2012	Session	Derek	Maine	6	0.0	223	14.94	2.78	4.93

*\*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.*

**2019 NFL Draft Outlook:**

Brown is tracking as a top 30-40 prospect. I want to say there are too many WR talents in this draft for Brown to go 1st-round, but I know the NFL – they make this mistake with WR prospects time and time again. They’ll talk themselves into it...I think they already have. He’ll go top 40 but shouldn’t.

