THE NFL DRAFT REPORT PRESENTS

THE 2019 SAFETY CLASS

THIS BULLDOG SAFETY HAS COME FULL-CIRCLE

Johnanthan Abram-#38

Mississippi State University Bulldogs

5:11.3-211

*Agility Tests.*..4.45 in the 40-yard dash…1.56 10-yard dash…2.60 20-yard dash…38-inch vertical jump...9'-08" broad jump…Bench pressed 225 pounds xx times…31 3/8-inch arm length…9 5/8-inch hands…74 3/4-inch wingspan...Note-Abram suffered an injury at the Scouting Combine and did not complete drills. He also did not participate in agility tests during the school's recent pro day.

*Background*...Once a Bulldog, always a Bulldog, Abram might be saying. Only this time, being a Bulldog comes with a happy ending. He was originally a Georgia Bulldog in 2015. The three-star recruit had enrolled early at Georgia in January 2015, making him eligible for the Bulldogs' spring camp. He impressed the staff enough that he started four of the ten games he played in.

After recording 25 tackles as a true freshman, Abram told teammates back in December that he intended to transfer out of Georgia and continue his college football career elsewhere. Abram did not play in Georgia's final game of the season, which was a 24-17 TaxSlayer Bowl victory over Penn State.

After participating in the first couple of postseason practices in Athens, Abram left campus and did not return. At the time, former interim head coach Bryan McClendon said Abram was taking care of a personal issue, which is why he went home to Mississippi. Once in Jacksonville, McClendon said it would be unlikely for Abram to make it for the game.

Abram apparently told his teammates he would look into transferring to Alabama, which is where former Georgia defensive coordinator Jeremy Pruitt now holds the same title. Pruitt was not retained by new head coach Kirby Smart, who will reportedly bring in Alabama defensive backs coach Mel Tucker to be his defensive coordinator.

Abram, realizing that he would not be eligible to play immediately, then headed to the junior college ranks in 2016 before joining the Mississippi State Bulldogs prior to the 2017 season opener. Abram is proud of his time as a Bulldog and said MSU has readied him for the next step in his career.

"Overall, this is probably the best decision I've ever made in coming here," Abram said. "It prepared me mentally and physically … On our defense this year, one [NFL] coach said it was like defending every blade of grass that's behind you, which was true. We take pride in that. A lot of NFL coaches see that, and they have a lot of success with Mississippi State players because they're healthy coming out of college, hard workers and really good men."

Prior to his college travels, Abram attended East Marion High School, where the Mississippi native lettered in football and baseball. In addition to lining up at safety, he also started at quarterback. He finished his junior season with 88 total tackles, five interceptions, two forced fumbles and one fumble recovery as well as 1,288 rushing yards, 19 rushing yards, 1,737 passing yards and 21

passing touchdowns.

As a senior, Abram led East Marion to a 10-5 record and a berth in the 2014 2A Mississippi State Semifinal game. The 2014 MAC Defensive Player of the Year was named to the 2014 Mississippi-Alabama All-Star Football roster. He closed out his career by returning an interception for a touchdown in the Mississippi-Alabama All-Star game. ESPN.com rated him the state's 14th-best overall player and rated him 60th on their national list. 247Sports.com regarded him as a three-star recruit and the nation's 21st-best safety.

At Georgia, Abram was awarded the Doug and Diane Magnus Family Athletic Scholarship. He saw action at free safety and slot cornerback before deciding to leave the team. He then joined the Jones County Community College Bobcats in 2016, finishing that year rated as the best junior college safety in America and a consensus four-star prospect. Among all JUCO prospects, he ranked tenth overall by 247Sports.

Abram made 23 tackles, including 2.5 for loss to go along with one pass breakup and one forced fumble in 2016. He also saw some action at quarterback in “Wildcat” formations, completing one pass for a 33-yard touchdown vs. Copiah-Lincoln, adding six tackles, including one for a loss. He scored on a 17-yard bootleg in the East Mississippi clash, as he also caused one fumble and posted six tackles.

Abram decided to stay in home state and enrolled at Mississippi State in 2017. He started seven of the thirteen games that he appeared in at strong safety. Despite just starting a little over half of their games, he finished second on the team with 71 tackles (43 solos), adding two sacks among five stops for losses, causing fumbles on both QB drops. He also deflected five passes. He closed out his first Bulldogs campaign with a then career-high nine tackles in the TaxSlayer Bowl vs. Louisville.

Abram was a weekly highlight film in 2018. Regarded as one of the top defensive backs in college football, he started 11-of-13 games - nine at safety and twice at star. He earned All-American honors from The NFL Draft Report (first team) , The Athletic (second team), Sports Illustrated (second team), The Associated Press (third team), CBS Sports (second team), American Football Coaches Association (second team) and Phil Steele (third team).

Abram also collected All-Southeastern Conference first-team honors, as he led the team and ranked eighth in the league in tackles (99). He filled the stat sheet with nine tackles for loss, three sacks, two interceptions, five pass breakups, one fumble forced and one fumble recovered. He paced the SEC and placed third in the nation in total pressures among safeties (16).

Five of his recorded pressures were QB hits, which led the SEC and tied for third in the country among safeties. His 99 tackles also were the most of any SEC defensive back and he finished with at least one tackle for loss in each of the last four games, including a career-high 3.5 on Senior Day vs. Arkansas. He saw 31-of-48 passes targeted into his area get caught, good for 271 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

Abram's nine tackles for loss were the second-most in the SEC among defensive backs. He dominated the month of November with 31 tackles, six tackles for loss, 1.5 sacks, one interception, a forced fumble and a recovered fumble. He recorded his first interception of the season in the third game vs. Louisiana and then turned in his first of two double-digit tackle efforts (10) and added one sack at LSU.

The ball-hawk tallied nine tackles, one tackle for loss and three pressures, including a pair of QB hits vs. Alabama before he earned SEC Defensive Player of the Week honors for his performance vs. Arkansas, which included career highs in tackles (12), tackles for loss (3.5) and sacks (1.5). He also forced and recovered a fumble and was responsible for a season-high five pressures according to PFF against the Razorbacks. He allowed 60-of-97 passes to be completed (61.86%) for 692 yards and six touchdowns

In 26 games at Mississippi State, Abram participated in 1,665 snaps, as he registered 170 tackles (96 solos) with five sacks for minus 36 yards and fourteen stops for losses of 61 yards. He gained nine yards on two MSU interception returns and deflected twelve tosses. He caused three fumbles and recovered another.

For his entire career, that included pit stops at Georgia and Jones County, Abram delivered 218 tackles (115 solos), five sacks and eighteen stops behind the line of scrimmage. He also caused four fumbles while completing a 33-yard touchdown pass, carrying twice for 19 yards and a score and returning two blocked punts for ten yards.

*The Scouting Report*

*Athletic Ability*… Abram has an athletic build with minimal body fat, along with room to carry additional bulk if a team decides to utilize him as a strong safety. He has good upper and lower body muscle definition with a good bubble and solid thickness in his thighs and calves. He has that thick linebacker-like frame that could see him play some Cover-2 at the second level, thanks to his great playing strength and explosive closing speed. Some scouts even call him a safety playing linebacker and feel he can interchange at both safety spots, along with handling Rover, hybrid-type duties, as he offers good scheme versatility in the back-seven.

Abram is a smooth, fluid mover who has done quite a nice job of making plays at the opposite side of the field, thanks to his burst, second gear and ability to sift through traffic to get to the ball. He shows excellent ball reactionary skills, along with the quick decision-making process to close on the play with good urgency. He can change direction in an instant and does a nice job of maintaining position when challenged by lead blockers assisting vs. the ground game.

He has the nimble feet you want in a free safety, along with the loose hips to recover quickly when a receiver gets behind him. He can turn and run with the speediest of receivers, as he is a savvy player who knows how to disrupt the route’s progression by using his hands to knock his coverage assignments off stride. He has the loose hips and sudden burst to close on the ball in a hurry and shows good body control in transition. He has excellent hand/eye coordination, along with the leaping ability to get fine elevation going up to get to the pass at its high point (team’s active interception leader). He has above average-sized hands and does a fine job of extending and catching away from his frame. He is quick and fast, which allows him to keep plays in front of him and mirror even the swift flankers and split ends in deep secondary coverage.

*Key and Diagnostic Skills*…Abram demonstrates very quick reading ability on the top end and is very decisive figuring out the play action and where he needs to be to make the tackle. He has such good ability when it comes to reading and recognizing the action in front of him and is vastly underrated for his run force skills. He is cat-quick with anticipation the flight of the ball and is quick to react handling switch-offs in zone coverage. I am also very impressed with his alignment skills, as he always seems to be ready to wrap-tackle, rather than take a side or “ankle bite.” He attacks the outside leg of the ball carriers properly to prevent forward progress and is never going to be fooled by play action or misdirection.

While some scouts feel he could be a solid strong safety, thanks to his hard impact type of tackling, I feel that his quickness makes him an excellent centerfielder when playing deep in the zone. He does a fine job of keeping plays in front of him and his future coaching staff would be well advised to utilize that quickness more by using him as a blitzer (see 2018 LSU, Alabama, Arkansas, Iowa games). Last season, 323-of-693 plays made by Abram came in run force, thus disputing the assessment by some that he is not physical playing near the line.

He is quick to anticipate the play and has the loose hips and acceleration to stay with almost any receiver on deep routes. When given room to roam, he can really locate the ball in a hurry. You will almost never see him get burned on deep routes. He is a decisive athlete who can react in an instant. His quickness and ability to take proper angles allows him to close on the ball and string plays wide in run support. He has the vision to make plays with his back to the ball, doing a nice job of looking the pass in over his shoulders.

*Man Coverage Ability*…While he is too valuable as a centerfielder to remove him from either safety position, he has the speed, range and mirroring ability to excel as a slot cornerback, as he is fluid and calm in one-on-one confrontations with split ends and flankers, along with showing the physicality to reroute tight ends and slot backs working in the short areas. He has the quickness, agility and speed needed in the slot to more than handle any NFL #3 receiver.

He reminds me a lot of Atlanta's Keanu Neal for his ability to quickly locate the receiver and stay on the hip of his man throughout the route. He has very quick feet to match up with almost any opponent and looks very natural turning and running to the ball. His speed allows him to cut off routes and stays in proper position by keeping his eyes on his assignment (see 2018 Louisiana, Texas A&M, Alabama, Arkansas games).

He has more than enough quickness to shadow targets in the short area and the speed to run with slot receivers and backs. Because of his loose hips, it is rare to see him allow a cushion. He has more than enough quickness, flexibility and strength to keep tight on the tight ends and shows good feet out of his backpedal to accelerate and close. His recovery speed is evident, as it allows him to attach himself to his assignment and never lose site of the ball in flight.

*Zone Coverage Ability*…Abram always seems to be in the right position to defend the deep areas of the field. He has more than enough range to make plays at the other side of the field and has very good alignment and assignment read ability. He does an excellent job looking up threats and getting a good jump on the pass. With his speed and acceleration validated, he will not have any problems covering ground at the next level. He just has that 20-20 vision that lets him not only keep relationship with the receiver, but also eye the quarterback.

He does a great job of anticipating the ball in flight and uses his speed and hands to keep plays in front of him (see 2018 Louisiana, LSU, Arkansas games). His zone coverage awareness and alertness allows him to get a jump on the ball. He will not be fooled by the quarterback’s pump action or fakes. His outstanding range lets him cover lots of ground, even when playing deep in centerfield. The thing I like when watching his film is Abram’s good zone awareness and ability to quickly see the route develop.

*Ball Reaction Skills*…Abram is extremely quick out of his plant-&-drive. He is also very aggressive to and through the reception point, leading to the high amount of targeted passes that he has managed to reroute his coverage assignments away from. He shows above average timing and leaping ability to win jump ball battles. He reacts with very good urgency to break on the thrown ball and has the eyes and patience to track, locate and chase down the ball in flight. When he stays low in his pads, he is quick to get into position to make the play. He has a good grasp of taking angles to close and has explosive acceleration coming out of his breaks.

He will frustrate a quarterback with the way he can anticipate the throw and his plant-&-drive agility is exceptional, as it lets him get an excellent jump on the ball. He can lay back and play centerfield due to his timing and shows good courage attempting to go for the ball in a crowd. He is so quick in transition that he does not even need to accelerate much to stay tight with the receiver on deep routes. He is very fast to fit vs. the running game in attempts to close. The thing you notice on film is the way he can glide up and down hill with sudden acceleration.

*Jumping Ability…*Abram constantly uses his size and jumping ability to get position on the pigskin when operating in a crowd. He can elevate with the best safeties in this draft class (38-inch vertical jump) and shows no fear for his own safety, if it means he can impact the play. He is the type that knows how to ride up the receiver and use his arms to either deflect or catch the ball in flight. He attacks the ball with good urgency and feels that any pass coming his way will not be caught.

With his hand/eye coordination, he gives his opponents fits trying to reach and pluck the ball without having to break off their routes. With his foot speed, size and playing strength, he can match up with the split ends and flankers on deep routes or out-muscle tight ends and backs going for the ball underneath. He has the hip swerve to adjust to the ball on the move and he does a nice job of getting into position to make the play. He is the type of player that gets a good rise in his jumps to compete for the ball.

*Hands*...Abram lacks production, as far as ball thievery is concerned. He has just ten pass deflections and two interceptions through 41 appearances. He can elevate and compete for the ball vs. receivers much bigger than him, but he needs to time his leaps properly and most of his issues occur when he leaves his feet too early. He is very consistent using those hands when asked to jam or reroute the tight ends or backs, though. With his strength, he is effective at interrupting the route’s progression. He appears to be very confident in his placement skills and also has a strong hand punch to disrupt the receiver’s route progression, but I do not expect a ramp-up in production when it comes to picking off a pass from this downhill performer.

*Run Defense…*Abram is quick to react and come up into the box in run support. He demonstrates very good leverage along with proper hand usage to avoid and shed blocks trying to impact the backfield. He is so active and physical working along the line, some NFL team might also utilize him as a Cover-2 linebacker in certain situations vs. speedier ball carriers. The thing I like most about his run support skills is that he shows no hesitation in “sticking his face into the fire,” as he is a smart, tough player who simply will not back down when challenged by offensive linemen. While he does show true aggression, he is a solid wrap-up tackler who plays within the system.

He has the power to punish ball carriers, but prefers to maintain position, stay low in his pads, wrap and secure rather than play with a reckless abandon that would result in missed tackles. He has a good feel for the cutback lanes and has no problems taking down the runner once he locks on to the opponent. He has the size to take on the lead blockers and for a young player. He is alert to chop blocks when working through trash (rarely susceptible to low blocks). He has a good feel for double teams and shows the vision to locate the support lanes and takes good angles to the ball. He is also very conscious of the offensive linemen and maintaining leverage. With his speed, you hope that one day the coaching staff will let him use that quickness more in backside pursuit.

*Tackling Ability*…Abram is a solid, physical tackler, especially when operating in space. He will not hesitate to strike when he gets an opportunity. He can maintain balance and form up to make the tackle. With his weight room strength, he is a highly effective collision type tackler, and he knows how to use his speed well to make plays in space. He makes every attempt to square up, break down, face up and wrap and is the type that will blow up the opponent, thanks to his improved technique refinement. He has that gifted athletic ability to run laterally, clear trash and make tackles on the move, but needs to develop better consistency doing it.

*Compares To*...Patrick Chung-New England Patriots...Some compare Abram to Keanu Neal, but he does not possess the same ball thievery/break-up skills. Abram has the versatility to play either strong or free safety. He as the feet to play man-to-man coverage, along with very good stop-&-go quickness. You can see that he is smooth turning from his backpedal and thanks to his lateral quickness and change of direction, he can make plays at the opposite side of the field. He is a physically and mentally tough competitor who shows an impressive willingness to hit.

GARDNER-JOHNSON IS LIKE SEABISCUIT-RAPIDLY GAINING GROUND ON THE FAVORITES

Chauncey Gardner-Johnson-#23

University of Florida Gators

5:10.7-210

*Agility Tests.*..4.48 in the 40-yard dash…1.58 10-yard dash…2.62 20-yard dash…4.20 20-yard shuttle…7.03 three-cone drill…36-inch vertical jump…9'-09" broad jump…Bench pressed 225 pounds 17 times…30 7/8-inch arm length…9 1/4-inch hands…74-inch wingspan.

*Background*...There is a pretty cool story behind this Gator's recent name change. Chauncey grew up in Cocoa, Florida where he starred for the local high school. The son of Del and Brian Johnson can’t believe how far he’s come. “Going through high school people used to say to me all the time mama that kid is going places,” Del remembers. “I’d be like okay, okay.”

The Johnson’s Cocoa home is one giant trophy case for Chauncey’s accomplishments. You’ll see his Under Armour All-American jersey in the living room - his Outback Bowl MVP trophy. In his room you’ll find a box filled with all of his college scholarship offer letters. As blessed as this family is for Chauncey there was always something missing. “He mentioned when he was in middle school,” Del says. “He called home one day and he was like mom I want to change my last name.”

Chauncey was born Chauncey Gardner, Jr - Brian Johnson is technically his stepfather. “That’s my step-dad but that’s like my dad to me,” Chauncey says. “He’s been there since I was three everyone that’s been following me since high school [knows] my real dad hasn’t been there.”

“Sometimes I forget I’m not his real dad,” Brian says. “Until somebody brings it up, I just love my kids.” Brian and Del have two children together Byron who is 13 and Brandon is 15 years old. Both their last names are Johnson. Since middle school Chauncey has been determined to change his last name. “He would bring paperwork home,” Del says. “The kid would write Johnson on his homework.”

His biological Dad didn’t support the decision, but when Chauncey turned 18 he was able to make the change without consent. “I was honored,” Brian says. “Like I’m in tears now I was in tears then.”

Soon after Chauncey legally had his name changed to Chauncey Gardner-Johnson in court, but it wasn’t until week one of the 2018 season vs. Charleston Southern that it all sunk in for Brian. “To me I hope Brian really really sees that we really appreciate him,” Del says.

“This guy has been there, taught me everything I know, without him I probably wouldn’t be playing football right now,” Chauncey says. “I just can’t wrap myself around that my son is a star at Florida University,” Brian says. “I’m just thankful for him,” Chauncey says. “That’s a name it’s on my jersey and its going to be there forever.”

Gardner-Johnson excelled in football, basketball and track at Cocoa High School, ending his prep career by playing in the 2016 Under Armour All-American Game. Playing both sides of the ball, he made 37 tackles (18 solos) with three interceptions and a blocked a punt as a sophomore. He also had 16 carries for 92 yards and three touchdowns, along with 19 receptions for 307 yards and three scores.

The Class 4A First Team All-State as a junior, Gardner-Johnson posted 49 tackles, three sacks, three interceptions and two blocked punts, in addition to having 31 carries for 303 yards and five touch-downs and 10 receptions for 196 yards and two scores in 2014. The All-Florida and Florida All-State Class 4A first-team pick in 2015, he led his team to a 10-3 record as a senior and reached the Class 4A State Semifinals.

During his final campaign, he took on quite a workload. Gardner-Johnson would register 55 tackles

(31 solos), four sacks, two interceptions, one forced fumble and one fumble recovery. He also had 29 carries for 410 yards and six scores, 12 receptions for 235 yards and five touchdowns, punted 20 times for 615 yards, added eight kick returns for 169 yards and three punt returns for 113 yards. He also attended the Opening 2015 event at Nike’s headquarters in Beaverton, Oregon.

Garnder-Johnson was named the Class 2A Florida Dairy Farmers Track and Field Athlete of the Year for 2015. He captured the 2A Track State Championships in 100 and 200 meters, where he also competed in the long jump and triple jump, in addition to lettering in played basketball.

As a true freshman at Florida, Gardner-Johnson appeared in all thirteen games, making starts in the final three games of the season. During the 2017 Outback Bowl, Gardner-Johnson had two tackles and a pair of interceptions, one of which was returned for a touchdown, as he became the second true freshman in program history to win a Bowl MVP Award.

He saw thirteen passes targeted into his area, yielding eight catches for 193 yards and a score while appearing in 283 snaps to finish with 32 tackles, three interceptions for 103 yards in returns, including one touchdown and three pass break-ups. Gardner-Johnson's 58-yard interception vs. Iowa in the Outback Bowl is the fourth-longest touchdown return via pass theft in school history.

Following an injury to veteran Marcell Harris during the preseason, Gardner-Johnson started all eleven games that he appeared in at one of the safety spots in 2017. He totaled 58 tackles (43 solos), two interceptions, seven pass breakups, six tackles-for-loss and one sack. He recorded his pass thefts vs. South Carolina and UAB in back-to-back weeks. He ranked third on the team behind Marco Wilson (10) and Duke Dawson (9) in passes defended and second on the team in tackles behind David Reese (102). Just 11-of-23 targeted passes in his area were completed by the opposition, for a total of 136 yards.

The NFL Draft Report named Gardner-Johnson All-American and All-Southeastern Conference first-team in 2018. Starting twelve of thirteen games, he ranked third on the team with 71 tackles (37 solos) that included three sacks among nine stops-for-loss. He gained 110 yards with two touch-downs on four interceptions, breaking up two other throws. The junior, who declared for the draft in December, saw 57 passes enter his territory, with 31 being caught for 269 yards and one touchdown.

Gardner-Johnson led a defensive group that helped UF lead the nation in fourth quarter opponent passing efficiency (66.25) and rank second nationally in fourth quarter opponent completion percentage (40.5). After he snagged a pair of interceptions, including one returned for a touchdown in the Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl vs. Michigan, Gardner-Johnson was named Defensive MVP. Also for his efforts, he garnered Associated Press All-Bowl Team honors. He notched his other interception returned for a touchdown on the first play of Florida’s contest vs. Idaho.

His three interceptions returned for touchdowns is one short of the school career-record set by line-backer Brandon Spikes (four; 2006-09). His interception return average of 33.44 yards broke another school all-time record that was previously held by Ahmad Black (27.8-yard average on thirteen thefts; 2007-10).

Gardner-Johnson started26-of-37 games that he played in, recording 161 tackles (91 solos), four sacks for minus 15 yards, 15.5 stops for losses of 40 yards and two quarterback pressures. In addition to nine interception returns (301 yards), he deflected twelve passes. He is just the 12th player in Southeastern Conference history to gain over 300 yards via interception returns. Only

Ahmad Black, Florida (362 yards; 2007-10) gained more yards in Gators annals. Opponents targeted his area 93 times, completing 51 attempts (54.84%) for 598 yards and two touchdowns.

*The Scouting Report*

*Athletic Ability*... Gardner-Johnson has outstanding size for a free safety and some teams could look to shift him to the strong-side, as he is the elite performer in the secondary playing inside the box. He has an athletic physique with good overall muscle definition throughout, including broad shoulders, a V-shaped torso, tight waist and hips, good bubble and strong thighs and calves.

Gardner-Johnson’s success as a downhill player is due to his in-stride acceleration. He is such a smooth, athletic mover that the staff has great confidence in his ability to play at the line of scrimmage. He runs with a normal stride and has the change of direction agility and body control to make plays at the opposite side of the field.

Even though he shows the agility in space to break down and make open field tackles and has the ability to play outside the box in man coverage, he has had most of his success initiating contact in tight areas. You can see the flexibility and outstanding acceleration as he closes on the ball. He demonstrates the explosive burst to close and the foot quickness to recover when a receiver gets behind him (see 2018 Tennessee, South Carolina games). He’s just a quick twitch player with excellent range, along with the power to deliver explosive hits, but he will bite on play action and misdirection when he tries to freelance too much.

*Key and Diagnostic Skills*...Gardner-Johnson is not the quickest to read and react, but when he stays focused on the ball, he is usually ready to make the play. He is likes taking on ball carriers and blockers inside the box (see 2018 Charleston Southern, LSU, Missouri games). He is prone to being caught out of position in coverage vs. play action, but he is the type that supports fast vs. the run, as linemen find him too aggressive and slippery to block for long. He disguises well, allowing him to “fool” quarterbacks to the tune of nine interceptions (three returned for touchdowns) and twelve pass break-ups in his 26 starting assignments.

Gardner-Johnson needs to improve as a “read-&-react” type of player, as you would hope he can become more decisive in recognizing the runs and passes in front of him. A savvy quarterback can “sucker” him out of position with misdirection or play action. Still, with the ball in flight, he shows good anticipation and knowledge for taking angles when closing and has a knack for stepping into the passing lanes, evident by his interceptions and ability to keep the receivers from getting into their routes. He shows good vision tracking the ball in flight, along with great determination when competing for the pass at its high point. He is alert to blocking schemes and is fast to come up and plug holes inside the box when asked to provide run support.

*Man Coverage Ability*... While most safeties are not required to handle one-on-one assignments, Gardner-Johnson is a “different breed,” a defensive back with outstanding ability to mirror and run with the receiver over the middle and down field. He is still a work in progress in attaining valid instincts vs. play action, but he shows the loose hips to angle and flow to the ball, making eight touchdown-saving tackles out of his assigned area in pass coverage (had the second-lower pass rating vs. him - 44.1% - among draft eligible defensive backs last year).

He has excellent foot quickness and flexibility in his backpedal, along with the timed speed to easily run with backs, slots and tight ends, demonstrating the good footwork out of his breaks, along with the burst and recovery speed to accelerate and recover when a receiver happens to get behind him. His man coverage skills do pose a pleasant problem, as he is fluid and quick enough to play free safety, yet big and physical enough to make a possible shift to the strong side at the next level. Where he really excels in man coverage is vs. slot receivers, as he is constantly moving his feet and is never fooled by his opponent’s hard cuts. With his loose hips, he has no problem turning and running on deep patterns and is one of the best in college when it comes to mirroring and staying square with the receiver.

*Zone Coverage Ability*...Gardner-Johnson is instinctive working in the zone. He has the speed and range to cover a lot of ground in a hurry. He is quick to make the switch-off and anticipate the receiver’s moves, showing a good feel picking up his new assignment and maintaining a good relationship throughout the route’s progression. With his footwork, he can get proper alignment to make plays on either the ball or the man, but he is still developing the eyes to make quick reads and do the job looking up threats (does recover to get a good jump on the ball after the throw, though). He plays with leverage and excels at holding up the tight ends, backs and slot receivers working underneath, showing the low pad level and range to close in an instant.

*Ball Reaction Skills*...Once Gardner-Johnson anticipates the passer, his break towards the ball occur. Even when fooled, he is quick to recover, adjust and make plays on the ball in flight (see 2018 Vanderbilt, Idaho, Michigan games). He gets very good height and elevation competing for the ball at its highest point and is sudden out of his plant-&-drive. He also plays with aggression to and through the reception point, sort of becoming a wide receiver himself, when the ball is in the air. He shows good urgency closing on the ball carrier or pass catcher and times his leaps to win jump-ball battles. Usually, most of his interceptions came when playing centerfield, but he is also good at separating the receiver from the ball when he realizes he does not have a great chance to make the pick or break-up

*Jumping Ability*...Gardner-Johnson’s basketball skills come into the limelight with his tremendous success competing for the jump ball (21 passes defended and 75 reroutes/jams in 26 games as a starter). He has outstanding timing and ability to make plays on the ball in flight, thanks to excellent flexibility and ball adjustment skills. He can elevate in an instant to reach the high point and will not hesitate to sacrifice his body to make the plays in a crowd. He is a bit of a contortionist making the tough interception (see 2018 Idaho, Michigan games). What separates him from the rest of the 2018 class is that he has no peers when it comes to laying it out to make a play on the ball, or when torpedoing a ball carrier.

*Hands*...Gardner-Johnson has outstanding hands to secure the ball and make the interception (see 2018 Vanderbilt, Idaho Michigan; 2017 UAB, South Carolina games). He shows the “large mitts,” soft hands and pluck-&-extension skills to come up with the ball in traffic. He excels at making the fingertip grabs and those hands are of such high quality, I would like to see him utilized briefly as a receiver to see if he can offer value as a versatile player (played both sides of the ball in high school). He shows ease of movement getting under the ball in flight and never fights when trying to look the ball in. Those hands also generate great power when playing the press, as he is effective at disrupting the route’s progression or tying up the receiver at the line of scrimmage.

*Run Defense*...This Gator has a decent feel for run support lanes and takes good angles to shorten the field and get to the flow of the ball in a hurry. When he flies to the football, he does so with intent to punish, leverage and control, whether at the line of scrimmage or in the open field. When taking on ball carriers, he arrives quickly and with purpose, knowing that he has the ability to deliver a blow and snap the runner’s head back.

*Tackling Ability*...Gardner-Johnson comes to balance and is active in run support, consistently taking the runner down. He is also a fierce collision tackler with the speed and strength to deliver explosive strikes, as he takes great pride in his ability to run through blockers to make tackles in space. He is good at running laterally, clearing trash and making the impact play, doing so with great jolt-stun-&-wrap skills.

*Compares To*...Minkah Fitzpatrick-Miami Dolphins...Like Fitzpatrick, Gardner-Johnson is best served playing in a variety of roles, as he can easily play nickel corner or any of the safety positions. With added strength, he could also be called upon for certain Cover-2 linebacker chores. He is quick and fluid with above average agility, as he shows very good hand placement taking on blocks and will get physical when a lineman or tight end tries to stalk him. He shows good focus on the pass route and he has a knack for the big play interception, timing his break to catch it at the high point, but is prone to miscues vs. misdirection and play action.

THIS COUGAR HOPES TO RAPP UP DAY TWO DRAFT CONSIDERATION

Taylor Rapp-#7

University of Washington Huskies

5:11.6-208

*Agility Tests.*..4.74 in the 40-yard dash…1.71 10-yard dash…2.72 20-yard dash…3.99 20-yard shuttle…11.33 60-yard shuttle…6.82 three-cone drill…35-inch vertical jump…9'-07" broad jump…Bench pressed 225 pounds 17 times…30 3/4-inch arm length…xxx –inch hands…xxx –inch wingspan.

*Background*...Rapp entered the NFL Scouting Combine as the top-rated safety, but after he suffered a right hip flexor that prevented him from completing the agility tests, teams waiting until the school's Pro Day to get vital statistics on him. Now, after running a pair of 40-yard dashes at 4.74 and 4.77 seconds, his shine has dimmed a bit, but most teams still regard him as a quality prospect, more Day Two than the original Day One plans.

Rapp is used to dealing with adversity. The dual American/Canadian citizen of Chinese ancestry, he played at a prep program that consistently ranked as one of the worst in the state of Washington. Still, he persevered. At Sehome High School, during his junior year, he earned first-team Associated Press all-state and first-team All-NWC honors as a safety and second-team all-league as a receiver in 2014. He scored offensive touchdowns as a runner, receiver and passer, finishing the season with 682 rushing yards and 349 receiving yards.

Named to the Tacoma News Tribune "Western 100," USA Today all-state (all levels) first-team, Associated Press 2A all-state first-team, All-Whatcom County first-team, and All-NWC first-team honors as a senior, Rapp earned a spot on the All-USA Western Washington first team as a defensive back. He was credited with 117 tackles, seven tackles for loss, four forced fumbles and three interceptions in 2015. He was then invited to play in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl following his senior season.

On the recruiting trails, Rapp was rated as the best safety prospect in the state of Washington and 49th at the position nationally by Scout.com. He was listed as the fourth-best prospect in the state and 25th-best safety in the country by ESPN. Still, he was the lone bright spot in a losing program.

Which makes Rapp's rapid rise to one of the country's fiercest, hardest-hitting defensive backs -- following in the backpedals of former Washington greats Marcus Peters, Budda Baker, Sidney Jones and Kevin King -- even more remarkable. He's beaten long odds, undeterred by a city that failed to support prep football, a high school community that openly mocked him, coaches who were unprepared to develop his talents, college recruiters who blatantly overlooked him and kids who racially taunted him for his Chinese ethnicity.

Driven by the fear of being left behind and never fulfilling the sixth-grade promise he made to his brother of playing major college football, Rapp not only persevered but pushed his way to the front until he could no longer be ignored. This self-made football player finally had people's full attention, from Pac-12 offenses that game-planned for him the last three years to NFL scouts eager to watch the Huskies' latest great defensive back compete.

"I had to separate myself from everyone around me and really stand out," Rapp says before exiting the Sehome campus. "I knew that if I really wanted to go to the next level, I couldn't be ordinary." He was a standout as a freshman, starting ten of the fourteen games he appeared in during the 2016 campaign. On 673 snaps, he recorded 53 tackles (29 solos), gaining 58 yards on four interceptions, returning one for a touchdown while breaking up six other passes at one safety spot opposite Budda Baker.

Rapp excelled in run support - not so in pass coverage - as opponents completed 24-of-31 passes into his area (77.4%) for 243 yards and two touchdowns in 2016. He was named the MVP of the Pac-12 Championship Game, where he intercepted two passes and ran one of them back for a 35-yard touchdown on the first play of the second half. He returned the other interception 23 yards and had four tackles, including half of a tackle for loss and was selected the Huskies' defensive player of the game for the win over Colorado.

Started twelve of his thirteen appearances in 2017, Rapp received All-Pac 12 Conference and Academic All-Pac-12 first-team honors. He collected 59 tackles (42 solos) with two sacks among his 3.5 stops-for-loss. He caused a fumble and intercepted one pass. Opponents targeted 29 passes into his area, completing 22 (75.86%) for 141 yards and no touchdowns, an average gain of 6.41 yards per reception.

The 2018 season saw Rapp elevated to All-American status (first-team by TheAthletic.com, PFF, ESPN, USA Today; second-team by The NFL Draft Report, Associated Press, SI.com, The Sporting News, CBS Sports, Athlon's). THe All-Pac 12 Conference and Academic All-Pac 12 choice was also named to the CoSIDA Academic All-District VII team. He started all thirteen games, registering 59 tackles (33 solos) with a career-high five sacks and seven stops behind the line of scrimmage.

The team's Defensive MVP added two more interceptions to his career total of seven, breaking up seven other tosses and recovering three fumbles. Playing more inside the box, only eighteen passes came his way, allowing eight catches for just 53 yards. A hip injury kept him sidelined for the bowl season, but he then announced on January 2nd, 2019, that he would forgo his senior season and enter the NFL Draft.

Rapp closed out his Washington career starting 35-of-40 games, as the safety made 171 tackles (104 solos) that included seven sacks for minus 46 yards and ten stops for losses totaling 55 yards. His seven interceptions netted him 59 yards, including a score and he broke up fourteen other tosses. In run support, he caused two fumbles and recovered three others while participating in 2,202 snaps through three seasons. He allowed 54-of-78 targeted passes to be completed (69.23%) for 437 yards and two touchdowns - both occurring during his freshman year.

*The Scouting Report*

*Athletic Ability*...Rapp has a well-proportioned frame with room to add at least another ten pounds of bulk. He has impressive upper body muscle tone, especially in the upper body area, along with a tight waist and hips. He demonstrates very good playing strength and despite his timed speed (4.74), he has the foot quickness and body control to step inside the box and make plays in run support. He might struggle a bit to handle speedy receivers in man coverage battles, but if he has to challenge for the ball in flight, he has the leaping ability and hands to win most jump-ball battles.

He has good functional quickness and builds to top speed, showing the acceleration to stay with tight ends and backs working the short and intermediate areas. He lacks a sudden burst coming out of his backpedal, but uses his hands effectively to mirror the receiver and takes good angles to shorten the field. He compensates for a lack of blazing timed speed with good range. He has the agility to slip past and avoid blocks in pursuit, showing the hip flexibility needed to generate a quick twitch working in the short area. He maintains balance in transition, but needs to redirect quicker to close on the ball in backside pursuit .

*Key and Diagnostic Skills*...Rapp has excellent vision and field awareness. He picks up blocking schemes quickly and does a very good job of making calls in the secondary. He has excellent ball reaction skills and knows how to time his leaps to get to the thrown pass at its highest point. He makes good body adjustments on the move and is quick to sniff out the run when working inside the box.

Rapp has very good ball skills, showing great timing and awareness making plays down hill. He is quick to get his hands up for the pass break-up and is very physical attacking receivers, as his opponents need to account for him at all times on the field. He will get a bit too overaggressive at times, leading to costly penalties, but he has very good ability to sniff out the play and attack the ball. He is not the type that will be fooled by play action and shows urgency stepping into the box to fill the rush lanes. He reacts to the thrown pass well, doing a good job of keeping track of the ball in flight. He sees the field well and is especially effective at providing run force

*Man Coverage Ability*...Rapp is best when playing the ball than handling man coverage assignments. He won’t get turned or let the cushion break down, but does not have the timed speed to match up with receivers on deep routes. While he knows how to maintain relationship with the tight ends and slot backs in the short and intermediate area, he needs to improve his turning ability coming out of his backpedal. He looks tight when attempting to redirect, but shows good acceleration when making plays in front of him.

Rapp has the hand usage and technique to press, which helps him stall the receiver’s route progression. His lack of blazing speed makes it hard for him to plant and burst, but he compensates by taking good angles to shorten the field. When asked to line up on the slot receiver, he stays tight on the opponent’s hip. He just needs to show better hip flexibility and improve his timed speed to be effective covering on deep routes. He has good feet to adjust on the move, but appears best when playing the zone rather than in isolated situations

*Zone Coverage Ability*...This is one of his better assets. Rapp has solid awareness playing in the zone. He sees things develop quickly and has that innate feel for being in the right position. He has good route recognition ability and is rarely caught out of position. He looks very comfortable attacking the ball and has the ability to adjust and make plays on the move. He has an excellent feel for the routes and does a good job when he is the deepest player on the field. He has a good feel for handling the switch-off and takes good angles to shorten the field in his zone assignments.

He gets good depth, despite a bit of hip stiffness, showing the body control to plant and drive on plays in front or to the side of him, but must be quicker flipping his hips to go and get back in the action when a receiver gets by him. He shows ease-of-movement in his backpedal, but will take some false steps when he has to redirect. He is not as explosive as you would like coming out of his breaks, but he is fluid enough to take the short route to the receiver while staying on their hip in the short area.

*Ball Reaction Skills*...Rapp gets an excellent jump on the ball. He has natural hands for the interception and a fire in his belly competing for the jump balls. He is quick to anticipate the quarterback’s arm motion, which allows him to get into position to make the play (see 2018 North Dakota, BYU, UCLA, Stanford games). He takes good angles to shorten the field and attack the ball, staying low in his pads to deliver forceful hits on the move. He has very good vision for tracking the ball in flight. He closes on the play with good urgency and just lacks the speed to go long distances. He does a very good job of stepping in front of the ball and has the leg drive to break tackles on the interception

While he may not have an explosive burst to close, Rapp’s ability to take proper angles and build to top acceleration has made him effective delivering tackles along the sidelines. Even with his adequate timed speed, he has the ability to cover ground when the ball is in the air (carries his equipment well). He is more of a build-up type than one than will generate explosion, but his long stride allows him to build his acceleration quickly.

*Jumping Ability*... Rapp has very good timing to go up and compete for the ball at its high point. He does a very good job of tracking the ball over his shoulders and is quick to get his head turned around on the move. He shows natural hands for the interception and has the athletic ability to adjust to the ball at its high point. When he sees the ball released by the quarterback, he is usually smart enough to get into position to make the play (see 2018 UCLA, Stanford, Washington State games). The thing you see on film is that he shows good aggression competing for the ball.

*Hands*...Rapp is a natural hands catcher who does a good job of extending and plucking the ball away from the body’s frame. He zones in on the pass once it is thrown and will do whatever he needs to attack the pass and prevent the reception. He might not be the fastest man coverage defender around, but compensates with forceful hand usage, knowing how to reroute tight ends and slot receivers when jamming them at the line. He also uses his hands effectively to ward off blocks aimed for his legs when working through trash. His ability to extend for the ball has resulted in several spectacular interceptions. His hands are large enough to properly secure the ball.

*Run Defense*... Rapp is a classic down hill player who hits with pop on contact when playing inside the box. He breaks down well in space and stays low in his pads when making the tackle. He knows how to slip past and avoid blocks on the move. He is quick to come up and fill the gaps and stays low in his pads to prevent the lead blocker from blowing him off the ball. He is best when working in the box, as his ball anticipation skills and instincts make it very hard to fool him on draw plays or misdirection. Simply, he plays smart. Once he is able to locate the ball working through trash, he is quick to close (see 2018 North Dakota, Byu, Oregon, Utah games). He comes up to hit with urgency and is not the type you will see playing along the fringes much. He has very good force and at times, overpowering strength, but will get a bit reckless at times, needing to play with more consistent control.

*Tackling Ability*...Rapp is an explosive hitter who can cause a receiver to hesitate before getting to the ball, knowing that the safety is about to deliver a vicious hit. He has the ability to be an effective wrap-up tackler, as he has the strength to thump on contact and will throw his body at the ball carrier. He is best when allowed to make plays in front of him rather than taking a side. When he can keep the action in front, he is a reliable tackler will explode into the opponent. He is consistent to staying low in his pads in order to wrap better, but will get caught up in the action at times and get over-aggressive, taking him out of the action.

*Compares To*...Patrick Chung-New England Patriots...Rapp does a good job of making plays vs. action in front of him. His timed speed does not really translate to the field, making him a bit of a liability when having to cover the deep third of the field. He is a nice fit for a Cover-2 scheme, as he has the physical ability to step inside the box and make crunching tackles playing downhill. He has very good ball skills and receivers are always hesitant to come into his area due to his explosive tackling ability.

THORNHILL'S NFL DREAM IS A SLAM DUNK

Juan Thornhill-#21

University of Virginia Cavaliers

6:00.2-205

*Agility Tests.*..4.42 in the 40-yard dash…1.57 10-yard dash…2.60 20-yard dash…44-inch vertical jump…11'-09" broad jump…Bench pressed 225 pounds xx times…31 1/8-inch arm length…8 3/4-inch hands…74 3/4-inch wingspan...Note-a hamstring injury prevented Thornhill from competing in the shuttle drills.

*Background*...An ESPN star during his high school days due to his slam dunk ability on the basket-ball court saw Thornhill treat NFL personnel to a similar experience at the NFL Scouting Combine, where his 44-inch vertical jump tied Missouri receiver Emanuel Hall for the best mark at the 2019 event. In fact, that jump has been topped just three times in the last fifteen Combines - by Byron Jones of Dallas (44 1/2-inches in 2015), receiver Chris Conley (45-inches in 2015) and former Ohio State receiver Donald Washington (45-inches in 2009).

Jones just barely topped Thornhill's 11-foot, 9-inch broad jump, recording a 12-foot, 3-inch leap for the top performance in that agility test during the last fifteen events. With over 330 players at the 2019 function, Thornhill also tied for 14th in the 40-yard dash, blazing the track at 4.4 seconds. In the weight room, he led all defensive backs by producing 21 reps at 225 pounds. His power as a tackler is evident, as he ranks seventh among defensive backs in making plays vs. the run, posting 25 of his 98 tackles last season in run force.

The versatile defensive back opted looked smooth in and out of his breaks, adjusted well to the ball in the air and impressed with his innate sense of detail — perfecting the little nuances of each drill and running everything out during the paces he underwent in position drills.

Asked about his best attribute as a safety: “I’m a ball hawk for sure,” Thornhill said. “When the ball is in the air, I’m going to go get it. I’m going to make the quarterback pay if he’s willing to throw it into my area. If he throws it in the corner’s area, I’m still going to try to make that play as well. I had thirteen career interceptions, so that explains a lot.”

What motivates him: “Just to be the best I can be, honestly,” Thornhill said. “Every day I step on the field, I want to be the best and compete every single snap. I’m coming out and trying to win everything. At the Combine, with the bench press, I was out there trying to win that — one guy beat me by one! I wouldn’t let them beat me in anything else, that was my goal.”

Thornhill played safety and quarterback at Altavista High School, but it was his basketball skills that captured national attention. He helped the school win three Class 1A state championships and tallied over 1,000 career points for the basketball team.

Thornhill also led the football team to a pair of state titles, as the Group 1A VHSL State Player of the Year and Group 1A VHSL Quarterback of the Year was also a first-team VHSL all-state on defense. In the 2014 title game, he rushed for the game-winning score, a 40-yard touchdown midway through the fourth quarter in a win over Essex High School. He also ran for two touchdowns and threw for another to finish with 99 rushing yards and 100 yards passing in the game.

As a senior, Thornhill was 69-of-111 passing for 1,299 passing yards with 15 touchdowns. He threw one interception, which came in the state title game, and rushed for a team-high 1,562 yards on 145 carries. He was rated a three-star recruit by ESPN.com, Scout.com, Rivals.com and 247Sports.com.

Thornhill saw action in nine games as a true freshman after enrolling at Virginia in 2015. Seeing action on special teams, he delivered a pair of solo tackles. To take advantage of his speed, the coaches shifted him to field cornerback for the 2016 campaign. He posted 45 tackles that included one sack among three stops behind the line of scrimmage. Three interceptions netted him 32 return yards and he also deflected ten passes while causing one fumble.

Despite his speed, Thornhill struggled in man coverage that year. Teams targeted his area 56 times, completing 29 tosses (51.3%), decent figures, but he was the victim of six long touchdowns while giving up 603 yards, an average of 20.79 yards per reception.

It would be more of the same in 2017, as the field cornerback did produce 63 tackles (47 solos) with 4.5 stops-for-loss, four interceptions for four yards in returns and sixteen pass break-ups, but he allowed 28-of-61 passes to be completed (45.90%), but the long ball was his victim again, yielding 432 yards (15.43 ypc) with five touchdowns.

After two seasons of "living on the edge," Thornhill was returned to his more natural position in 2018. Playing the "sabre" position (strong safety), the All-Atlantic Coast Conference first-team pick and All-American honorable mention finished third in the nation with six interceptions for 141 yards in returns, as his yardage set a school season-record.

Thornhill registered a career-high 98 tackles (62 solos) with 4.5 stops for losses of 15 yards. He blocked one kick and deflected 13-of-43 targeted passes. He allowed just eighteen catches (41.86%) for 239 yards and three touchdowns. He was named ACC Defensive Back of the Week after the Indiana game where he made seven tackles, intercepted one pass and blocked a PAT, returning it for the first defensive extra points by a Cavalier since 1994.

Thornhill added Walter Camp National Defensive Player of the Week and the ACC Defensive Back of the Week honors after making six tackles and picking off two passes vs. Miami, including one that he returned for a career-long 62 yards. He closed out his career with six tackles, including one for a loss and an interception in UVA's Belk Bowl win over South Carolina. He was part of a secondary that helped keep South Carolina's passing game at bay, snapping quarterback Jake Bentley's streak of 14 games with at least one passing touchdown and handing him his second-worst QB rating (78.3) of his career. His 54-yard interception return set a UVA bowl record for longest return and most interception yards in a game.

In 46 appearances, Thornhill recorded 208 tackles (140 solos), 1.5 sacks for minus 12 yards and twelve stops for losses of 39 yards. His thirteen interceptions netted 177 yards and he deflected 39 other passes. His theft total tied Florida Atlantic's Jalen Young for the national lead and his 52 passes defended rank ninth among NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision active players. He was targeted 160 times, allowing 75 receptions (46.88%) for 1,274 yards and fourteen touchdowns, averages of 16.99 yards per completion and 7.96 yards per attempt.

“Every day I step on the field, I want to be the best,” Thornhill said. “At the combine in the bench press, I was out there trying to win that, but one guy beat me by one, but I wasn’t going to let him beat me in anything else. I think I still did pretty well. With me, I’m good at performing under pressure, so I like to do that a lot.”

Thornhill has already met with the Los Angeles Chargers, Los Angeles Rams, Kansas City Chiefs and Philadelphia Eagles. “I see it as a great opportunity to go out there and meet everyone, talk to these different coaches, see the facilities,” Thornhill said. “I think it’s really exciting, because I finally get a chance to live my dream. Since I was a little kid, I wanted to play in the NFL. I knew I wanted to get to Virginia and I got here. I also know I wanted to get to the NFL so I’m working to get there now.”

*The Scouting Report*

*Athletic Ability*...Thornhill has an athletic-looking build with good upper body thickness. He has made marked improvement in the weight room (21 reps topped all safeties at the Combine) and has valid development in his thighs and calves. He does possess tight waist and hips, along with a frame that can carry a little bit more bulk without having the added weight affect his average timed speed.

Thornhill shows excellent speed to play either safety position, but is prone to giving up big plays vs. speedy receivers on long routes in man coverage.

He compensates with quick feet, good balance and fluid change of direction skills. He has the ability to adjust on the move, but will miss some tackles when he gets over-aggressive in his pursuit angles. He has the natural hands and long arm extension skills to catch outside his frame (see 2018 Indiana, Duke, Miami, Liberty games). The thing you notice on film is his movement skills, as he is sudden to redirect and close on the ball. His burst is evident, especially when closing in the short area, thanks to his loose hips. He can get high in his backpedal at times, but when he keeps his pad level down, he has the flexibility to come out cleanly from his breaks.

*Key and Diagnostic Skills*...Thornhill is a smart player with good instincts, but just needs to recognize the play developing and show better patience in play action, as he is easily fooled by that and misdirection. He wastes little time reading and reacting to the ball in flight, but his feet tend to get flat and stall vs. bootlegs or play action. He will get out of control trying to deliver the knockout punch, leading to several missed tackles, and while he is a hard worker, there are times where he will continue to repeat the same mistakes in a game.

He plays with very good ball-in-flight awareness (see 2018 Miami, North Carolina State, South Carolina games) and is able to locate, track and elevate for the ball well without losing sight of the pigskin. He is functional in making plays in front of him, but will struggle to shed when attacked by bigger lead blockers. Still, he has good ability to mirror receivers, but despite his timed speed, lacks that explosive second gear to recover when they get behind him.

*Man Coverage Ability*...Thornhill has the speed and quickness for good zone coverage skills or working in the short-to-intermediate areas, but must learn to conserve his aggressiveness when mirroring receivers on deep routes. It is rare to see him play man-to-man often, but he has good hand placement and coverage skills taking on slot receivers and backs (must show the same desire taking on the bigger tight ends though). With his timed speed, he is capable of generating a good burst and quickness needed to run vertical, but when he fails to keep an eye on his man and good position in the deep part of the field, he will get a bit reckless in taking proper angles to close and if the receiver gets behind him, he lacks the sudden burst to recover.

*Zone Coverage Ability*...Thornhill excels when he keeps the action in front of him, particularly when playing underneath (see 2018 Miami, Liberty, South Carolina games). He shows good route awareness in the zone and has the vision to scan the field, but must maintain position in order to be consistent (will sometimes attack the man rather than the ball). He has the ability to read the quarterback, but bites on play action and misdirection. His vision is evident by his ability to anticipate routes and there is no question he has the hands to secure the ball as a pass thief, along with the leaping ability to get up and over the bigger receivers to knock the pass away and disrupt the pattern progression.

*Ball Reaction Skills*...Thornhill does a nice job of anticipating throws and closing on the action when the ball is in flight. He works hard to be in position to make those plays and has explosive plant-&-drive skills. When he gets too high in his pedal, he will take extra steps coming out of his breaks, but when he maintains proper pad level, he has the body control and balance needed when closing out of transition and is very capable of jumping the receiver to make plays on the ball in flight.

Even when beaten on deep routes, Thornhill has the functional speed to recover vs. the slot receivers and backs, but speedy wide-outs will be much harder for him to get back on their hips, especially when he takes soft angles (just needs to not take extra steps). He has the short area quickness to close underneath and when he plays at the right pad level, is sudden coming off the hash.

*Jumping Ability*...Thornhill has excellent leaping ability (44-inch vertical/11'-09" broad jump), doing a nice job with his timing before leaving the ground. He will often compete for the ball in the air and has the natural hands to not only break up the pass, but to secure the ball for a key interception. Even though he looks comfortable playing in centerfield, he does show the body control to go up and compete for the ball in flight. He is better making adjustments when on the move, but his ball skills are valid enough for quarterbacks to be cautious when hoisting the high balls into his area.

*Hands*...Thornhill appears to have very good hands to secure the interception, especially when catching the ball in front of him. He excels when timing his leaps to get to the ball at its high point. His hand punch is not strong, but is effective enough to knock a receiver off the route’s progression. He’s is the type that can overpower (21 reps at 225 pounds), jam or press the bigger receiver in man coverage. He has the soft hands to secure the catch and he always seems to on those opportunities more (see 2018 Miami, South Carolina games).

*Run Defense*...Thornhill takes good pursuit angles, and uses his arms well to consistently wrap and secure. He is aggressive and has learned how to attack the outside leg from the runner to prevent forward progress. He is a tough hitter who loves to come up and make tackles in the box. He has the vision to make proper reads vs. the pass, and in run support, he has the physicality you want from a safety taking on and shedding blockers. He also knows how to stay in control, rather than try to make the arm swipes or knockout shots, as some shifty runners can simply bounce off those attempts.

*Tackling Ability*...Even though he will get a bit over-aggressive at times, Thornhill is a “Rock ‘Em/Sock ‘Em” type of tackler who can simply knock the air out of an opponent when he sticks his hat into their chest. He can put up some highlight reel type of plays when covering vs. the pass and is generally an effective enough wrap-&-drag down tackler in the open field. He shows the ability to be a good angle concept type, thanks to improved overall strength. For a scheme looking for a collision tackler who can come to balance and make tackles in space, Thornhill might be that ideal fit.

*Compares To*...Eric Berry-ex-Kansas City Chiefs...Thornhill is a smart player with good instincts and a nose for the ball, but just needs to play with more control at times, as he will try to go for the “big hit” rather than make plays on the ball. With his natural hands and great leaping ability, he is improving his ball skills as a pass thief and he is certainly capable of generating a long return with his quick feet. He has the ability to make timely adjustments to the ball in flight and is smart enough to make good checks in the secondary. He has no problems taking plays from the chalk board to the playing field and sees things well when he keeps good position.

THIS AMANI OUT TO MAKE A SECONDARY "FASHION" STATEMENT

Amani Hooker-#27

University of Iowa Hawkeyes

5:11.3-210

*Agility Tests.*..4.48 in the 40-yard dash…1.54 10-yard dash…2.60 20-yard dash…4.10 20-yard shuttle…11.59 60-yard shuttle…6.81 three-cone drill…37-inch vertical jump…10'-03" broad jump…Bench pressed 225 pounds 14 times…30 1/8-inch arm length…9 1/8-inch hands…72 3/8-inch wingspan.

*Background*...While bigger than the man who made playing strong safety a popular position in the Hawkeyes organization - Bob Sanders - Hooker brings the same element to the football field with his instincts, range and hitting ability. If the football gods deem it right on draft day, Hooker could not only fill a need that the Vikings have, but also return to his native state of Minnesota.

Hooker was a three-time All-State selection and finalist for Minnesota's Mr. Football Award in 2015, as the standout defensive back also excelled in a variety of roles on offense for Park Center High School. Also named the conference MVP as a senior, he was a second-team all-state as a junior and third-team all-state as a sophomore.

At Park Center he competed as a defensive back, quarterback, running back, and wide receiver. Hooker went on to set a school record for interceptions in a season (11) while helping the team post a 9-3 record as a senior, while reaching state playoffs. The gridiron team captain also lettered in basketball.

Hooker was relegated to special team chores as a true freshman, seeing action in all thirteen games in 2016, as he recorded three solo tackles and one assist while being listed third on the depth chart at strong safety. The following season, he was named to the Associated Press All-Bowl team following his performance in Pinstripe Bowl win over Boston College. He alternated between free and strong safety, starting six times, but sat out the Wisconsin, Purdue and Nebraska contests due to a knee bruise.

Hooker posted 56 tackles (41 solos) with two interceptions, returning one for a touchdown while breaking up two other tosses. He started at strong safety in 27-20 Pinstripe Bowl win over Boston College, as the defense allowed just 21 net rushing yards and 102 yards total offense in second half. In that game, he led the team with 12 tackles, including eight solo stops and four assists, making a pair of two touchdown-saving tackles that held Boston College to field goals.

In his first career start at free safety, Hooker had a career-best 13 tackles vs. Penn State, including 11 solo stops, along with one pass break-up. He recorded six solo tackles vs. Illinois, while he had his first career interception in the Iowa end zone to stop an Illinois scoring threat. He also had one rush for 18 yards while converting a fake punt, which led to an Iowa touchdown. In 573 snaps, Hooker saw 19 passes enter his area, as eleven were completed for 173 yards and three scores.

In 2018, the coaches created a safety/linebacker hybrid position in their defense for Hooker and he rewarded them by being named Big Ten Conference Defensive Back of the Year. In thirteen games, he delivered 65 tackles (36 solos) with a six-yard sack and 3.5 stops for losses of 11 yards. He deflected eleven passes, gaining 60 yards via four interceptions and nine yards on a punt return vs. Illinois.

One of five juniors named to 2018 Leadership Group, Hooker earned second-team All-American honors from The NFL Draft Report, the Associated Press and USA Today. The first-team All-Big Ten by the league coaches and media, he received the team's Roy Carver Most Valuable Player Award (defense) and the Coaches Appreciation Award. He led the squad with eleven tackles and a pass break-up vs. Wisconsin and then started at Cover-2 outside linebacker vs. Minnesota, responding with three tackles, along with career-best two pass break-ups.

Remaining at linebacker, Hooker made five tackles at Purdue, as he contributed a shared tackle for loss and one pass interception for an 11-yard return that led to an Iowa touchdown (pick-six was called back due to penalty). in the Illinois clash, he made three solo tackles at Illinois, including one tackle for loss and had a 39-yard interception to go with one pass break-up and a nine-yard punt return. For the season, he was targeted 69 times, as 39 passes were completed for 350 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

Hooker appeared in 36 games for the Hawkeyes, finishing his career with 125 tackles (80 solos), a 6-yard sack and 3.5 stops behind the line of scrimmage. He deflected fifteen passes and intercepted six others for 90 yards in returns, including one touchdown. He added nine yards on a punt return and 18 yards on a rushing attempt. He saw 50-of-89 passes targeted into his area completed (56.2%) for 523 yards and five touchdowns.

*The Scouting Report*

*Athletic Ability*... displays very good size to play his position, as the downhill player has enough bulk to be utilized as a Cover-2 linebacker, in addition to playing the middle of the field. He has very good upper body definition and “washboard abs,” along with a frame that can easily carry another ten pounds of bulk without it impacting his overall quickness.

The first thing you notice upon eye contact is that Hooker displays excellent change of direction agility, doing a very good job of opening his hips. He shows balance and body control throughout his backpedal, and a quick burst to make plays in front of him. He has a valid second gear, along with the field savvy and instincts to know when to take proper angles to the ball when working in space. He displays the ability to accelerate quickly to the ball and generates a sharp closing burst because of his loose hips. He times his leaps properly and has natural hands for the interception.

He is strong enough to excel in run support and while he might have been a little tight in the hips earlier in his career, he appears to be moving with much more fluid change-of-direction agility on 2018 film (see Wisconsin, Maryland, Purdue).

He has a good initial burst to accelerate and make cross-field tackles, along with outstanding hands (former prep quarterback and wide receiver) and jump-ball ability to make the big play challenging for the ball at its highest point. With his above average balance and agility, he could play a big role on the blitz, as he’s very good at slipping under and running around bigger offensive linemen in attempts to flush the quarterback out of the pocket or chase down ball carriers on end-arounds.

*Key and Diagnostic Skills*... Hooker's ability shines through in his read and diagnostic skills. Hooker has a very good feel for the ball, showing awareness in zone assignments. He does a nice job of keeping the play in front of him. He keeps his head on a swivel, tracking the ball in flight and timing his leaps to get to the pigskin at its high point. He shows no hesitation stepping into the box to make plays in run force. He is quick to locate the ball when working through trash and even quicker to process the play as it develops. He gets a good jump on the ball and has the valid speed to stay on the hip of his pass coverage assignment. He is not the type that will get over aggressive, but does hit with authority. He breaks on the ball well and gets a good jump from the hash.

*Man Coverage Ability*... Strong safeties are more known for their aggressive downhill hitting ability rather than their man coverage skills, but while he is a fierce downhill tackler, Hooker is also like a slot cornerback for his ability to handle one-on-one assignments. He is equally effective making plays in front of him or playing in the zone. He can mirror the tight ends, backs and slot receivers on underneath routes, as he has that valid second gear needed to recover when beaten deep. He does a good job of opening his hips and turning on the ball, showing no wasted motion through transition. If playing in a system that will man him up on slots receivers and tight ends, he will do a very good job. He is the type that can cover the speedier receivers on deep patterns.

He easily stays on the hips of the tight ends (see 2018 Minnesota, Illinois games). When he gets his hands on the opponent and gets physical, he will generally reroute his man or jam him at the line of scrimmage. He possesses quick-twitch moves, along with the flexibility to sift through trash, combat blockers and run with slot receivers and backs working underneath.

*Zone Coverage Ability*... When Hooker plays deep in the zone, little, if anything has a chance to get behind him. This is one of his best assets, as he shows alertness and a good feel for the ball. He is quick to locate the pigskin when working in the box and gets a good jump on the play due to his ability to anticipate and diagnose the patterns. He is a highly effective ball-hawk with natural hands for the interception (see 2018 NIU, Illinois, Maryland, Purdue games).

He is quick to turn out of his backpedal and has a sharp burst, staying low in his pads while driving hard with his legs to neutralize receivers making plays in front of him. His vision and feel for the play will generally see him in position to make the tackle. The thing you see on film, especially when handling switch-offs, is his uncanny ability to keep a good relationship with the receiver he is assigned to pick up. He has that veteran’s ability when it comes to anticipating and reading the quarterback, and this allows him to consistently get a good jump on the ball.

*Ball Reaction Skills*... Hooker looks very decisive in his read-&-diagnostic skills, as he consistently makes proper adjustments to be in position to make the play. He gets in and out of his breaks cleanly and shows good explosion in his initial move. When he gets himself in position to make the play, he hits with good aggression and willingly combats bigger receivers and tight ends going for the ball at its highest point. He is equally effective closing in the short area and when having to run and close on long plays. He appears to have much looser hips as a junior and with his second gear, he can explode out of his breaks and demonstrates crisp change of direction agility, instantly making the tackle when working in space. When he lays back and plays “centerfield,” he does so with excellent timing and that has given him great success attempting to make the interception.

*Jumping Ability*... Hooker has excellent balance, timing and leaping ability, as he has defended 28 passes during his career. He knows how to utilize his above average leaping ability to get to the ball at its high point. He shows very good body control flowing to the ball, taking no wasted steps when closing. He has good angle technique to close the cushion, especially when asked to support vs. the outside run. While he does a good job of mirroring the receiver, he also shows very good intent to attack the ball. He gets good height competing for jump balls (37-inch vertical leap) and will not hesitate to go vertical in a crowd to get a piece of the ball.

*Hands*...Hooker is a natural hands catcher and excellent ball thief. He catches the pigskin with his hands properly extended from the body’s frame. When he competes for the ball, he will generally get a piece of the pigskin. He uses his hands with force in pass coverage, doing a good job of jamming and rerouting tight ends, backs and slot receivers when attacking at the line of scrimmage. He is also able to snatch the ball at its high point, demonstrating functional interception skills.Thanks to his time playing wide receiver in high school, he does a nice job of getting his head turned around and his fingers spread apart to make the interception without having to break stride.

*Run Defense*... Hooker is like a linebacker when he has to step inside the box and support vs. the run. His tackling ability, wrap-up technique and range closing on plays along the opposite sidelines could see him shift to the second level in a Cover-2 scheme. He has a nose for the ball in tight areas, along with bringing ball carriers down at the line of scrimmage. When working in the box, Hooker is quick to read and react to the run. He takes good angles to the ball and will not shy away from contact working in-line. He is not asked to blitz much, but shows very good acceleration in back-side pursuit. He is a tough tackler who stays low in his pads and rarely takes passive arm tackles, rather preferring to extend his hands to wrap and secure. He will attack the line of scrimmage with aggression, but will not overrun the play.

*Tackling Ability*... Hooker makes good body adjustments, staying low in his pads while driving hard with his legs to push back the lead blocker through the rush lanes when working in the box. He takes good angles to the ball when in space and is very active with his hands when encountering the smaller blockers in the open field. He generates good power behind his tackles, doing a nice job of breaking down and exploding into the ball carrier. He will not hesitate to fill the alley, demonstrating no concern that he might get punished a bit by the larger offensive linemen.

He is even better tackling in the open field, as he shows good wrap-up technique and strength when delivering his hits. He can “blow people up” if on track to make the play and will break down, face up and wrap with authority. He also has the feet and balance to run laterally, clear trash and make plays in tight areas.

*Compares To*...Thomas Davis-Los Angeles Chargers...Hooker is a very effective eighth man working in the box, displaying a knack for always being around the ball. He gets a very good jump on the ball when coming out of his back-pedal, taking no wasted steps in transition. Hooker can run, hit and change directions when playing in space. He shows no hesitation attacking ball carriers at the line of scrimmage. He has valid speed and above average balance and body control, evident by his ability when taking proper angles to the ball.

SAVAGE BACKS UP HIS SURNAME WITH HIS HITTING ABILITY

Darnell Savage Jr.-#4

University of Maryland Terrapins

5:10.6-198

*Agility Tests.*..4.36 in the 40-yard dash…1.53 10-yard dash…2.58 20-yard dash…4.14 20-yard shuttle…7.03 three-cone drill…39 1/2-inch vertical jump…10'-06' broad jump…Bench pressed 225 pounds 11 times…31-inch arm length…9 1/8-inch hands…74 3/4-inch wingspan.

*Background*...It is puzzling that a player as talented as Savage had to wait until his NFL Scouting Combine to garner national media attention. One of the few defensive backs at the 2019 event to blaze the track with a sub 4.4-second 40-yard dash, if you ask anyone in the state of Maryland about him, they might say, "what took you so long."

At Caravel Academy, the Delaware native played on both sides of the ball for the football team, Delaware All-State honors after he helped lead Caravel to the 2013 state championship. He ended up breaking his right femur that season, forcing the consensus three-star prospect to work relentlessly to come back for his final season stronger than ever and prove he was the same player he was before the injury.

"We talked about the grind to recover and to never panic," Caravel head coach John Reed said. "He's a hard worker, and he worked relentlessly to get back to where he was or even better. He was on a senior-season mission."

Savage worked with the Caravel training staff to return from the injury for the 2014 season. As a senior, Savage operated the wildcat formation and led his team to a two-touchdown victory against Episcopal Academy, the team Savage was playing against when he got hurt in 2013. That season, he posted 1,298 rushing yards and thirteen touchdowns, also recording 54 tackles.

The Honor Roll student was a consensus three-star recruit and Rivals.com rated him the second-best player in the state. Academically, in addition to being named to the honor roll, Savage was a member of the Headmaster’s List.

The Maryland coaches did not waste any time getting Savage acclimated to college ball. He first lined up behind All-American Will Likely at left cornerback during his freshman year in 2015, posting twelve tackles (11 solos) in ten appearances off the bench. He started the season finale vs. Rutgers, responding with five tackles. On 131 snaps, he did give way on 8-of-10 passes targeted into his area though, as the opponents totaled 207 yards from those grabs.

In 2016, Savage started all twelve games that he appeared in. The free safety missed the Indiana game and three quarters vs. Michigan State with a leg contusion, but he still managed to deliver 59 tackles (45 solos) with a sack among 3.5 stops-for-loss. He posted first career interception and returned it 30 yards vs. Boston College and broke up five other attempts. He had two double-digit tackle games, with a season-best eleven vs. Nebraska and ten more vs. Ohio State. He did give up three touchdowns and 261 yards, as opponents connected on 21-of-37 passes vs. him.

Savage switched from jersey #26 to #4 prior to the 2017 season, honoring Will Likely, who had served as his mentor when he first arrived on campus. He received All-Big Ten Conference honors from The NFL Draft Report after he recorded 59 tackles (45 solos) for the second-straight year. He led the team with eight pass breakups and tied for the lead with three interceptions.

Savage had a massive game vs. Indiana (10/28), sparking a 14-point comeback by notching an interception and also blocking a field goal and returning it 16 yards for a touchdown. He made eight tackles and a fumble recovery at fifth-ranked Wisconsin and was in on seven tackles and an interception vs. Northwestern. He picked off another pass and returned in for a 75-yard touchdown vs. Towson. Opponents challenged his area with 45 throws, completing 26 for 314 yards, but he kept each receiver out of the end zone.

Savage's final season saw him garner third-team All-American and first-team All-Big Ten honors from The NFL Draft Report, adding second-team league accolades from the coaches. He started every game, as the safety's four interceptions for 30 yards also included one that he returned for a touchdown while making two stops-for-loss in the Temple clash. His four thefts placed him second on the conference leader board.

Savage also had two interceptions vs. Rutgers, becoming first Terp to achieve the feat since Sean Davis in 2015. He also broke up six of the 50 passes targeted into his area that resulted in 28 receptions for 239 yards, but no touchdowns.

Savage ended his Maryland career with 181 tackles (138 solos) in 43 games. He participated in 2,397 snaps, posting a 9-yard sack and nine stops for losses of 46 yards. He scored on a blocked field goal and on two of his eight interceptions that resulted in 153 return yards. He caused one fumble and deflected 22 of the 142 passes targeted to him that saw 83 completed (58.45%) for 1,021 yards and three touchdowns.

*The Scouting Report*

*Athletic Ability*...Savage has a small, yet athletic build with room on his frame to carry at least another ten pounds of bulk without the added weight affecting his overall quickness. He shows good arm and leg muscle definition, but his arms are slightly shorter than ideal (74 3/4-inch wing span/31-inch arm length), looking more like a ball carrier than an impact-hitting safety. Still, obvious by his pass theft and return figures, he shows good extension and natural hands to compete for the ball at its high point. He displays tight waist and hips, thick thighs and calves. He has to add more natural strength in the weight room, but has impressive upper and lower body flexibility (great contortionist going for the ball) and body control.

Savage runs with a short, quick stride, demonstrating above average flexibility, agility and balance moving in the open field. He has the foot speed (4.36 40-yard dash) to cover most receivers on deep routes and can quickly redirect and accelerate when his man gets behind him (good recovery burst). He is a fluid mover on plays in front of him, showing the plant-&-drive skills to come off the block and make plays at the opposite end of the field. He has excellent hand-eye coordination and natural hands, easily extending away from his frame to reach and pluck the ball at its highest point (see 2018 Temple, Rutgers games). He is becoming an efficient downhill tackler that makes lots of plays in front of him. He will sometimes round his cuts, but compensates with an explosive second gear and the ability to take proper angles to the ball when working in space. He displays the ability to accelerate quickly to the plays in front of him. He times his leaps properly and has natural hands for the interception.

*Key and Diagnostic Skills*...Savage shows very quick reactionary skills. He has that natural feel for finding the ball, thanks to his quick decision making that allows him to read and reacts in order to get to the ball in a hurry. He is seldom fooled by play action and misdirection, doing a nice job of keeping action in front of him. More than 35% of his tackles in his last two years came outside his territory, as he is alert to defensive breakdowns and feels it is his responsibility to serve as the “last line” for his unit. He is not the type that will bite on misdirection or play action, evident by his ability to easily read the quarterback and makes plays on the ball in flight.

He sets the tone of the game with his aggressive play and does not hesitate to close once he spots the ball. He has exceptional blocker awareness and because of that vision, he is able to slip through blocks to make plays in tight areas. He keeps his head on a swivel, tracking the ball in flight and times his leaps to get to the pigskin at its high point. He is not the type that will get over aggressive, but does hit with authority. He breaks on the ball well and gets a good jump from the hash.

*Man Coverage Ability*... Savage has great speed, which he couples with a quick plant-&-burst skill and he constantly keeps his feet moving, demonstrating above average change of direction agility. He is capable of being used to cover receivers one-on-one on deep routes (former cornerback), but is much more effective at playing the bump-&-run, as he rerouted receivers away from 26 pass attempts the last two years. Not only does he have the blazing speed needed to play in man coverage at the next level as a cornerback, but with his flexible hips and ease of movement when redirecting, he has no problem mirroring tight ends, slot receivers and running backs on underneath routes.

He gets a good jump on the ball to stay with the receivers in the short range area, using his hands well in attempts to impede the route’s progression. If playing in a system that will man him up on slots receivers and tight ends, he will do a very good job. He is just the type you need to cover the speedier receivers on deep patterns. He easily stays on the hips of the pass targets in the short-to-intermediate areas and when he gets his hands on the opponent and gets physical, he will generally reroute his man or jam him at the line of scrimmage.

*Zone Coverage Ability*...This is one of Savage’s better assets, as he is quick to read and react, using his speed and acceleration well to close ground on the ball. He consistently finishes plays with either an interception or pass deflection and has possibly the best vision and range of any safety at the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision level. He shows very good field vision and awareness, along with route recognition on his drop. He is adept at handling the switch-offs vs. backs and tight ends, showing alertness and a good feel for the ball.

He is quick to locate the pigskin when working in the box and gets a good jump on the play due to his ability to anticipate and diagnose the patterns (see 2018 Rutgers, Temple, Michigan games). He is an effective ball-hawk with natural hands for the interception. He does a good job of staying low in his pads while driving hard with his legs to neutralize receivers making plays in front of him. His vision and feel for the play will generally see him in position to make the tackle. The thing you see on film is his ability to fly up to the line quickly to support vs. the run.

*Ball Reaction Skills*...Savage is a calculating type who might take a few chances that will not be the norm for a safety, but he has very good vision to make the pick or break-up. He does a nice job of stepping in front of the pass. He is sort of a mind reader, as he works in perfect sync with what the quarterback is trying to do, making him more often than not in position to make a play on the ball. He is aggressive using his hands, resulting in him having success in jamming or rerouting receivers on passes targeted into his area. He gets an explosive break to close on the thrown ball and does a very nice job of locating and tracking the ball over his shoulder. What he excels at is chasing down the ball in flight, showing steady acceleration and timing to compete for the pass.

*Jumping Ability*...Savage has the athletic ability to reach and pluck the ball at its high point and possesses a very impressive 39 1/2-inch vertical jump. He tracks the ball well in flight and has the smooth change of direction agility to adjust when needed. The thing you see on film is his aggression combating for the ball (see 2018 Rutgers, Michigan games). He is a very good leaper, which he combines with his ability to track the ball and readily adjust to get under it. He shows no hesitation sacrificing his body to compete for the ball in a crowd. He can elevate from a stand-still position and times his leaps so he does not get there too early to make the play. He loves to compete for the high passes, as he is good at elevating to catch the ball in his hands and away from his body. He demonstrates body control flowing to the ball, taking no wasted steps when closing.

*Hands*...This is Savage’s best asset, evident by the fact that he is has set up six scoring drives via his eight interception returns (on the other two, he scored himself). While he has shorter-than-ideal arm reach (31-inches), he compensates with excellent leaping ability, timing and natural hands to reach and pluck the ball at its highest point. He catches the ball with his hands properly extended from the body’s frame. When he competes for the ball, he will generally get a piece of the pigskin. He uses his hands with force in pass coverage, doing a good job of jamming and rerouting tight ends when attacking at the line of scrimmage.

*Run Defense*...Savage is a solid wrap-up tackler and the scheme in 2018 called for him to see much more action inside the box than the coaches allowed in the past. He is quick to react to plays in front of him (better downhill tackler on running plays). He charges up fast to fill the rush lanes and shows good leverage, along with proper hand placement and usage to avoid and shed blocks.

The thing you see on film is his aggressiveness, as he works hard to play through blocks and shows good, low pad level when meeting the running backs at the line of scrimmage, but he needs to impact with more force behind those hits at times (when he takes a side, a ball carrier has success breaking those tackles). He will generally keep his shoulders square and drives hard with his legs to rock the ball carriers back. He runs with an effortless stride and is very decisive in his movements on plays in front of him. He takes good angles to the ball and will not shy away from contact working in-line. He is not asked to blitz much, but shows good acceleration in back side pursuit.

*Tackling Ability*...Savage shows good courage taking on bigger blockers, but can get pushed around some when he fails to keep his hands inside his frame. He was not used much in the box until last year, when the scheme called for him to be more active in there. He is mostly assigned to make plays on the ball in flight, thus his just average tackle totals, but he will usually make those hits count (46 third-down stops in his last 26 games). He will miss a few tackles when he tries to give a side and not execute his wrap-up technique, but does have good body control moving in the open field. He is not used often on blitzes as I would like, but he has that low center of gravity and leg drive to surprise a lethargic blocker when asked to shoot the gaps.

*Compares To*...LaMarcus Joyner-Oakland Raiders...Savage has enough range to play centerfield and his eight interceptions for 153 yards and two touchdowns are evidence that he is a solid ball hawk. He can mirror the tight end underneath and stays tight with the slot receivers up the seam, but he also has the speed and recovery skills to man up in multiple receiver formations. When working the zone, he gets a much better jump on the ball on plays coming from the middle hash. He will square up and hit with good pop and is a solid wrap-up tackler. He appears very instinctive going for the jump ball, timing his leaps to get to the pigskin at its high point.

SMALL COLLEGE STAR HAS HALL OF FAME FAMILY LINK

Nasir Adderley-#23

University of Delaware Blue Hens

5:11.6-206

*Agility Tests*...4.50 in the 40-yard dash…1.54 10-yard dash…2.63 20-yard dash…4.07 20-yard shuttle…11.14 60-yard shuttle…6.82 three-cone drill…34-inch vertical jump…10'-00" broad jump…Bench pressed 225 pounds 18 times…31-inch arm length…9-inch hands…74 3/4-inch wingspan.

*Background.*..Adderley has a lot of positions listed under his name, but that is for good reason, as the hard-hitting tackler is being compared to a player of same size, ability and field awareness, one that most in the industry regard as one of the best to ever play the college and professional football game - Brian Dawkins.

Perhaps it is fitting that this incredible, yet unknown (at least by the national media) prospect hails from the city where Dawkins cemented his reputation. Perhaps the youngster had first-hand viewing rights to see Dawkins set the pattern for future "undersized" safeties who proved every scout wrong when he came out of Clemson University after the 1995 season.

Perhaps it is part of Adderley's DNA that has seen him excel, starting every game since he first arrived on the University of Delaware campus in 2015. Nasir’s grandfather, Nelson Adderley, was a running back at Ohio State under Woody Hayes in 1965. He later played in the Canadian Football League, so Nasir clearly has football running through his blood.

Nasir’s surname may also ring a bell to many old-time Green Bay Packers fans, as Herb Adderley was a Hall of Fame defensive back for that team in the 1960s. Herb also played for the Dallas Cowboys and is a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Also a Philadelphia native, he played college football at Michigan State University and was an All-Big Ten Conference offensive star as a halfback. As a professional, he is the only player to appear in four of the first six Super Bowls.

Adderley was selected by the Green Bay Packers in the first round of the 1961 NFL draft, the 12th overall pick. He began his professional career as a halfback on offense, but was later switched to defense because the Packers already had eventual Hall of Fame runners in Paul Hornung and Jim Taylor. He was first moved to cornerback to replace injured teammate Hank Gremminger against Detroit on Thanksgiving and made an interception that set up the game-winning touchdown.

In 1962, the move became permanent and Adderley went on to become an all-NFL selection five times in the 1960s. Packers coach Vince Lombardi remarked, "I was too stubborn to switch him to defense until I had to. Now when I think of what Adderley means to our defense, it scares me to think of how I almost mishandled him."

Nasir excelled as a cornerback during his first two seasons at Delaware before shifting to the rover position in 2017. He has started all forty-three games that he has played in - the first twenty-two at weak-side cornerback before shifting to the "rover" position as a junior. He has recorded 246 tackles (146 solos) with an assisted sack and 9.5 stops behind the line of scrimmage for losses totaling 29 yards.

Adderley has caused five fumbles and recovered two others. The senior has deflected 22 passes, intercepting eleven others for 158 yards in return that includes a 22-yard touchdown. He has advanced two blocked punts for ten yards and generated 806 yards from thirty-one kickoff returns for a 26.00-yard average with a 92-yard touchdown.

Prior to arriving on the University of Delaware campus, Adderley was a two-year starter at free safety and strong safety during a standout career at Great Valley High School. The Philadelphia product also started at wide receiver and was a kick returner for head coaches Mike Choi and Dan Ellis. He led the team to a 12-2 record and the district title as a senior in 2014 after his squad went 8-3 in 2013.

The honorable mention All-State senior was also named second team All-Southeastern Pennsylvania, first team All-Area, and first team all-conference. He was an all-conference at both receiver and defensive back. For his career, caught 68 passes for 1,025 yards and five touchdowns, rushed for 383 yards and five touchdowns, intercepted nine passes and returned three for touch-downs, forced three fumbles, and had seven touchdowns on kick returns

When the prep honor roll student arrived at Delaware, he was instantly inserted into the lineup, recording 51 tackles (37 solos) in eleven contests, third-best on the team, as the Freshman All-American also deflected eight passes. He added All-Colonial Athletic Association accolades in 2016, as the sophomore cornerback posted 49 tackles with four pass break-ups, returning one of his two pass thefts for a touchdown. He also earned the eighth spot on the school season-record chart with 28 kickoff returns for 662 yards (23.84 avg).

Moved inside to rover in 2017, Adderley registered a career-high 78 tackles (48 solos) as a junior. He led the team with five interceptions (fourth in the NCAA FCS ranks) for 135 yards in returns, as he caused three fumbles and recovered another. He saw 50 passes targeted into his area, as he made eleven solo tackles on receptions that generated 105 yards (9.55 yards per pass completion), assisting in stopping five other receivers after catches that amassed 47 yards, holding his opponents to a pass completion percentage of .320.

As a senior, the All-American delivered 68 tackles (37 solos), as he deflected seven passes, adding four interceptions through ten appearances on the 2018 schedule. He has had 50 passes targeted into his area, as he made eleven solo tackles on receptions that generated 146 yards (13.27 yards per pass completion), assisting in stopping four other receivers after catches for 93 yards. He has either rerouted or jammed his coverage assignments away from twenty of those tosses (40.00% of targeted passes), posting fifteen third-down stops and three more on fourth-down snaps.

Adderley started all forty-three games that he has played in at Delaware - the first twenty-two at weak-side cornerback before shifting to the "rover" position as a junior. He has recorded 246 tackles (146 solos) with an assisted sack and 9.5 stops behind the line of scrimmage for losses totaling 29 yards. He has caused five fumbles and recovered two others.

The senior deflected 22 passes, intercepting eleven others for 158 yards in return that includes a 22-yard touchdown. Adderley has advanced two blocked punts for ten yards and generated 806 yards from 31 kickoff returns with one touchdown for a 26.00-yard average.

*NCAA Football Championship Subdivision Active Leaders...*Currently, Adderley's eleven interceptions are tied with Will Warner of Drake and Tyler Castillo of Colgate for fifth among FCS active leaders. His 158 yards via interception returns is 19th-best among active participants.

His kickoff return average of 26.00 yards is tied with Ahmere Dorsey of Rhode Island for the tenth-highest mark among active FCS players.

Adderley's 146 solo tackles is 16th-best while his 33 passes defended (eleven interceptions; 22 pass break-ups) placed him in a tie for 11th with Colgate's Tyler Castillo and North Dakota State's Robbie Grimsley.

*Delaware Career-Record Leaders...*Adderley's eleven interceptions are tied with Tyrone Jones (1983-85), Mike Harris (1982-84), Johnny Bush (1970-72), Bruce Fad (1968-70), Bob Pietuszka (1974-75), Kenny Bailey (1993-96) and Mike Adams (1999-2003) for 13th in school history. The record is 22 by George Schmitt; 1980-82.

His 158 yards gained from his interception returns in 17th in school annals (record is 408 by Kenny Bailey; 1993-96). His 22 pass deflections hold the 19th spot in Blue Hens annals (record is 37 by Kenny Lucas; 1985-87).

Adderley's 26.00-yard average on kickoff returns rank third on Delaware's career chart, behind the 30.1-yard average by Bill Hopkins (1963-64) and 26.9-yard mark by Sidney Haugabrook (2001-04).

Adderley's 806 kickoff return yards hold the 14th spot on the school all-time list.

*The Scouting Report*

*Athletic Ability*...Adderley has room on his frame for additional bulk, if a team prefers utilizing his hard-hitting style as a rover/strong safety. He has low body fat, defined chest and arms, tight waist and hips and developing calves. He also has broad shoulders and adequate arm length. He has average-sized hands (9-inches), but is a natural hands catcher and ball thief, due to his prep experience as a wide receiver.

Adderley shows the range needed to cover the entire field. He is especially effective at coming up to the line of scrimmage and delivering crunching hits in run support (has already made four touchdown-saving tackles vs. running plays in 2018- see Rhode Island, Cornell, Elon College games). He plays with very good leverage and shows the strength to deliver pop on contact. He plays with good balance, making smooth body adjustments in space. He runs with a normal stride and shows agility and balance closing on the ball. He has the plant-&-drive agility to redirect and accelerate. He plays faster than even his impressive timed speed indicates and delivers solid open field tackles, staying at a proper pad level to wrap and secure.

*Key and Diagnostic Skills*...Adderley has keen football instincts and field awareness. He shows good urgency taking proper angles to close and shows a good feel in zone coverage to pick up and anticipate on the switch-off and combo routes. He processes the action in front of him well and gets a quick jump on the ball in run support. It is rare to see him get caught out of position, but he does get a little over-aggressive at times (see 2018 North Dakota State game). Once he finds the football, he closes ground in a hurry. His timing is excellent going up and getting the most out of his leaps to deflect or intercept the pass at its high point (see 2018 Richmond, 2017 Towson, Richmond, William & Mary games).

*Man Coverage Ability*...Adderley plays with good ball awareness. He is not prone to getting fooled pump fakes and play action, as he has the hip snap and foot movement to recover and close ground in a hurry. He has the flexible hips to redirect and shows steady acceleration and a quick burst to stay on the hips of the receivers in the short-to-intermediate zone. With his timing, you can man him up on slot receivers, as he possesses the burst needed in order to cover them at the pro level vs. the more explosive wide-outs.

He has the strength to get more physical in attempts to reroute at the line of scrimmage and has the stride to stay on the hip of the opponent in the deep area of the secondary. He does a nice job of keeping his eyes on his assignment and stays in good position to make the play. He is most effective when mirroring underneath and has no trouble jamming tight ends at the line (see 2018 Richmond; 2017 Cornell, William & Mary games).

*Zone Coverage Ability*...Adderley shows a good feel for keeping action in front of him in the zone. He is quick to handle the switch-off and has that feel you need to locate and pick up assignments on combo routes. The thing you see on film is his ability to anticipate and make a jump on the ball (see 2018 Lafayette, Richmond; 2017 Towson, Richmond; 2015 New Hampshire games). He plays with good urgency in his pass drop, coming out of his pedal without taking extra steps.

His range and anticipation skills make him better in the zone than man coverage, but you would like to see him attack the ball more often to show if he has natural hands for the interception. He shows good tracking ability to maintain eye contact on the ball in flight and knows how to work on the outside shoulder of the receiver to prevent the quarterback from keeping the ball away from him. He takes good drops in curl, flat and underneath coverage. He will sometimes freelance a bit, but he does not neglect his responsibilities.

*Ball Reaction Skills*...Adderley excels at using his feet to break quickly and close on the ball (see 2018 Lafayette, Richmond; 2017 William & Mary, Richmond games). He takes good angles and shows above average range. He consistently attacks the ball and shows steady acceleration and timing to close and neutralize the cutback lanes in run force. He has a knack for getting himself in position to make plays on the ball. He is aggressive attacking the receivers on underneath routes, but needs to develop better hands to secure the interception. You can see on film that he has the ability to fit into tight areas to make plays at the line, doing a nice job of keeping the bigger blockers off his body due to strong hand usage.

*Jumping Ability*...Adderley demonstrates good body control and ball skills to adjust on the move and get into position to make the play. He has developed the NFL-caliber hands needed to make the interception and has learned to catch away from his framework to turn those pass break-ups into thefts instead. He tracks the ball well and readily adjusts to it, showing decent vertical ability to contest for the jump ball, and it is rare to see him misplay when going after the pass. He excels at timing his jumps and extending his hands to get to the ball at its high point (see 2017 Towson, Richmond, Cornell games).

*Hands*...You can see that Adderley is an excellent playmaker when going for the interception or pass break-up, even with average-sized hands to secure. He has the ability to catch away from the body’s frame and uses his hands with force and emphasis in attempts to press and reroute his opponent. He has the skills to make plays on the ball in front of him, and he has good timing to get to the jump balls, developing that required feel to pluck and catch away from the frame rather than bringing the ball into his body. Once he does secure the ball, he has the loose hips to run and gain valid yardage.

*Run Defense*...Adderley is a kamikaze type when it comes to stepping up and filling the rush lanes, showing no concern for his body to make the play. 65 of his last 111 tackles have come in run support, along with making 31 plays inside the red zone that included 15 goal-line hits and a total of 23 touchdown-saving tackles vs. both the run and pass since the start of the 2017 season (moved from weak-side corner to rover then). He is very aggressive stepping up to the line and looks very natural to fit in the running game. He is a physical wrap-up tackler who takes good angles attacking the line of scrimmage. He might get a little over-aggressive at times, but he has the plant-&-drive agility to redirect and the recovery burst and loose hips to get back into the action.

*Tackling Ability*...Adderley generally plays in control and has a good feel for taking angles to close in pursuit. He is very capable of fitting in space and brings his arms and feet to secure with good strength and pop on contact. He has above average body control in the open and it is rare to see him miss a tackle. He packs a strong punch for a player his size and excels at filling the alley, breaking down and delivering solid hits. He is doing very good to increase his strength and you can see it in his explosive hits. He shows good body control to stay in front of the play and is developing into a very effective collision-type tackler due to his balance and ability to close working in space.

*Special Teams Play.*..This is where Adderley is a hidden gem, more in the Steve Tasker mold, as he simply obliterates punt returners. He's caused and recovered fumbles attacking on punt runbacks (see 2017 William & Mary, Maine; 2018 Lafayette, Richmond games) and has also done a highly effective job as a kick blocker (see 2017 James Madison, Virginia Tech games).

*Compares To*.. Brian Dawkins-ex Philadelphia Eagles/Denver Broncos…While comparing anyone to Dawkins, our staff's "measuring tool" for future safeties, that is the highest praise this scouting department can pay a player, but Adderley certainly fits the mold. He is not as vocal or emotional as Dawkins, but he does play with that "quiet assassin" attitude. He simply has the ability to perform the task at a variety of secondary positions. Whether a pro team runs a Cover-1, - 2, or -3 scheme, Adderley has the athletic ability to perform, and do it well.

What is very impressive about the senior safety is his use of a straight-backpedal and angle backpedal, if necessary, to reach ideal position. He can easily see the field and have his eyes on the quarterback, knowing when to leave the pedal when the ball leaves the passer’s hand. Even with average speed, he can turn and sprint, allowing the path of the ball to take him to the intended receiver.

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