THE NFL DRAFT REPORT PRESENTS

THE 2019 RUNNING BACK CLASS

SECOND STRING TALENT SHOULD BE THE FIRST RUNNING BACK DRAFTED

Joshua "Josh" Jacobs-#8

University of Alabama Crimson Tide

5:11.0-220

*Agility Tests.*..4.64 in the 40-yard dash…1.60 10-yard dash…2.63 20-yard dash…35-inch vertical jump…9'-04" broad jump…Bench pressed 225 pounds 18 times…31 5/8-inch arm length…10 1/8-inch hands…74 1/4-inch wingspan...Note-Jacobs' groin pull prevented him from performing the shuttle drills.

*Background*...The draft will feature a rare occurrence, with a back-up ball carrier being selected before his team's starter. If Jacobs ends up being selected late in the first round, he is likely to be the only running back to hear his name called on Day One.

Playing for a team than can rival an NFL roster, the Crimson Tide's wealth of talent, especially in the backfield, limited the amount of carries Jacobs received during his career, but that allowed him to focus on other aspects of his game, developing into a valid third-down receiving option while also taking a few turns as a kickoff returner.

At McLain High School, the Tulsa, Oklahoma native did not explode on to the recruiting scene until later in his prep career, but still closed out his senior campaign rated a four-star prospect, the second-best player in the state and the sixth-best all-purpose running back nationally. ESPN listed him as the fourth-best player in Oklahoma and the 36th-ranked running back in the country.

Jacobs averaged an astounding 15.1 yards per carry and 245.8 yards per game as a senior with 2,704 rushing yards on 179 carries with 31 rushing touchdowns. The first team All-State Class 4A pick by the Oklahoma Coaches Association and OKPreps.com, he was a second-team choice by The Oklahoman. He played in only six games as a junior in 2014 due to injury, rushing for 948 yards and 13 scores in just over four games, finishing his career with 5,372 yards rushing and 56 touchdowns.

Jacobs chose to enroll at the University of Alabama over Oklahoma and Missouri. He played a key role in a Tide backfield that was tasked with replacing Heisman Trophy winner Derrick Henry, as the true freshman rushed 85 times for 567 yards and four touchdowns to average 6.7 yards per carry, a total that ranked second among Tide backs. He also added 14 receptions for 156 yards. The first-year performer saw defenders miss tackles on 26-of-those 85 rushing attempts.

He was selected as the SEC Freshman of the Week after his performance vs. Kentucky, as he carried 16 times for 100 yards while catching three passes for 44 yards - all career marks - in his first start for the Crimson Tide. He also added one touchdown on the ground and collected a then career-long rush of 28 yards and a 23-yard reception, also a new career-high mark. Against Arkansas, he rushed three times for 57 yards with a long of 56, all coming on the first drive, but exited the game for good after suffering a leg injury near the Razorbacks' goal line on the Crimson Tide's opening drive.

The shifty tailback missed the first two games of his sophomore campaign due to a hamstring injury but finished starting once through twelve games, he totaled 284 yards on 46 carries and a touch-down, while catching 14 passes for 168 yards and two touchdowns. He also worked on kickoff return, taking back four kicks for 86 yards with a long return of 23 yards. He earned special teams player of the week recognition from the Tide coaches for his efforts vs. Arkansas and was also tabbed an offensive player of the week by the UA coaches for his performances vs. Ole Miss, Mississippi State and Mercer.

In the Ole Miss, Jacobs saw his most extensive time of the season, as he rushed two times for 51 yards with a season-long scamper of 45 yards. He also had an impact in the passing game, catching a pair of tosses - each for 18 yards - and recording his first career touchdown reception. In the

Mississippi State, he carried six times for 36 yards and a touchdown with a long rush of 13 yards. On his score, Jacobs carried it over the goal line from one-yard out to keep the score even at 14 heading into half. He also caught a pair of passes for 18 yards.

In 2018, the versatile athlete provided a threat on special teams. Jacobs averaged 28.6 yards per kickoff return for his career (514 yards, 18 returns) to rank third in UA annals (minimum 15 returns) He also contributed in numerous ways as a junior, totaling 15 touchdowns (11 rushing, three receiving, one kickoff return) to rank eighth in the Southeastern Conference and his 11 rushing scores tied for seventh in the league.

Jacobs wrapped up 2018 tied for the team lead in all-purpose yards with 1,315 to average 87.7 yards per game. He ranked second on the Tide in scoring with 90 points, as he rushed 120 times for 640 yards and a team-high 11 scores while catching 20 passes for 247 yards and three touchdowns. Fifty of his rushes as a junior went for a first down or scores while 14 of his receptions led to a Tide touchdown or first down. Opponents also missed tackles on 33 of his carries.

Jacobs earned special teams player of the week honors from the UA coaches for his play against Louisville, Ole Miss and Missouri while earning offensive player of the week recognition for his performances against the Tigers on Homecoming and against Mississippi State and Auburn. In the Louisville clash, he totaled two touchdowns by night’s end, as he rushed six times for 45 yards and a score and added a 77-yard kickoff return for a touchdown, the first of his career.

Against Mississippi State, Jacobs totaled a career-high 20 carries for 97 yards and a touchdown to average 4.8 yards per tote while adding two catches for 12 yards and the Tide’s lone touchdown reception of the day. Selected as the SEC Championship’s Most Valuable Player for his standout performance vs. Georgia, he led all Tide rushers with 86 yards and two touchdowns on only eight carries, as he averaged a game-high 10.4 yards per carry.

In the BCS playoff match-up vs. Oklahoma, Jacobs accumulated 158 all-purpose yards in an impressive Orange Bowl performance vs. the Sooners, rushing a team-high 15 times for 98 yards, a total that also led UA. He added four receptions for 60 yards with a 27-yard catch and score that saw him truck an OU defender to get to pay-dirt. In the title game vs. Clemson, he contributed all over the field in the title game, carrying 11 times for 47 yards, collecting five first downs in the process. He also caught one pass for a 16-yard gain and Tide first down and added one kickoff return for a 30-yard gain.

In 42 games at Alabama, Jacobs appeared in 712 offensive snaps. He totaled 1,491 yards with sixteen touchdowns on 251 carries (5.9 ypc), catching 48 balls for 571 yards (11.9 ypc) and five more scores. He forced missed tackles on 63 of his rushing attempts and fumbled only three times while scoring 138 points. On special teams, he posted three tackles and averaged 28.6 yards with one touchdown on eighteen kickoff returns for 514 yards, adding 27 yards for a touchdown via a blocked punt return. He amassed 2,603 all-purpose yards, an average of 61.98 yards per game.

*The Scouting Report*

*Athletic Ability.*..Jacobs has solid size and power, but lacks blazing speed (more field fast than timed speed) for his position. He has a thick, yet athletic physique with a muscular and defined upper body. He has a tight waist and hips, good abdomen and bubble, along with muscular thighs and calves. In other words, he is built for power. This stout athlete has broad shoulders, good chest muscle development and above average change of direction agility.

Jacobs is a classic downhill runner with excellent size and power to combines with nimble feet and good elusiveness. He shows superb agility and balance with his pick-&-slide and the change of direction and hip flexibility to easily redirect to the cutback lanes. He lacks great acceleration into the second level, but unlike most big backs, do not label him as a one-cut runner, as he is quite capable of eluding or running through tackles. He has very good leg drive and vision, doing a nice job of sliding through the hole. He is a strong runner that can break arm tackles. He also shows he can break free for a big gain, but lacks that second gear/home run speed.

*Initial Quickness*...Jacobs lacks blazing speed, but hits the hole quickly and with a vengeance. Unlike previous Tide runners (Trent Richardson, Eddie Lacy comes to mind), he runs at a good pad level and shows great body lean and leg drive to run past or run over defenders in his path. He has enough functional quickness to bounce wide and is crisp changing direction, as he is one of the better cutback runners in this draft. He shows a good start off the ball, but is not sudden in his movements. He will attack the holes with good urgency and also shows that he can also be more of a glider.

*Acceleration/Burst*...Jacobs can accelerate into the hole in an instant, taking no wasted steps. He has great balance and outstanding lateral agility for a big man. He shows a good short area burst of speed and while he can be run down going long distances, he is too much of a load for a secondary defender to bring down in man coverage. He has the low pad level and good short burst through the hole, but just average long speed. He will rely more on power to gain yardage after initial contact rather than utilizing his hip swerve and wiggle to elude, but he is nimble moving his feet. He has deceptive moves to lull the defender and then slide laterally to pull away from trash. His ability to maintain pad level and balance when accelerating on his cuts lets him gain separation. His short area burst gets him through the holes before a defense can re-adjust.

*Instincts/Balance*...Jacobs has a lot of “old school” in him, as he runs over his feet with good base and balance. He sets up his blocks well, has above average field vision and displays a natural feel for the running lanes. He can find the hole in an instant and will cutback fluidly, showing a nice bounce in his step. Some scouts think that he will struggle to avoid in the open, but with his brute power, he can just simply run over people to get big yardage.

If the outside is impacted on his runs, he simply plants his foot, redirects and moves laterally inside. He does a very nice job of turning his shoulders when moving up field. He runs with a quick, short stride through traffic and has good ability to see the seam and capitalize. What I also like about him here is that he plays the hand he is dealt rather than get too “cute” by trying to create something out of nothing. With his vision, he has a good feel for seeing threats.

*Inside Running*...This is Jacobs’s best category. He has the power to drag the pile and an incredible stiff arm to stymie a defender that gets in his path. He has that instinctive feel and vision to spot even the slightest of crease and unlike a lot of young backs, has the patience of a veteran when it comes to following his blocks. He hits it up hard between the tackles and is an above average pick-&-slide runner with great body lean. He is nimble, but he does like using his pile-moving ability to gain additional yardage. He is patient letting his blocks develop, but it is his cutting vs. the grain and his balance that gets a defense oft-kilter most of the time. He is physical taking the ball up the gut and seems to be a “tough cookie” with a high threshold for pain. Even when banged up, he attacks the inside holes in a hurry, easily running through arm tackles, making him very consistent in attempts to move the pile.

*Outside Running*...Jacobs runs downhill, but has just average speed to get the corner turned (more of a north-south runner). He can outrace second level defenders turning the corner, but he does tend to gather to cut. He is conscious of low blocks, doing a nice job of picking up his feet to prevent defenders from tripping him up when running north-south. He knows how to keep the ball in his outside hand when turning the corner and has excellent vision. For a big man, he shows some nice jitterbug moves and shifty hips, but is more of a pile mover than one who will elude. He does have the ability to create on his own, but is much more effective pounding the ball up the gut than to try to act like he is on “Dancing With the Stars.” We’ll leave that to Emmitt Smith!

Jacobs has the power to drag the pile and an incredible stiff arm to “donut” a defender that gets in his path. He has that instinctive feel and vision to spot even the slightest of crease and unlike a lot of young backs, has the patience of a veteran when it comes to following his blocks. He hits it up hard between the tackles and is an above average pick-&-slide runner with great body lean. He is more nimble than elusive, preferring to use his pile moving ability to gain additional yardage.

*Tackle-Breaking Strength*...Jacobs is a runaway freight train once he lowers his pads and kicks his legs into high gear. He will generally get big yardage after initial contact and runs with good body lean. He rarely misses the open crease and while he lacks an explosive burst, he does have the leg drive to break tackles and move the pile. He is strong powering through trash on goal line plays and even when he gets high in his stance, his strength is too much for “ankle” tacklers to contain.

He has valid explosive acceleration out of his cuts and the vision, quick change of direction agility and burst to consistently make the first defender miss. In the open field, he is much more than just a one-cut runner, as he knows how to change his pace and vary his extra gear going long distances, as this prevents defenders from maintaining balance.

*Receiving Skills*...Jacobs is the type of player that shows good extension ability, along with the knowledge how to catch away from his frame. He is a tailback who can be an effective pass catching option out of the backfield. He shows ease of movement looking the ball in over his shoulder, and is savvy enough to be used while running complicated patterns. You can see he is a capable receiver, as he snared 48-of-59 targeted passes targeted to him at Alabama seasons and he has become a good “table-setter,” as 29 of his grabs produced first downs.

*Blocking Ability*...Jacobs appears to struggle picking up the blitz. For all of his power and the punishment he dishes out as a runner, you would think that he would relish hitting defenders back as a blocker, but he fails to set his feet and it is rare to see him use leverage to sustain. He displays good toughness to face up and pop in pass protection, but prefers to just get in a defender’s way. He is an average cut blocker downfield, but needs to generate a stronger leg base in rare chances as a lead blocker (gets pushed back in the rush lane at times).

*Compares To*...Marlon Mack-Indianapolis Colts...Some compare him to Sony Michel, but he lacks that breakaway speed. Jacobs and Mack both are downhill types - powerful, strong and quick, just not stopwatch fast. He has the functional agility, and balance for his position, but his best asset is his ability to gain yards after initial contact, as he hits the zone-stretch play hard and fast. He has the hard-driving running style of Washington’s Adrian Peterson, but is not as well-rounded, nor does he play with that steady “fire in the belly” that the veteran running back displays. There are a lot of holes in Jacobs' game (average timed speed, limited carries), but for a team needing someone to develop in the backfield, his "low mileage" as a ball carrier is enticing.

ANOTHER LOW MILEAGE BALL CARRIER COULD BE A DAY TWO STEAL

Miles Sanders-#24

The Penn State University Nittany Lions

5:10.5-211

*Agility Tests.*..4.49x.xx in the 40-yard dash…1.57 10-yard dash…2.61 20-yard dash…4.19 20-yard shuttle…6.89 three-cone drill…36-inch vertical jump…10'-04" broad jump…Bench pressed 225 pounds 20 times…30 5/8-inch arm length…9 1/4-inch hands…74 5/8-inch wingspan.

*Background*...For a player who patiently waited for his opportunity, Sanders provided the Nittany Lions with yet another quality running performance that seems to be commonplace at State College. Even though he did not join the first unit until 2018, he became the 45th player in program history to rush for more than 1,000 yards, ranking 25th all-time with 1,649 rushing yards.

During the 2018 season, Sanders earned the program's 26th individual 1,000-yard rushing season (16th 1,000-yard rusher in program history), finishing with the 11th-most rushing yards on PSU's annual chart with 1,274. Back in 2016, he set the Penn State season record with 33 kickoff returns, passing former teammate Grant Haley’s mark of 32 from 2014. His 688 kickoff return yards that year rank second on the school season list behind Chaz Powell (733 yards; 2011). Last season, he became the sixth player in program history (nine occasions) to rush for 200 yards and score three times, accomplishing that feat vs. Illinois.

The Pittsburgh native lettered in football every year while also competing in track at Woodland Hills

High School. In his prep debut season, he recorded twelve touchdowns and rushed for 641 yards as a freshman in 2012. He followed with 1,064 yards and 14 rushing touchdowns as a sophomore in 2013. As a junior, he collected 1,132 yards on just 97 carries and scored 18 touchdowns. He closed out his career with 1,523 yards and 16 touchdowns while averaging 11.2 yards per carry as a senior.

Named a team captain in 2015, Sanders helped lead the Wolverines to an 11-1 mark and a WPIAL runner-up finish to eventual PIAA AAAA State Champion Pittsburgh Central Catholic. Woodland Hills accrued 39 victories during his career, finishing his time with 4,573 yards on 508 carries and 59 touchdowns. His rushing yardage rank fifth in WPIAL Class AAAA and he was selected to the Scout.com All-American team, in addition to being named as 2015 Mr. Pennsylvania Football for Class AAA/AAAA.

Sanders was also tabbed as PIAA Class AAA All-State first team in 2014 and 2015, and named to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Fabulous 22 Team and earned the Post-Gazette’s East Player of the Year honors in 2015. He participated in the Under Armour All-America Game as a representative on the Armour team in Orlando. He was rated the top running back in the nation by Rivals, Scout and 247Sports. He was also the consensus best prospect in Pennsylvania by all four major recruiting outlets – ESPN, Rivals, Scout and 247Sports. Additionally, he competed in the 100, 200 and 4x100 relay for the school's track team.

Listed on the Big Ten Conference All-Freshman team in 2016, Sanders placed seventh in the league with a 20.8-yard average via a school season-record 33 kickoff returns. In thirteen games, he averaged 7.4 yards on 25 carries (184 yards) with one score. One of his two receptions was good for a touchdown, totaling 24 yards.

In 2017, Sanders was presented with the Red Worrell Award, given to the offensive player who has best demonstrated exemplary conduct, loyalty, interest, attitude and improvement during spring practice. He appeared in twelve games, spelling Saquon Barkley in the starting lineup vs. Rutgers. He only had 31 attempts for 191 yards (6.2 ypc) with two touchdowns, but added 30 yards via six catches and 76 yards on five kickoff returns.

Sanders had his breakout season in 2018. Starting all thirteen games, he was selected second-team All-Big Ten by the league's coaches and media. He was also named the team's Most Valuable Offensive Player. He added Named Big Ten Offensive Player of the Week honors vs. Illinois and was tabbed selected to Pro Football Focus Big Ten Team of the Week following the Pittsburgh game.

A member of the Maxwell Award Watch List. Sanders was among the candidates on the preseason watch list for the Doak Walker Award, given to the nation's top running back. Wearing jersey #8 to honor former Raiders great Marcus Allen, he finished second in the league and 15th nationally with 1,274 yards and nine touchdowns on 220 carries (5.8 ypc). His average gain of 98.0 yards on the ground per game was fourth-best in the Big Ten.

Sanders ranked seventh in the Big Ten in rushing touchdowns and all-purpose yards per game (108.7), as he pulled in 24 tosses for 139 yards. In the Appalachian State season opener, he had 19 rushes for 91 yards, with 62 yards coming in the fourth quarter and overtime. He rushed for two touchdowns, including the go-ahead 4-yard score in overtime and had three receptions for 20 yards, as the coaching staff named him Offensive Player of the Week.

At Pittsburgh, he recorded his first career 100-yard game, with 118 yards on 16 carries that included three runs of 20 or more yards, with a long of 41-yards in the first quarter. At Illinois, he carried for a career-best 200 yards on 22 carries, as he set a career high with three rushing touchdowns that included a 48-yarder in the third quarter to go with 2- and 14-yard touchdown runs. He added 162 yards on 17 carries with a 48-yard touchdown, as he added a 78-yard run, the longest of his career, in the Michigan State game.

Sanders ended up starting 14-of-38 games at Penn State, carrying 276 times for1,649 yards (6.0 ypc) and twelve touchdowns. He hauled in 32 passes for 193 yards (6.0 ypc) and one score, adding 764 yards via 38 kickoff returns (20.1 avg) to register 2,606 all-purpose yards, an average of 68.6 yards per game. He caused the opponent to miss on 66 tackles, including 47 in 2018.

*The Scouting Report*

*Athletic Ability.*..Sanders displays very good upper body muscle tone with a thick lower body, good bubble and thigh definition. His arms are adequate in length, but he has large hands to secure the ball. His frame could still use additional bulk, but that could impact his best asset – his quickness.

Sanders has a very good burst and explosion off the snap. He has become a very physical runner who can consistently move the pile (see 2018 Appalachian State, Illinois games), and has more than enough strength to beat the press in passing situations.

He shows above average vision and is a patient runner who waits for blocks to develop. He can stick his foot in the ground and explode laterally, showing an explosive vertical burst when changing direction. He has very good stop-&-go quickness, along with the in-line acceleration to race up the rush lanes. He is a shifty type with outstanding feet, doing a nice job of avoiding low tackles on the move. He has the timed speed to take the ball long distances and runs with good balance. In isolated coverage, he will win any foot race. He has swivel hips, rather than veer and weave

He is a deceptively explosive runner around the corner, but shows very good patience waiting for blocks to develop. He can generate a second gear to separate in the open and has the nimble feet needed to make precise lateral cuts. His loose hips and change of direction agility makes him very elusive avoiding traffic. He has nice feet and above average balance in his initial burst, doing a nice job of “getting skinny” to pick his way through tight creases. He keeps his feet after contact and has the pick-&-slide agility to elude when running in-line. He runs with a normal stride, but is very crisp redirecting on the move.

*Initial Quickness*...Sanders displays outstanding quickness, which is one of his rapidly emerging assets. He attacks the rush lanes with above average explosion and has the pull-away ability to leave even speedy cornerbacks grabbing at air (see 2018 Pittsburgh, Illinois, Michigan State games). He gets to top speed in an instant and has very good ability to create separation, thanks to his stiff-arm skills and burst. He has very good vision to recognize coverage and avoid angles. He has excellent lateral agility and probably the best sudden burst into the crease of any running back in this draft. For all his speed, he is a very patient runner, allowing blocks to develop. He can also pick and slide through trash.

He also attacks the inside creases with tremendous explosion, getting to top speed in an instant. He gets a solid jump and some of the best movement on the ball than any other runner in this draft crop. It takes him just a step or two to reach top speed and he has that fluid hip wiggle to make defenders miss in space.

Sanders might not look like it, but he has excellent acceleration and burst through the holes. He has very good balance, showing the transition in and out of his cuts, along with balance to easily slip into the second level. He has very good ability to impact around the corner and leave defenders in his wake going long distance, but he also has a lot of moves to con the defender and that plant-&-drive agility to instantly redirect. He gets off smoothly and easily coming out of his stance and is able to accelerate and get to top speed quickly. He his quick to the hole and if a defender blinks, he is gone well past the line of scrimmage. He moves with no hesitation on the snap and gets to his mesh point with speed.

*Acceleration/Burst*...Sanders might not have blazing long speed, but he accelerates quickly and has that second gear needed to pull away from second level defenders. He can lull an opponent to sleep when he uses pitter-patter steps, then all of a sudden, bam- he’s executing the short burst to pull away. I really like the change of pace he demonstrates with varying his speed. Once he clears the line of scrimmage, he has the ability to get up field when running inside (see 2018 Illinois, Michigan State, Wisconsin games).

Sanders has a quick burst and maintains acceleration on extended runs. He has that body control and balance, along with loose hips to redirect and separate in the open. He has valid explosion to win foot races vs. second level defenders, along with the moves to set up the opponent and elude while displaying excellent balance and awareness hugging the sidelines.

You can see his very good balance coming off hard cuts and he has more than enough second gear to accelerate when he gets into the second level. Once out on the edge, he has proven in 2018 that he has the agility, body control and acceleration to outrun angles. This year, more than any other, he has had good success finishing when out in front.

*Instincts/Balance*...Sanders has a good feel for the defensive scheme and flow. He allows time for blocks to develop and shows very good vision for the cutback (see 2018 Illinois, Michigan State, Wisconsin games). If the outside is impacted on his runs, he simply plants his foot, redirects and moves laterally inside. He does a very nice job of turning his shoulders when moving up field, and has become highly proficient utilizing his jolting stiff-arm to shove secondary defenders out of the way. He has that “make you miss” cutting agility and can accomplish valid yardage on his own once he gets past his blockers, demonstrating good power to simply break arm tackles (see 2018 Illinois, Appalachian State games).

Sanders has outstanding vision. He sees the holes and cutback lanes naturally and shows good savvy as an open field runner. He is more apt to try and side-step his defenders, and has that natural feel for the holes, quickly anticipating the opening. He has also shown the patience to set up and use his blockers. He is quick to see threats and it is very easy for him to change direction, as long as he doesn’t try to run through the opponent.

*Inside Running*...In this area, Sanders has some Emmitt Smith in him, as he seems to be very comfortable keeping his pad level low and making sensational cuts when the rush lanes suddenly close. He has good body control and balance in his stride taking the ball up the middle, and he also has the lower leg strength to break tackles. He is quite effective at lowering his shoulder to move the pile. His deceptive leg thrusts let him bounce off the opponent while maintaining top speed (see 2018 Pittsburgh, Illinois, Michigan State games). He has good lateral quickness and fluid pick-&-slide agility. I really like the way he started running with pitter-patter steps, as it allowed him to maintain body control to slide through the holes.

Sanders runs inside with good body lean and awareness, especially when picking and sliding. His short area burst lets him bounce to the outside when the middle is clogged. He is a good downhill runner with the slippery moves and change of direction agility to get through trash. He knows how to get skinny through tight creases, thanks to his strong leg drive, as he is the type of ball carrier with the ability to move the piles. He runs with good awareness and body lean, but also has the agility to bounce outside when he generates a short burst.

*Outside Running*...Sanders has that low center of gravity and plant-&-drive ability to put his foot firmly in the ground and cut on a dime. He just has those natural instincts that franchise backs need. He has a nice feel and awareness to anticipate openings and uses his blocks well to set up. With his vision, once he gets into the open, he is very elusive. He not only has the vision to move laterally, but also the power to take the ball up the gut. When he is captured for a loss in the backfield, it is usually the result of blocks breaking down in front of him. If he turns the corner with a full head of steam, the race is over. He shifts gears naturally and can make crisp cuts to turn and head up field. Even when running at full speed, he knows how to use his blockers, especially when he attempts to square up on contact.

*Tackle-Breaking Strength*...Sanders is elusive with his lateral quickness, but is no ballerina. He is the type that uses head and shoulder fakes, along with good hip snap to make defenders miss when navigating through a crowd. He is very light on his feet and knows how to vary his speed to lull the defender in and then execute a short burst to pull away. He can spin and break the tackle down in the short area and is quick to plant and drive into a new direction. He also shows good hip shake, and is never hesitant turning the corner and this prevents the defense to recover. He can make his opponent miss in space and is equally effective running in the open areas.

Sanders is very effective eluding defenders with his lateral slide and veer moves, knowing how to combine them with his burst. He can generate enough space to pull away from the defender, thanks to his dart ability.

*Receiving Skills*...Sanders has shown he is becoming a natural hands catcher who could become a nice weapon lined wide or in the slot in a multiple receiver formation. He does a good job of extending and plucking the ball outside his frame and shows good hand/eye coordination to take the screen, turn and head up field without breaking stride. He is not used much on deep routes, but with his hip snap and body torso he appears capable of getting adjusted to get to the ball over his outside shoulder. He shows good hand placement and leaping ability to high point the throws and the field awareness to get into position to make the play.

*Blocking Ability*...Much like his outside running and short area catching ability, Sanders has shown marked improvement as a blocker, especially when attacking second level defenders or when remaining in pocket protection to neutralize the blitz. He might not be a 240-pound bruiser, has a good concept for angling when blocking in the second level and knows how to throw a punch and deliver a shoulder when chipping vs. first level types. He will show good knee bend and pop in pass protection, but if he exposes his body, a defender can push him back into the pocket.

He shows good intent and aggression chipping on edge rushers and gives the quarterback enough room to operate when protecting the pocket. He will not hesitate to face up and fight for position blocking in-line and makes a determined effort to engage. He is a good contact seeker in space, taking good angles when cut blocking.

*Compares To*...Mark Ingram-Baltimore Ravens...Sanders is taller than Ingram, but like the former Saint, there is no one area of Sanders’ game that you immediately notice and say “gotta have a guy like that.” That is, until you see the quiet efficiency he plays the game, always alert to his surroundings. He’s not a “me first” type and is always looking out for the team’s success than his own. That is what makes him a “wish I had a guy like that” as a teammate.

THIS CYCLONE IS READY TO STORM THE NFL

David Montgomery-#32

Iowa State University Cyclones

5:10.1-222

*Agility Tests.*..4.58 in the 40-yard dash…1.63 10-yard dash…2.69 20-yard dash…4.23 20-yard shuttle…7.12 three-cone drill…28 1/2-inch vertical jump…10'01" broad jump…Bench pressed 225 pounds 15 times…31 3/8-inch arm length…9 1/4-inch hands…77 3/8-inch wingspan.

*Background*...The Big Ten Conference schools, especially Ohio State, might be regretting not pursuing Montgomery on the recruiting trails. A duel-threat quarterback at Mount Healthy High School, the Cincinnati native was named the Division III Ohio Player of the Year by the Associated Press in 2015, the same year he also was the Southwest District Offensive Player of the Year.

Montgomery had rushed for at least 200 yards in thirteen games during his prep days, as the three-time all-state selection rushed for 6,666 yards and 91 touchdowns in his four-year career. He reached the end zone eleven times while passing for 685 yards, adding 1,783 rushing yards with 22 more scores as a sophomore. During his junior season, ran for 1,951 yards and 22 touchdowns, as he threw for 836 yards and seven scores.

Rated a three-star recruit by Scout and ESPN, Montgomery ranked as the 67th-best running back nationally by Scout . He recorded the 21st-highest rushing total in the state of Ohio prep history with 2,707 yards as a senior, scoring 41 times while averaging 10.1 yards per attempt in 2015. He posted seven 200-yard games and three 300-yard games that year, including rambling for a career-high 373 yards vs. Edgewood. He also passed for 726 yards and seven scores to help his team finish 8-4 and make the regional semifinals.

Montgomery chose to attend Iowa State over offers from Illinois, Purdue, Indiana and Marshall. Campus Insiders tabbed him Freshman All-American honorable mention, as he recorded one of the finest seasons by a Cyclone rookie rusher. Playing in all 12 games, starting the final four contests, he led the team in rushing with 563 yards on 109 carries, averaging 5.2 yards per attempt while scoring twice. His rushing total was the second-best season effort by a Cyclone freshman in school history.

Montgomery also caught 13 passes for 129 yards, as he averaged 113.7 yards per game and 6.1 yards per carry over the final three games. In his second career start, he rushed for a season-high 169 yards, including 105 after intermission, on 24 carries to help the Cyclones defeat Kansas. He was named Big Telve Conference Newcomer of the Week after tallying the fifth-best single-game rushing effort by a freshman in school history vs. the Jayhawks. He then racked up his second 100-yard game with 141 yards on 21 carries vs. West Virginia. He also caught four passes for 45 yards vs. the Mountaineers.

Montgomery was his own version of the movie "catch me if you can" in 2017, as the first-team All-American selection by The NFL Draft Report and Pro Football Focus, as he led the nation in forced missed tackles (109), the most in a season by an FBS player since PFF began tracking the stat in 2014. He was also chosen first-team All-Big Twelve Conference, as the Doak Walker Award watch list member was the recipient of his team's Ray Scott Outstanding Offensive Skill Player Award.

Starting all thirteen games, Montgomery ranked third in the league in rushing yards per game (88.2), as he became the 14th Cyclone rusher in school history to reach the 1,000-yard barrier (1,146 yards), which rank 17th on ISU’s season record book. He had six 100-yard rushing games, tying for ninth on ISU’s season list, and 11 rushing touchdowns, ranking third in the league. He was also a threat as a receiver, ranking fifth on the team in receptions (36) and compiling 296 receiving yards. His 36 grabs rank second among ISU running backs in a season.

Montgomery averaged 111.0 yards per game from scrimmage. He had one lost fumble in 294 touches. He gained 127 yards on the ground and had 46 receiving yards vs. Akron. He rushed for three touchdowns and had 68 rushing yards vs. Kansas. He then posted a season-high 164 rushing yards vs. Texas Tech, including a season-long 58-yard scamper, followed by three-straight 100-yard games vs. West Virginia (115), Oklahoma State (105) and Baylor (144).

The junior was again a first-team All-American choice by The NFL Draft Report and Pro Football Focus in 2018. He added All-Big Twelve and Academic All-Conference honors, as the Jason Witten Man of the Year semifinalist became the fourth player in school history to earn All-American honors in multiple seasons. One of the best running backs nationally for the second-straight season, starting eleven of twelve games played.

Montgomery ranked third in the league and 23rd nationally in rushing yards per game (101.3). He broke the 1,000-yard rushing barrier for the second consecutive year (1,216), becoming the eighth Cyclone with multiple 1,000-yard seasons. His 1,216 yards ranks 12th on ISU’s season list. He had seven 100-yard rushing games, tying for third on ISU’s season list, and 13 rushing touchdowns, tying for second in the Big Twelve and ninth on ISU’s season list, while leading the nation in forced missed tackles according to Pro Football Focus for the second-straight year (99).

The junior also caught 22 passes for 157 yards. He registered a streak of four-straight 100-yard rushing games, tying for the fifth-best string in school history. He had one lost fumble in 279 touches and was successful on 5-of-6 fourth-down conversion chances. He registered first 100-yard game of the year vs. Akron with 107 yards and then recorded 101 yards and a touchdown vs. TCU.

After Montgomery missed the Oklahoma State game with a shoulder injury, he came back vs. West Virginia, battering the Mountaineers with a career-high 189 rushing yards and a touchdown. He posted two rushing touchdowns and 125 yards on the ground vs. Texas Tech and rushed for 149 yards, averaging 7.8 yards per carry, as he tied his career best with three rushing touchdowns vs. Kansas State. He posted 147 yards on the ground vs. Drake and rushed for 124 yards and a touch-down vs. Washington State in the Alamo Bowl. He also had a career-long 53-yard catch vs. the Cougars.

Montgomery ended his career with 2,925 rushing yards (sixth in ISU history), 26 rushing touchdowns (eighth in ISU history), fifteen 100-yard rushing games (third in ISU history) and 3,507 all-purpose yards (sixth in ISU history). His 71 career receptions for 582 ranks fifth all-time by an ISU running back. On 624 carries, his opponents recorded 208 missed tackles. He also generated 3,507 all-purpose yards for the Cyclones.

*The Scouting Report*

*Athletic Ability.*..Montgomery has a very good frame with room for additional growth. He has a V-shaped upper body torso with thick, muscular arms, broad shoulders and a tight abdomen. He has a good bubble with thick and developed thighs and calves. He also possesses the hands needed to secure the ball properly before running. He possesses a fine blend of power and size to carry the brunt of the rushing load. He may lack explosive speed, but he is quick out of his stance, building acceleration nicely to get past the line of scrimmage. He is not the type of back that will try to elude the defender in the open, but has the raw power to easily break arm tackles.

He makes sharp cuts and shows good vision for the cutback lanes and has the lower body strength to move the pile. The thing you see on film is the way he consistently bounces off tackles, thanks to his thick upper body frame and thrust off the snap. He keeps his feet on the move and has a decent burst to clear trash. His balance and foot quickness, along with loose hips, lets him consistently redirect on the move. He is a durable athlete who suffered only one injury that cost him playing time during his Iowa State career (did hurt his right groin at the Combine, also).

*Initial Quickness*...Montgomery won’t suddenly explode through the rush lanes, but he gets out of his stance quickly and builds his acceleration nicely to clear the line of scrimmage. He runs with good body lean and balance and gets to top speed nicely when running into the second level. His in-stride quickness and body control allow him to adjust his direction to reach the cutback lane. He has a valid short burst to surprise a lethargic defender, but his speed is more evident in the hole and after initial contact. In 2018 (see West Virginia, Drake games), he showed a much quicker first step and vastly improved balance coming out of his cuts.

*Acceleration/Burst*...Montgomery can get to top speed quickly and he has shown a better second gear to break it open for long runs. He has good balance and a smooth running stride in space and has enough competitive speed to take the ball into the second level. He is much more efficient bouncing out to the corners (see 2018 Akron, West Virginia Texas Tech games) than he did in the past, as the knee rehabilitation has made him much more effective making precise cuts to burst past the defender.

*Instincts/Balance*...Montgomery is a very patient runner and it is rare to see him not set up his blocks. He has the peripheral vision to scan the field and make smooth in-stride adjustments to separate and he is very quick to find the cutback lane. He is very good at anticipating the defensive coverage and excels at reading the blocks in front of him. You can see in 2018 his ability to locate the cutback lanes and his feel for letting his blocks develop. (see Texas Tech, Kansas, Drake games).

*Inside Running*...Montgomery hits the holes with good stride and strength, keeping his pads down and sinking his weight to fluidly redirect. He follows his blockers well and has greatly improved his creativity as a senior (offensive line play is marginal, resulting in Montgomery having to improvise more often). His body lean and balance lets him break the initial tackle and he shows the awareness for knowing when to pick and slide. His short area burst is functional enough for him to use to bounce outside when the rush lanes are clogged. When he keeps his pads down, he is tough to contain in the inside running lanes.

The junior has never had a ball security issue (just three fumbles on 624 carries). He is conscious of protecting the ball through traffic and does a good job of shielding the pigskin from defenders on pass routes. His effort and drive is good taking the ball up the middle and also demonstrates the second gear to elude along the perimeter. He runs hard and ends most of his carries going forward.

*Outside Running*...Montgomery compensates for a lack of explosive speed with his balance and vision, as he is very good at setting up the defender with his initial juke move. He won’t win many foot races down the sidelines though, as he still needs to show he has the pure speed to turn the corner. His best outside runs have come from starting up field and bouncing outside with a short area burst. His body control and balance in 2018 is greatly improved, forcing defenses to change their pursuit angles (see Texas Tech, Drake games).

Montgomery won’t shock smaller, faster defenders out of their cleats, but vs. the linebackers and linemen, he is very good at executing hard, precise cuts to get the opponent off balance. He won’t constantly shift his weight in attempts to separate, but has the power to drive through tackles. He has the lateral slide and veer moves to avoid, but you really can’t label him as an elusive runner. He is very precise stepping in and out of holes and when he can’t avoid tacklers, he utilizes his juking moves and leg drive to power through.

*Tackle-Breaking Strength*...Montgomery consistently finishes his runs with good balance and forward body lean. He won’t pulverize a defender, but has the strength and pad level to break initial tackles for additional yardage. He does a good job of keeping his pads down in order to drive through the opponent while keeping his balance. He has shown that he is capable of being a hard runner in space (see 2018 Oklahoma, TCU, Texas games) and is one of the better backs at gaining yards after initial contact (opponents had 208 missed tackles on 624 carries).

You will never see Montgomery take a play off, as he performs as if the next snap is his last. He is a tough runner who has had to create a lot of running room on his own behind a suspect offensive line, yet he never complains about the hand he has been dealt. He has the vision to quickly locate the cutback lanes and the patience to allow his blocks to develop. He is one of the more alert runners in the 2019 draft class and has had to be very creative, as he operates behind a suspect offensive line (generally has to create his own running room).

*Receiving Skills*...While used mostly on short area routes, Montgomery has the natural hands and extension to get to the ball outside his frame and at its high point. You would hope that the offense would let him line up wide for a few plays, as he is good to come out of his breaks and makes sharp open field cuts. He has ease of movement extending for the ball and shows no flinch competing for the pass in a crowd. He keeps his feet on the move and does a nice job of adjusting to the ball in flight.

Montgomery rarely gets the chance to display his route running ability, but you can see that he has the plant-&-drive agility to come out of his breaks without having to break stride. He is used more on screens and dump-offs, but he shows the ability to look the ball in (see 2018 Texas, Washington State games) and is quick to get into his patterns. He has the flexibility to adjust to the ball in flight, doing a nice job of catching over his outside shoulder.

*Blocking Ability*...Montgomery is never going to shy away from contact and is more of a stalker in the open field. He has good balance attacking the defender and shows good angles to shorten the field in attempts to neutralize the linebackers. He is a contact seeker who will square up and counter the defender’s moves. He needs to hold his blocks a bit longer when working in-line, but he makes every effort to engage and sustain. His cut blocking skills are good, but what he does best is mirror the pass rusher, stepping up and being very decisive when delivering his hands to shock and jolt.

*Compares To*...Kareem Hunt-Cleveland Browns...Like Hunt, Montgomery might lack explosive speed, but his lower body strength, balance and body control allow him to shift his weight, sink his pads and drive through arm tackles. He is an efficient receiver out of the backfield and adds to his resume as a gunner on special teams. He quietly goes about his job and is slowly developing into a solid cut blocker. He also seems to get stronger as the game wears on.

NOTHING FANCY WHERE HARRIS IS CONCERNED, AS CONSISTENCY IS HIS CALLING CARD

Damien Harris-#34

University of Alabama Crimson Tide

5:10.1-216

*Agility Tests.*..4.57 in the 40-yard dash…1.61 10-yard dash…2.71 20-yard dash…37-inch vertical jump…10'01" broad jump…Bench pressed 225 pounds 16 times…30 3/4-inch arm length…9 3/4-inch hands…72 7/8-inch wingspan.

*Background*...For the good of the team, is how Harris might describe his work overload for the Crimson Tide. While his backup, Josh Jacobs, is getting all of the first round draft attention, the team's featured back quietly goes about his business - like he always has - for the good of the team.

Harris was the 2014 Kentucky Gatorade High School Player of the Year in 2014, as being rated the best ball carrier in the nation coming out of Madison Southern High School. The Rivals.com five-star recruit finished his prep career with the second-most touchdowns in state history (122 total; 113 rushing) and the 11th-most rushing yards (6,748), despite being limited to seven appearances as a senior, due to a knee injury.

After Harris rushed for 2,621 yards and 42 touchdowns as a junior, he tacked on 1,474 yards and 23 scores during his abbreviated senior campaign. He was healthy enough to end his prep days by participating in the 2015 Under Armour All-America Game. A two-time performer at Nike's "The Opening" (2013 and 2014), he was also selected the 2013 Gatorade Kentucky Player of the Year and was a two-time The Courier-Journal All-State selection.

Harris chose to attend the University of Alabama over offers from Ohio State and Kentucky. He would serve as the primary backup to Heisman Trophy winner Derrick Henry, as the freshman rushed 46 times for 157 yards and a score while catching four passes for 13 yards in 2015. He ranked second on the team with nine kickoff returns for 174 yards including a long of 30. He also had two tackles on special teams.

In the Middle Tennessee clash, he ran eight times for a season-high 55 yards, including a long rush of 41 with one reception for eight yards, adding to an Alabama rushing attack that amassed 220 yards on the ground. He also notched one tackle on special teams. In the Charleston Southern game, Harris saw the most extensive playing time of his freshman season, rushing a ten 10 times for 44 yards, as he added the first touchdown of his career, a six yard rush to the right side.

As a sophomore, Harris earned the role as the Tide's primary tailback following the departure of Heisman Trophy winner Derrick Henry. He rushed 146 times for a team-leading 1,037 yards with two rushing scores. He was even better against ranked teams, gaining 863 yards in those ten games for an average of 86.3 yards per game. All told, 58 of his carries went for a first down or a touchdown, as he had 18 explosive rushes of twelve yards or more and caused his opponents to miss on 32 tackles. He seemed to get stronger as the game wore on, rushing 61 times for 489 yards and two scores in the second halves of games to average 8.0 yards per clip.

Harris added 14 catches for 99 yards and two touchdowns to average 7.1 yards. He was named one of the UA coaching staff's offensive players of the week for his performances vs. USC, Ole Miss, Texas A&M and Chattanooga. He had a breakout game against the Trojans, using nine carries to rush for a team-leading 138 yards in his first career start that included had long rushes of 46 and 73 yards.

Against Ole Miss, he put together the best game of his sophomore season, rushing for a then career-high 16 times for a career-high 144 total yards and a score while catching a pair of passes. Seven of his rushes went for a first down or a touchdown vs. the Rebels and he broke out in the second half, accumulating 115 yards on 10 carries with a touchdown. He exited the Kent State in the first quarter with a lower leg injury, but two weeks later, he registered his third 100-plus yard game of his career, going for 122 yards on 13 carries to average 9.4 yards per tote with a long of 57. He also caught a pair of passes for a career-high 60 yards with a long reception of 56 yards.

In 2017, Harris was Alabama's leading rusher for a second consecutive season, finishing with 1,000 yards on only 135 carries, after tallying a team-high 1,037 yards in 2016. He collected three 100-yard rushing performances as a junior. He averaged 7.4 yards per rush with a team-high 11 touchdowns and added 12 receptions for 91 yards. His yards per carry average ranks second all-time in Alabama history for a single season by Tide backs with at least 100 carries.

Harris ranked seventh nationally in yards per carry average. On the Maxwell Award Watch List and the Doak Walker Award watch lists. he was named the SEC Offensive Player of the Week for his performance at Vanderbilt, as he put together his best performance of the season. He rushed 12 times for a season-high 151 yards and three touchdowns, as he had a season-long rush of 61 yards for the Tide's second score of the day and his first of three. Seven of his 12 carries went for a first down or a touchdown, as he led all backs in yards and carries in the Crimson Tide's 496-yard rushing effort against the Commodores.

Against Florida State, he earned offensive player of the week recognition from the Tide staff. He made an impact in more than one facet of the game, as he led the Alabama rushers with nine carries for a team-high 73 yards and one score, averaging 8.1 yards per tote with a long of 34 on the Tide's first play. He added one reception for 11 yards and on special teams, he blocked a Seminole punt to give UA the ball on the FSU 6-yard line.

In the Arkansas contest, Harris collected his third 100-plus yard performance of the season, totaling 125 yards and two scores on just nine carries (13.9 ypc). He also matched his career-long rush with a 75-yard run on the first play of the game while also carrying for four yards on his second rushing touchdown of the night. He hauled in one reception out of the backfield for an eight-yard gain and six of his nine carries went for a first down or a touchdown.

As a senior, Harris was selected to the All-Southeastern Conference second team by the league's coaches after he accumulated a team-leading 876 yards with nine scores on a team-high 150 carries for an average of 5.8 yards per tote in 2018. He totaled 44 carries for a first down or touchdown and owns the longest rush by a Tide running back in 2018 at 73 yards. Opponents missed on 22 tackles and he added 22 receptions for 204 yards for an average of 9.3 yards per catch.

Harris was selected as one of the Alabama coaching staff’s offensive players of the week for his efforts at Ole Miss, Texas A&M, Arkansas and LSU. In the clash vs. Mississippi, he accumulated 85 all-purpose yards in just over a half of play in Oxford. He carried five times for a team-leading 62 yards and a score to average a whopping 12.4 yard average. Against Texas A&M, he totaled 100 yards of total offense with 52 on the ground and 48 through the air, rushing seven times for 52 yards and catching two passes for 48 yards with a season-long 52-yard catch.

Harris followed with a season-high 111 yards and two touchdowns on 15 carries, as he had six rushes of 11 yards or more while converting six first downs and his two scores vs. Arkansas. He notched his second 100-plus yard performance of the season, totaling 107 yards on 19 carries with one score vs. LSU, as he added three receptions for six yards for 113 all-purpose yards vs. the Tigers. He left The Citadel contest early due to a leg injury.

Harris, who passed up entering the NFL Draft to return for his senior season, totaled 3,070 career yards to rank eighth all-time at UA and make him one of just eight backs in program history to eclipse the 3,000-yard mark. He averaged 6.4 yards per carry on 477 carries for his career to set the Alabama all-time career mark (minimum 400 rushes). He registered nine 100-yard performances for his career, including two in 2018, to tie for ninth in UA annals. He fumbled just four times and recorded 93 missed tackles by his opponents.

Harris pulled down 52 passes for 407 yards (7.8 ypc) and a pair of scores. He posted five tackles (4 solos) on special teams, where he also generated 174 yards on nine kickoff returns (19.3 avg) and 19 yards on a punt runback. That gave him 3,670 all-purpose yards in 56 appearances, an average of 65.5 yards per game.

*The Scouting Report*

*Athletic Ability.*.. Harris has a well-developed, athletic physique with defined upper body muscles, tight waist and hips, good bubble, thick thighs and calves and low body fat, but his frame is at maximum growth potential and any more weight would impact his already adequate speed.

Harris is a well-built athlete, but has just average quickness. He compensates with his agility, balance and ability to come out of his stance low to generate enough initial quickness into the holes. He shows good, but not great strength and has the leg drive to have defenders draped on him to be dragged for extra yardage, as he shows good forward body lean. He has just adequate change of direction agility, but shows good flexibility and the functional acceleration coming off the snap, just lacking breakaway speed.

*Initial Quickness*...Harris has good initial quickness, but lacks explosiveness or a second gear to negotiate long distance runs. He is really like most Iowa running backs – more quick than fast. He can make quick cuts at the hole, but loses his power base when he hops up in his stance, at times. He does make quick decisions with the ball in his hands to hit the holes in a hurry. He shows functional cutting ability and does not need to gear down approaching the line, but he does not generate the sudden burst that would allow him to gain advantage getting into the second level

Harris has a decent short area burst in his turns, but lacks great acceleration in the open. He has a good feel for the cutback lance and some bounce in his step, but is best taking the ball up the middle than try to dance to the outside. He is just not going to run away from too many people. He does a good job of varying his speed, showing good cut back ability to bounce off tackle. When taking the ball around the edge, he lacks the top-end speed to challenge the secondary.

*Instincts/Balance*...The thing that you notice immediately about Harris is his change of direction agility and body control. When the rush lane is clogged, he’s has the feel to redirect and bounce outside, but does not have the speed to take the ball to the house down the sidelines. He shows the vision needed to see threats and plays the hand that he is dealt. While he won’t explode past the line, he shows patience setting up his blocks and has the balance and body lean to gain positive yardage falling forward.

Along with adequate initial quickness, there are times when Harris takes too many false steps and he might have a harder time turning the corner at the NFL level until his footwork improves. He just doesn't show a second gear when he gets into space and I doubt that he will be able to outrun NFL defenders. Still, he bounces off arm tackles and has above-average but not elite balance. He is not the type who is going to make many defenders miss in space, but when he runs at the right pad level, he can make the crisp first cut and can cutback vs. the grain.

*Inside Running*...Harris is a physical inside runner whose playing strength is better than his weight room figures. He has the short area quickness to get into the hole and can create if the crease is closed. He shows a good burst in his turns, just lacking suddenness in his change of direction, but has good vision. He can find the hole, but will sometimes run too upright, resulting in him being susceptible to ankle tackles (needs to generate better knee lift).

Harris consistently attacks the hole and punishes defenders. He is patient, as he waits for blockers to open the hole. He does display solid flexibility and with his stiff-arm and square shoulder pads, he is able to knock the tackler backward. I like the way he falls forward for an extra yard or two when going down. He has to work on his lift, but he does a good job of keeping his legs churning after contact. He won't elude, but Harris is able to run through arm tackles and keep his feet against hard hits. He has the good leg drive to take defenders for extra yardage and consistently finishes his runs, falling forward to gain additional yardage to end each attempt. He has good vision for the cutback and while he won't win too many foot races, he does have quick feet to bounce laterally and accelerate into the open field past second level defenders.

*Outside Running*...Harris does not show the explosive burst to consistently get around the corner. Is able to make sharp cuts. He is effective running through defensive back and linebacker tackles on the edge, though. When he tries to bounce outside, he lacks pick-&-slide ability. When he goes wide, he just does not have the speed to turn the corner, as he lacks that extra gear, but he can run over second level defenders impacting on the edge (just not able to elude them).

Harris is really a downhill runner who attacks the line of scrimmage. He is quick to recognize the hole and takes what the defense gives him. He has valid flexibility and use of leverage for a back of his size. When he runs with a very low pad level, it gives defenders little to hit between his knees and shoulder pads, which is one of the reasons why he bounces off of some many tackles.

*Tackle-Breaking Strength*...Harris is not a “make you miss” type, but when he gets a short burst off the snap, he shows quick cutting agility. He can also make the jump cut, showing the vision to avoid. The thing that sets him apart from most is that he has the ability to improvise, but once he gets into the second level, he will generally get caught from behind by smaller, quicker defenders (does better vs. linemen and linebackers). He is not going to go down easy, even from gang tackles. He lacks weight room strength, but has the lower body power to push the pile when he keeps his pads down. When he runs high in his stance, his base gets a little too narrow. He has enough leg drive to run through arm tackles and very seldom gets knocked back through the rush lanes when he keeps his pad level low.

*Receiving Skills*...Like most Alabama running backs, it is too few the opportunities he gets as a receiver, even on controlled routes. He does struggle to look the ball in and will generally trap it rather than reach and extend. Unless he can develop a better feel for the passing game, he will find himself on the bench in third-down passing situations. He has problems tracking the ball in flight and while he runs decent routes, they are rounded (makes soft angle cuts). He knows how to settle in the zone and is a strong runner after the catch, but has to develop moves to set up the corners in man coverage.

*Blocking Ability*...Harris is not asked to block much, but he is a team-oriented type that will face up to bigger defenders. He needs to work on his cut blocking in pass protection, but has the hip snap and power to impact when he makes a proper block. He just seems to lack the awareness to get a piece of the linebacker when picking up the blitz.

*Compares To*...Lamar Miller-Houston Texans...Like Miller, there is nothing flashy about Harris' game, as he is more of a consistent type. While not a blazer, he does run with good body lean, vision, and instincts. He possesses a runner’s patience to let the play develop and he drives his legs on contact, working to finish. He has an initial burst and can hop cut in the hole and get into the second level, but he is more of a between tackles runner, as he can get caught from behind. He does follow and utilize his blockers well and he can see the whole picture, especially when running the inside zone stretch play.

THIS TIGER ALWAYS RUNS WITH A FULL TANK

Darrell Henderson-#8

University of Memphis Tigers

5:08.3-208

*Agility Tests.*..4.49 in the 40-yard dash…1.42 10-yard dash…2.48 20-yard dash…4.41 20-yard shuttle…7.03 three-cone drill…33 1/2-inch vertical jump…10'-01" broad jump…Bench pressed 225 pounds 22 times…31-inch arm length…8 5/8-inch hands…73 7/8-inch wingspan.

*Background*...Henderson continues to impress and dumfound scouts at the same time. The slashing-style running back lacks great size and with his narrow base, one would think he would be stopped by the initial tackle, yet, on 428 rushing attempts, he beat the first tackler and made his opponents miss 106 times (24.77%). With 22 touchdowns to his credit last season, teams envision him as the perfect big-play compliment for a team that already has a big, short-yardage ball carrier in place.

Henderson would easily find a home in a spread-based offense - perhaps, as the replacement for Tevin Coleman on the Atlanta Falcons roster. Before he arrived at Memphis, the speedy ball carrier attended South Panola High School in Batesville, Mississippi, where he amassed 5,801 and 68 touchdowns on the ground. An early graduate who enrolled at Memphis in January, 2016, he was a 2014 Clarion Ledger Dandy Dozen selection and named the Mississippi Gatorade Football Player of the Year.

Henderson was also honored as the 2014 Best of MS Preps Player of the Year and was named to the Parade magazine All-American honorable mention list. His 5,801 yards rushing ranks eighth in the state of Mississippi high school football history. He accomplished that feat on 847 career carries, posting career rushing averages of 109.5 yards per game and 6.8 yards per attempt.

Henderson also caught 39 passes for 559 yards and seven scores in his career, generating 75 career touchdowns (68 rushing/seven receiving). He ran for 2,024 yards as a junior and gained 2,253 yards with 32 touchdowns his senior year, helping lead South Panola to the state Class 6A championship and a seventh-place finish in the national ranking in 2014.

As a true freshman at Memphis, Henderson saw action in all thirteen games and made six starts in the Tigers offensive backfield while also playing on the special teams. He was the squad’s third-leading rusher with 482 yards on 87 carries (5.5 ypc) while participating in 296 snaps. He was second on team with five rushing touchdowns and hauled in 20 receptions for 237 yards and three scores. He also added two kick returns for 113 yards and one touchdown - a 99-yard runback in a road win at SMU, which was the second-longest return in school history.

In 2017, Henderson missed the post-season due to a leg injury, but started ten of the twelve games that he appeared in. He led the Tigers with 1,154 yards on 130 carries, scoring nine times, as he became the program’s first 1,000-yard rushing season since Curtis Steele in 2012. The 1,154 yards are the sixth-most for a season in school history. He also had seven 100-yard rushing games, the fourth-most for a season in program history and logged two rushing plays of 80 or more yards (80 vs. UCLA; 82 vs. Tulane). The two rushing plays of 80 or more yards are the first time a player has done so in a season since Keith Benton in 1990.

Henderson was second on the team in all-purpose yards (1,630) and fourth in scoring (66 points). The 1,630 all-purpose yards were the fifth-most for a season in school history. He added 24 receptions for 226 yards and two touchdowns, along with 13 kick returns for 250 yards. He ranked among the conference statistical leaders in rushing (fourth) and all-purpose yards (third).His rushing average of 8.88 yards per carry set a new school season-record.

The sophomore ball carrier ran for a season-high 169 yards vs. Louisiana Monroe, as he also had two touchdowns vs. the Warhawks. He rushed for 105 yards, including an 80-yard scamper on Memphis’ first play from scrimmage, vs. UCLA, followed by 112 yards in a home win over Tulane. That game began a string of five-straight 100-yard rushing performances - with 123 yards vs. Tulsa, 147 vs. SMU, 122 vs. ECU and 109 vs. UCF (The American Championship Game). He logged a career-high 278 all-purpose yards in the home win over SMU (147 rush/15 receive/116 return). The 278 all-purpose yards were the fourth-most for a game in program history.

Last season, Henderson was named one of ten semifinalists for the 2018 Doak Walker Award and one of fifteen semifinalists for the Walter Camp Player of the Year Award. He was a second-team All-American and first-team All-American Athletic Conference choice by The NFL Draft Report after he exploded for 1,909 yards and 22 touchdowns on 214 carries, breaking his school record (2017) by averaging 8.92 yards per attempt. He joins D'Angelo Williams as the only Tigers to gain 1,900 yards on the ground during a campaign (Williams rushed for 1,964 yards in 2005 after gaining 1,948 in 2004).

Henderson's 150 points scored broke Williams' previous Memphis record of 138 in 2004. He scored three more times on nineteen catches for 295 yards, as he gained 124 yards on ten kickoff returns and completed one pass for a 4-yard touchdown. He gained at least 100 yards rushing seven times, including three 200-yard performances. Just the third Tiger to rush for over 1,000 yards in multiple seasons, opponents registered 56 missed tackles trying to bring him down.

Henderson tallied 212 yards on thirteen carries with three touchdowns, including a 78-yarder vs. Navy, as he also had an 18-yard reception and 43 yards on three kickoff returns. He followed with fourteen tries for 233 yards and two touchdowns, with a long of 61 vs. Georgia State and then scored twice on 22 attempts for 188 yards to go with 34 yards on two grabs and two kickoff returns for 27 yards vs. South Alabama.

He rushed fourteen times for 174 yards, with a long score of 61 yards among three touchdowns vs. Connecticut before amassing 199 yards on 31 tries vs. Central Florida. Henderson added 210 yards and three touchdowns that included an 82-yarder vs. UCF in the conference title clash, as he also completed a 4-yard pass for a score. He opted against playing in the Birmingham Bowl vs. Wake Forest and shortly after, declared for the 2019 draft.

Henderson ranks second in school history with 3,545 yards rushing, topped by D'Angelo Williams (6,026; 2002-05). He tied Dave Casinelli for second in school annals with 36 touchdown runs (Williams holds the mark with 55) on 431 carries, setting the school and American Athletic Conference all-time records with a rushing average of 8.23 yards. He is second in school annals with sixteen 100-yard rushing performances and second with 4,790 all-purpose yards.

Henderson gained 758 yards and scored eight times on 63 receptions (12.0 ypc), scoring 270 pouints as a Tiger. He completed one pass for a 4-yard score, adding a touchdown on 25 kickoff returns for 487 yards (19.5 avg) in 38 appearances. Opponents were charged with 106 missed tackles, as the ball carrier registered just three fumbles on 521 total touches. He also recorded four tackles (3 solos) for the special team coverage units.

*The Scouting Report*

*Athletic Ability.*.. Henderson has a solid build with a muscular lower body frame, good thickness in his thighs and calves, good bubble, broad shoulders, tight waist, but smaller than ideal hands ( 8 5/8-inches). Henderson has valid initial quickness and timed speed, but it is his exceptional body control and balance in his running stride that really stands out. He keeps his pad level low to generate solid lower body power in attempts to break tackles. He builds to top acceleration and runs with a normal stride. He has adequate change of direction agility and does a good job of twisting and adjusting his body on the move.

He doesn’t have the breakaway speed to pull away from the pile, but his balance and strength let him run over and through the initial tackle when he keeps his pads down. When he tends to get erect and high in his stance, he can be pushed back through the rush lanes. Henderson has a deceptive burst through the holes, displaying very good footwork and balance to clear out trash, as he will lower his head and drive into an opponent on contact. He has the side-step agility to pick his feet up over low tackles and keeps those legs churning through initial contact. He has that “make people miss” lateral agility and does a very good job of sliding and picking working in-line.

*Initial Quickness*...Henderson comes out of his stance with very good initial quickness, but it is his balance and body control, rather than explosion, that helps him build to top speed through the holes. When he keeps his pad level low, he shows a good forward body lean through the rush lanes, but he does tend to get high in his stance at times, causing him to get pushed back through the creases, despite obvious leg strength to break tackles. He has good in-line lateral speed and has that first step and lateral quickness to make second level defenders miss. He won’t generate sudden movement to gain advantage, but does have decent snap quickness.

*Acceleration/Burst*...Henderson is effective at varying his speed and setting up defenders with his moves rather than generating suddenness off the snap. He has a good short area burst, along with the sustained speed to threaten in the deep secondary. He can effectively gain valid yardage past the line of scrimmage, but it is more due to his combination of balance, strength and explosion. He shows a strong stiff-arm to defeat the initial tackle, along with the wiggle and shake to elude. He can build to top speed nicely and has to be considered a valid breakaway threat

*Instincts/Balance*...Henderson protects the football like a mother would protect her child. He might run hard, but keeps the ball secure against his body. Despite small hands, he has very good bicep and hand strength and try as they might, a defender is not going to dislodge the sphere when he has it tucked next to his body. He has excellent balance, doing a nice job of squeezing through tight areas. He shows the vision to quickly recognize coverage and has a good feel for the defender and the power to run through his opponent. He has a natural feel for cutback lanes and the instincts to know when to redirect and bounce outside. He can regularly generate special moves to create much space on his own, and he also has the leg drive to gain valid yardage on the move.

*Inside Running*... Henderson attacks the inside crease with no hesitation, but is also patient enough to allow his blocks to develop. He keeps his feet working through trash, thanks to his above average balance. He is always running at a good pad level and it is rare to see defenders take him down in isolated situations. He also shows good timing and leaping ability on short yardage and goal-line situations. He has that perfect forward body lean of old time runners like Freeman McNeil (Jets) and D'Angelo Williams that surprises defenders when he simply powers through them. If a defender tries to arm tackle him, he has that sudden spin move to simply redirect and then pull away with great acceleration.

*Outside Running*...With Henderson’s running style, he is tough to bring down in man coverage. He does a nice job of lowering his shoulders, leaning forward and driving with his legs to break the initial tackle. He has the change of direction agility to redirect, along with confidence in his impressive pick-and-slide agility. He shows good effort to keep his feet and adjust when navigating through tight areas. He has the agility to bounce to the outside and can long distance races. He also has the initial burst to move the chains consistently.

He is most explosive when trying to reach and turn the corner, as he has that natural vision to locate the short area’s soft spots and clear lanes. He can accelerate on his cuts, as he has valid “make you miss” moves in the open, but relies more on power and balance to gain yardage after initial contact. He is more comfortable as a straight-line, north-south runner rather than execute nifty moves to elude. He has the vision to adjust and the awareness to recognize coverages. He has functional lateral quickness, but it is rare to see him juke and disappear from the pile turning the corner. He is better off setting up tacklers and running off his blocks, as he has the leg drive, foot balance and hip snap to be more effective as a power back

*Receiving Skills*...Despite smaller than ideal hands, Henderson is a very good, natural hands catcher who is used often on screens, options and in controlled routes. He has the burst needed to separate and does a nice job of keeping eye relationship on the ball, timing his leaps to get to the pass at the high point. He can also line up in the slot, showing good awareness to settle in the zone to get to the underneath balls. When lined wide, he uses his second gear and hip swerve to con the defender and elude down the sidelines.

*Blocking Ability*...For a featured back to take on a role as a physical blocker is rare, but Henderson has that blue collar work ethic where he does not mind facing up and taking on blitzers when protecting the pocket. He’s not used as a lead blocker, but he has the strong arms, square shoulders and lowers his head properly to widen the rush lane, if needed. He hits with good force to ride out the smaller defenders in the second level, but needs to stay on those blocks longer, as second level defenders can usually recover and get back into the action when he just hits and bounces off.

*Compares To*...D'Angelo Williams-ex-Carolina Panthers... Henderson plays the game as if the next carry is his last. He is a true warrior on the field, one that won’t come to the sidelines when injured, feeling he will then let the team down. He is a strong inside pounder, but can also bounce off tackles, as he always gives second, third effort upon contact. He works hard in the weight room and practices, as his work ethic rubs off on other teammates.

THIS COWBOY IS A VALID HOME RUN THREAT WITH THE BALL IN HIS HANDS

Justice Hill-#5

Oklahoma State University Cowboys

5:09.5-198

*Agility Tests.*..4.40 in the 40-yard dash…1.56 10-yard dash…2.60 20-yard dash…40-inch vertical jump…10'-10" broad jump…Bench pressed 225 pounds 21 times…31 5/8-inch arm length…9 1/2-inch hands…74 7/8-inch wingspan.

*Background*...The three-star recruit soon turned into a blue chip prospect for head coach Mike Gundy's Cowboys. The coach followed through with his recruiting promise to the ball carrier, as Hill soon saw himself starting ten games as a freshman. Prior to putting on a Cowboys uniform, the speedy tailback competed in track and football at Booker T. Washington High School in Tulsa.

Hill helped lead the team to a 10-1 season with an appearance in the state semifinals as a senior, as he was an all-state selection and the 6A-II offensive player of the year that season. He had 198 carries for 1,948 yards (9.84 ypc) and 32 touchdowns, adding 12 catches for 103 yards. His best performance came when he ran for 276 yards and five touchdowns vs. Claremore.

During his final season, Hill had a long rush of 98 yards and surpassed 100 yards rushing in every game. As a junior, he totaled 1,426 yards and 22 touchdowns on 219 carries with an average of 6.5 yards per carry and 142.6 yards per game. He also competed in track and field, and was a member of the National Honor Society and actively involved with Men of Power.

In 2016, Hill produced the top freshman rushing season in Oklahoma State history with 1,142 yards. That mark led all FBS freshmen in 2016 and surpassed the OSU freshman rushing record set by Mike Hamilton in 2005 (961 yards) and the OSU true freshman season mark that was set by Thurman Thomas in 1984 (843 yards). His 1,142 rushing yards were the fifth-most for a freshman in Big Twelve Conference history. In addition to being the only OSU freshman to ever surpass 1,000 rushing yards in a season, he is the only freshman in school history to rush for 100 yards in six games. No other Cowboy freshman has done it more than three times.

Even more impressive, all six of his 100-yard games came vs. Power Five conference opponents, including a season-high 162 rushing yards in OSU’s win over Kansas, as he tallied the second-highest rushing total ever for an OSU true freshman, trailing only Thurman Thomas’s 206 rushing yards vs. Kansas State in 1984. His average of 105.9 rushing yards per game (on 5.8 yards per carry) in Big Twelve play ranked third in the league and he’s the only freshman who ranked in the top ten rushers in the league.

Hill played in all thirteen games and started the final ten, becoming the only OSU true freshman to start a game during the season and one of just nine to play at all. His other 100-yard games included his first career start at Baylor (122), the following game vs. Texas (135), Texas Tech (126 yards), TCU (126 yards) and in the Cowboys’ Alamo Bowl win over No. 10 Colorado (100 yards). He scored six rushing touchdowns, with one each vs. Baylor, Texas, Iowa State, Kansas, Texas Tech and Colorado.

Hill led the team in rushing yards and in carries with 206, becoming OSU’s first 1,000-yard rusher in a season since Joseph Randle in 2012. He added 46 yards on five receptions and ranked second on the team behind only James Washington with 1,188 all-purpose yards and second behind only Mason Rudolph in total offense with 1,142. He was named the Big Twelve Newcomer of the Week for his performances vs. Baylor, Texas and Kansas.

Hill earned CoSIDA Academic All-America first-team honors. One of ten national semifinalists for the Doak Walker Award, presented to the nation’s top running back and a first-team All-Big Twelve honoree by both the coaches and the Associated Press, he was one of only five players in the league in 2017 who appeared as a first-team selection to both the All-Big Twelve team and the Academic All-Big Twelve team.

On 268 carries, Hill's 1,467 rushing yards led the league by a wide margin, as the Big Twelve's second-leading rusher had 1,146. His rushing total ranked second among FBS sophomores (Devin Singletary, FAU - 1,920 yards), ranked 13th nationally and were the third-highest by a sophomore in OSU history, trailing only Thurman Thomas’ 1,650 yards in 1985 and Kendall Hunter’s 1,555 rushing yards in 2008. He also led the conference in rushing yards per game (112.8), rushing attempts (268) and rushing touchdowns (15).

Hill logged the 23rd 1,000-yard rushing season in Oklahoma State history. He helped Oklahoma State become the first team in league history to have a 4,000-yard passer (Mason Rudolph), a 1,000-yard rusher (Hill) and two 1,000-yard receivers (Marcell Ateman and James Washington). His fifteen rushing touchdowns tied Thurman Thomas’ 1985 total for the eighth-most by a Cowboy in a single season in team history. He recorded eight 100-yard rushing performances, which included surpassing 100 rushing yards in a four-game stretch and six of his eight 100-yard performances came vs. Big Twelve opponents, with the lone exception a 132-yard day vs. Tulsa in the season opener and a 120-yard outing vs. Virginia Tech in the Camping World Bowl.

Hill gashed Texas Tech’s defense for 164 yards on 30 carries during Oklahoma State’s 41-34 victory. He scored multiple touchdowns on four occasions, including during a three-game stretch where he scored two at West Virginia, two vs. Oklahoma and three at Iowa State. He rushed for a season-high 228 yards vs. Oklahoma to set an OSU record for rushing yards in a Bedlam game. That record was previously owned by Barry Sanders, who rushed for 215 yards vs. the Sooners in 1988. His 228 rushing yards vs. Oklahoma were the second-most by a Big Twelve running back in a game in 2017, trailing only Kansas’ Khalil Herbert, who rushed for 291 yards vs. West Virginia.

Hill also picked up his production as a receiver during his sophomore year, catching 31 passes for 190 yards. He scored his first career receiving touchdown at Texas Tech and finished second in the league with 1,657 all-purpose yards, and that was with no return yards factored into his total. On 268 carries, opponents missed tackling him 50 times.

A rib injury prevented Hill from playing in the final two regular season games for the Cowboys in 2018, as he also decided not to play in the Liberty Bowl. He generated 930 yards with nine touchdowns on 158 carries through ten appearances, as he made opponents record 33 missed tackles. He also pulled in thirteen passes for 68 yards. He totaled five 100-yard rushing games, picking up 122 yards with a 92-yard score on ten tries vs. Missouri State in the season opener. He scored twice on the ground vs. Alabama before registering three straight 100-yard games - 123 (with a 53-yard score) vs. Boise State, 111 (on 12 tries) vs. Texas Tech and 31 runs for 189 yards and one touchdown at Kansas.

Hill closed out his career with 632 carries for 3,539 yards (5.6 ypc) and thirty touchdowns in 36 appearances. His rushing attempts and yards on the ground rank seventh, and his thirty scoring scampers placed eighth on the school career-record list. He is also eighth with his average gain of 5.59 yards per carry. He snatched 49 passes for 304 yards and one touchdown to generate 3,843 all-purpose yards for the Cowboys.

*The Scouting Report*

*Athletic Ability.*.. Hill has a compact, well-built frame with good upper and lower body muscle definition. He might be a bit undersized, but he generates good power and leg thrust that easily helps when breaking tackles or running through defenders. He runs with suddenness and raw power, as he can just as easily elude or run through tacklers. He shows outstanding acceleration in the open field (see 2018 Missouri State, Boise State games).

With his superb body control, he can readily adjust on the move when trying to avoid. He shows above average balance, flexibility, agility and quickness, along with the sudden burst to instantly reach top end speed. His initial burst is evident, but it is his jitterbug, stop/start action that sets him apart from most backs. He has above average vision, quickly anticipating the coverage and generates very good acceleration in the second level. With his extraordinary speed, he has the ability to cut on a dime and stop-&-start with ease, displaying that special ability needed in an outside running threat.

*Initial Quickness*.. Hill can instantly gain advantage with his suddenness coming off the snap. He has the balance and quickness to avoid on the move and incredible acceleration in the open field (see 2018 Missouri State, Boise State, Texas Tech games). His extremely quick feet lets him get in and out of his cuts with no wasted steps and he also shows excellent lateral movement, along with the explos4ion running down the sidelines. When he gets past the second level, he makes people miss while disappearing into the end zone. He has the ability to get up to speed quickly, but he can also execute jitterbug type of moves when exploding off the snap.

*Acceleration/Burst*...Few runners have the quickness and burst to reach top speed like Hill can. He can fluidly accelerate coming out of his cut and gain separation (see 2018 Texas Tech, Baylor games). With his incredible combination of speed and balance, you can see he not only has that explosive second gear, but can also beat angles with his vision and feel for coverage. He can change gears and accelerate through the holes. Once he gets into the open, his hip swerve and burst gets him free from the defenders quickly.

*Instincts/Balance*...Hill has a great feel for the cutback lanes and with his natural feel and ability in traffic, it is very hard to bring him down. On close to a third of his 2009 non-touchdown carries (54-of-164), it took at least two defenders to bring him down one he got past the line of scrimmage (see 2009 Marshall, Northern Iowa and South Dakota State games). He runs with excellent vision, as he knows how to avoid and find the seam. He has the low center of gravity to navigate and find daylight with his inside runs, uncommon for a back with his size. His instincts with the ball in his hands show in his creativity, as he is always looking to see where holes and lanes are going before they open. He shows great balance and can get extra yards on contact. He lowers his pads and shifts gears instantly to avoid the trash and is very effective changing direction. He does an excellent job of anticipating rushing lanes, shows patience waiting for blocks to develop and is quick to improvise when the holes fail to materialize. He is so instinctive seeing creases and defenders, that by the time the opponent positions to make the tackle, Hill is already shifting down, changing gears and eluding his man.

*Inside Running*...Hill has the natural balance and forward body lean to bounce off the initial contact (teams recorded 116 missed tackles trying to bring him down the last three years). Even though he lacks ideal size and bulk, he has no problem generating a strong inside push, as he will lower his shoulder and keep his legs churning for additional yards. The thing you notice on film is his ability to pick his way through a crowd, as he might be explosive, but is also patient to let the play develop and run off his blocks. He slides and hits the seams quickly, showing above average balance to make the jump cut and power through the crease.

*Outside Running*...Hill has the speed and outstanding acceleration, along with a nice array of hip and head fakes to rock defenders up on their heels. He reads and anticipates well, especially when taking the ball around the corner and easily beats the opponent to the edge. He is a “make you miss” type past the second level (see 2018 Missouri State, Texas Tech games), showing great stamina to take the sphere long distances. With his speed, he can get to the corner in an instant and that burst of his is noticeable heading up field. But, he also has the vision in the open that helps eliminate a defender’s angles. He shows patience waiting for the toss to develop, doing an excellent job of staying low in his pads and changing gears to shift and bounce wide.

*Tackle-Breaking Strength*...Hill is more elusive than a power back, but he has that natural body control to quickly reach his top end speed and does a fine job of accelerating on the cut to gain separation. He is perfectly capable of executing the “juke,” but it is his lateral quickness that will see him disappear from would-be tacklers. He sets up the defender and runs off blocks like a big back, thanks to his loose hips and foot work needed to avoid. He can cut on a dime and the thing you see on film is his ability to do it at full speed! He has above average vision, quick change of direction agility and more than enough explosiveness to his burst to consistently make the first tackler miss.

*Receiving Skills*...Hill does an good job of extending and plucking outside his frame. He shows good flexibility getting into his routes and makes decent adjustments to snare the toss in his hands. More reps are needed, but he is effective when used on screens, options and in controlled routes. He has the burst needed to separate and does a nice job of keeping eye relationship on the ball, timing his leaps to get to the pass at the high point. He shows good acceleration getting into his routes and the hand usage to avoid the jam. He has a good concept and feel for the route’s progression and does a nice job of separating working underneath.

*Blocking Ability*...Because of his size, Hill is limited as an in-line blocker, but he does show good effort and face-up ability blocking vs. edge rushers. He has good “warrior” mentality and will take on bigger athletes, but at the next level, he could be walked back by a stronger opponent. He keeps his hands inside his frame and won’t whiff or duck his head on contact, but is better with the ball in his hands than lead blocking.

*Compares To*...Giovani Bernard-Cincinnati...Hill has a nice blend of speed and low pad level to escape the pile to bounce outside. His quickness is evident by the opposition’s inability to stop him once he gets into the second level. He is still a work in progress as a receiver, but teams will see he is much more than just a change-of-pace back.

THIS TERP HAS TORN UP THE TURF WITH HIS LONG DISTANCE TOUCHDOWN RUNS

Ty Marquese Johnson-#24

University of Maryland Terrapins

5:10.6-212

*Agility Tests.*..4.34 in the 40-yard dash…1.54 10-yard dash…2.49 20-yard dash…3.98 20-yard shuttle…6.78 three-cone drill…34 1/2-inch vertical jump…10'-03" broad jump…Bench pressed 225 pounds 13 times…30 1/8-inch arm length…9 1/8-inch hands…71 3/4-inch wingspan.

*Background*... Look around the culture in the National Football League and you will see that the perennial playoff teams have one thing in common - each of their offenses feature an elite all-purpose back. With the 2019 NFL Draft approaching, the collegiate talent was placed under the microscope during all-star games and the NFL Scouting Combine.

Emerging from the East-West Shrine Game, scouts formed their own evaluation "choir" in all saying that the next elite all-purpose standout is a Maryland Terrapin - Ty Marquise Johnson. You hear the whispers in scouting circles - the "make-you miss" moves like Alvin Kamara, the speed like Chris Johnson, the versatility like Tarik Cohen - are the best way to describe one of the most underrated talents in college football - Ty Marquise Johnson.

With several months of film view by NFL brass leading up to the draft, the professional organizations have to be very impressed by the senior's college career. One of just four players in school history to amass at least 4,000 all-purpose yards, Johnson adds another element to his game by borrowing a phrase from a sport that claims to be the national pastime - baseball. To call Johnson a "home run threat" is putting it mildly, especially when one sits down and realizes his long distance success in reaching the coveted end zone.

In college football's modern era, Johnson's average touchdown distance of 39.35 yards as a ball carrier (seventeen touchdowns for 669 yards) is the NCAA career-record at all levels. His total touchdowns average distance of 44.71 yards (21 touchdowns for 939 yards; 17 rushing, two receiving, two kickoffs) is also the NCAA's all-time record.

Johnson's average of 7.57 yards per rushing attempt ranks (minimum 250 attempts) ranks seventh in FBS annals. Darrell Henderson of Memphis holds the top spot with an 8.23-yard average (431 carries for 3,545 yards; 2016-18), followed by Houston's Chuck Weatherspoon (395 carries for 3,247 yards; 8.22-yard average; 1987-90), Travis Etienne of Clemson (7.80 ypc; 311 tries for 2,425 yards; 2017-18), Melvin Gordon of Wisconsin (631 attempts for 4,915 yards; 2011-14), who set the Big Ten Conference all-time record with a 7.79-yard average, followed by Marshall's Devon Johnson (7.78-yard average on 305 attempts for 2,373 yards; 2012-17) and Felix Jones of Arkansas (7.66-yard average on 386 runs for 2,956 yards; 2005-07). The pre-modern era record was 8.26-yards per carry by Army Hall of Fame standout Glenn Davis (358 attempts for 2,957 yards; 1943-46).

In college football's modern era (minimum 100 attempts), Johnson holds the fifth spot with an average gain of 9.13 yards in 2016. The leader is Chuck Weatherspoon, as the Houston talent averaged 9.63 yards on 119 chances for 1,146 yards in 1989. He is followed by Leon Burton of Arizona State (9.62-yard average on a total of 1,126 yards through 117 carries in 1957), Jhurell Pressley of New Mexico (9.50-yard average on 114 tries for 1,083 yards in 2014) and Khalil Tate of Arizona (153 runs for 1,411 yards and a 9.22-yard average in 2017).

Johnson ranks fourth in school history with 2,635 yards rushing, topped by LaMont Jordan (4,147 yards; 1997-2000), Charlie Wysocki (3,317; 1978-81) and Steve Atkins (2,971 yards; 1975-78). His average gain of 7.57 yards per carry is second in school annals behind Chet Hanulak, 8.13-yard average; 1951-53).

The ball carrier is fourth in school history with eleven 100-yard rushing performances, surpassed by LaMont Jordan (eighteen), Charlie Wysocki (seventeen) and Steve Atkins (fifteen; 1975-78). He is one of just four Maryland players to gain 4,000 all-purpose yards during a career (4,196), joining receiver Torrey Smith (5,264 yards; 2008-10), tailback LaMont Jordan (4,960; 1997-2000) and receiver Stefon Diggs (4,106 yards; 2012-14).

The senior is the eleventh Terrapin with at least 1,000 kickoff return yards, as his 1,196 yards placed seventh on that chart behind Torrey Smith (2,983 yards; 2008-10), William Likely (2,233; 2013-16), Keeta Covington (1,520; 1983-86), Larry Marshall (1,507; 1969-71), Stefon Diggs (1,472; 2012-14) and Steve Suter (1,259: 2001-04). His kickoff return average of 24.88 yards per attempt ranks fifth in school annals, surpassed by Tom Brown (26.24-yard average; 1960-62), Stefon Diggs (25.82), William Likely (25.67) and Tim Quander (25.50-yard average; 1981-82). He has returned two kickoffs for touchdowns, one shy of the school career-record of three, held by Torrey Smith.

When Johnson first arrived on Maryland's campus, the coaching staff listed him in the program as an "athlete," a 182-pound prep senior with an array of talent, yet not one position to call home, at least not on his first listing on the Terrapins roster. Despite being a three-year starter who excelled as a running back, cornerback and return specialist for Fort Hill High School head coach Todd Appel, he was such a lightly recruited player, that he would often be found sending out countless letters each day to college coaches, hoping that one would take notice.

Johnson's dilemma was simple. Despite being a three-star recruit who had a sensational career in the local public high school circuit, there was little major college talent in his area for most Football Bowl Subdivision recruiters to venture out to see. Because offers from the major-conference schools were scarce, the talented prepster was limited to school like Albany, Delaware and Fordham before the local product accepted an offer from Maryland, committing to the Terrapin program after he was spotted by Chad Wilt.

Johnson would become the first player at Fort Hill High in more than twenty years to receive a scholarship offer from a Division I school. In his school's history, just five players ever suited up and played in an NFL game. Defensive end John Alderton was the first, as he had a brief cup of coffee in Pittsburgh in 1953. Bob Rowley was a linebacker for Pittsburgh in 1963 before joining the New York Jets in 1964. Tight end Jim Mertens spent part of the 1969 campaign in Miami and quarterback Mark Manges was briefly a St. Louis Cardinals member in 1978. The longest pro career was recorded by defensive back Steve Trimble, whose career began in Denver in 1981 and ended in Chicago in 1987.

How Johnson almost slipped through the cracks is anyone's guess. This was a player who had amassed 4,851 all-purpose yards, totaled 3,363 yards with 43 scores on 229 carries (14.69 ypc), accounted for sixty-five touchdowns and intercepted seventeen passes for the Sentinels. During his three seasons on the gridiron, his team compiled a 37-3 record, including consecutive undefeated seasons (14-0 record in both) during his junior and senior seasons. He was rated the best running back in the state of Maryland by Scout.com and earned consensus All-State recognition in 2014.

Selected to play for Maryland in the Big 33 Game after the 2014 schedule, Johnson had generated 1,733 yards with 22 touchdowns on just 116 rushing attempts (14.94 ypc) that season. He also scored eight times on only eleven receptions that totaled 371 yards (33.73 ypc). On the other side of the ball, he registered 38 tackles with three interceptions and fourteen pass deflections. Even Ray Charles can see that they were highly impressive figures.

Timed at 4.28 seconds in the 40-yard dash during his high school days, Johnson also starred in track for Fort Hill. In three seasons with the outdoor squad, he was a sprinter who also performed in the 300-meter hurdles, high jump and long jump. He would go on to record personal bests of 11.2 seconds in the 100; 22.49 in the 200 and 54.34 in the 400 meters. He topped 42.09 seconds in the 36-inch/300-meter hurdles, logged a five-foot/six-inch high jump and a record 21-feet/five-inches in the long jump.

While he did not start any of his twelve appearances, averaging 7.14 yards in brief flashes (35 carries for 250 yards) set the tone for the rest of his college career. The consummate team player, he also returned kicks and punts that season, which would lead to his breakout 2017 season as a kickoff returner. It would also see the once 180-pound athlete show up for 2016 August camp a strapping 205 pounds - time to mount a challenge for the starting job.

Still, like most teams, seniority rules, and size played a factor, also. The start of August camp saw Johnson third on the depth chart behind Virginia Tech senior transfer, 225-pound Trey Edmunds, who was trying to hold off fellow senior, 230-pound Kenneth Goins for the starting job, but when the gun sounded for the season opener, Johnson was in place with the first unit.

The true sophomore would start eight of his thirteen appearances. He became the school's eighth player to rush for over 1,000 yards (1,004) in a season and for players with at least one hundred carries, his average gain of 9.13 yards not only led the nation, but was a modern day school record and also established new conference marks. He scored six times on 110 carries, one more time via sixteen receptions for 206 yards and amassed 1,249 all-purpose yards. He even made a tackle for a 5-yard loss on a fake punt and blocked another kick.

That season firmly entrenched Johnson as the team's starter moving forward. An incredible rash of injuries at quarterback sidetracked the Terrapins' season, as no less than eight signal-callers auditioned during the 2017 campaign. Johnson continued where he left off, as he had two 100-yard games to close out his sophomore year and two more during the team's first two encounters in 2017.

The struggles at quarterback affected the whole team, but Johnson still paced the squad with 875 yards on 137 carries, tying for seventh on the school season-record list with a 6.39-yard average. With such poor quarterbacking, he had only five receptions, but he made his mark on special teams, averaging 24.33 yards on 27 runbacks for 657 yards, the ninth-highest total by a Terrapin. He also tied a school record with a 100-yard return for a touchdown vs. Ohio State, finishing with 1,592 all-purpose yards, the seventh-best in Maryland annals.

Johnson entered his final season finally getting the national attention that his performance to date deserves. He was named to the watch lists for the Maxwell Award, Doak Walker Award and one that truly highlights his versatility, the Paul Hornung Award. He also received All-Big Ten Conference preseason recognition and was named the most underrated player in his league by The NFL Draft Report, as that scouting information service also selected him for their All-American Super Sleeper team.

The senior was off to a blazing start during the first half of the 2018 campaign before he suffered a calf injury early in the Illinois contest. He would miss three of the team's final four contests - all resulting in losses for the Terrapins. He ran for over 100 yards in three of his first six appearances, but despite missing the bulk of late season action, he finished second on the team in rushing and ranked seventh in the major college ranks by averaging 7.67 yards per rushing attempt.

Ironically, his injury forced the Terrapins to play freshman Anthony McFarland while Johnson was sidelined. The first-year performer would average 7.89 yards as the senior's replacement in a sort of "next man up" scenario. Johnson also added to his resume as a kickoff returner. His 27.21-yard average as a returner is the fifth-best season mark by a Terrapin and ranked second in the Big Ten Conference while placing ninth nationally.

Johnson has appeared in 46 games at Maryland, starting 28 of his appearances. He generated 2,635 yards with seventeen touchdowns on 348 carries, averages of 7.57 yards per attempt and 57.28 yards per game (75.16 yard-average as a starter). He caught 29 passes for 318 yards (10.97 ypc) and two scores, tallying 126 points in four seasons. The senior returned 48 kickoffs for 1,194 yards (24.88 avg) and two touchdowns, adding 49 yards on four punt returns (12.25 avg). For the special team coverage units, he registered six tackles (3 solos) that included two stops for losses totaling nine yards, as he also blocked one kick.

In college football's modern era, Johnson's average touchdown distance of 39.35 yards as a ball carrier (seventeen touchdowns for 669 yards) is the NCAA career-record at all levels. His total touchdowns average distance of 44.71 yards (21 touchdowns for 939 yards; 17 rushing, two receiving, two kickoffs) is also the NCAA's all-time record.

Johnson's average of 7.57 yards per rushing attempt ranks (minimum 250 attempts) ranks seventh in FBS annals. Darrell Henderson of Memphis holds the top spot with an 8.23-yard average (431 carries for 3,545 yards; 2016-18), followed by Houston's Chuck Weatherspoon (395 carries for 3,247 yards; 8.22-yard average; 1987-90), Travis Etienne of Clemson (7.80 ypc; 311 tries for 2,425 yards; 2017-18), Melvin Gordon of Wisconsin (631 attempts for 4,915 yards; 2011-14), who set the Big Ten Conference all-time record with a 7.79-yard average, followed by Marshall's Devon Johnson (7.78-yard average on 305 attempts for 2,373 yards; 2012-17) and Felix Jones of Arkansas (7.66-yard average on 386 runs for 2,956 yards; 2005-07). The pre-modern era record was 8.26-yards per carry by Army Hall of Fame standout Glenn Davis (358 attempts for 2,957 yards; 1943-46).

In college football's modern era (minimum 100 attempts), Johnson holds the fifth spot with an average gain of 9.13 yards in 2016. The leader is Chuck Weatherspoon, as the Houston talent averaged 9.63 yards on 119 chances for 1,146 yards in 1989. He is followed by Leon Burton of Arizona State (9.62-yard average on a total of 1,126 yards through 117 carries in 1957), Jhurell Pressley of New Mexico (9.50-yard average on 114 tries for 1,083 yards in 2014) and Khalil Tate of Arizona (153 runs for 1,411 yards and a 9.22-yard average in 2017).

Johnson's rushing average of 7.57 yards per attempt rank second in conference history behind the 7.79-yard average set by Melvin Gordon of Wisconsin (631 attempts for 4,915 yards; 2011-14). The only other Big Ten ball carrier to average at least seven yards during a career was Indiana's Tevin Coleman (7.12-yard average on 452 carries for 3,219 yards; 2012-14). He also holds the league season-record (minimum 75 carries) with a 9.13-yard rushing average in 2016. The previous record was 8.21 yards by Rashard Mendenhall of Illinois (78 runs for 640 yards) in 2006. For those with a minimum of 100 carries, the old Big Ten annual record was 7.81 yards by Wisconsin's Melvin Gordon (206 carries for 1,609 yards) in 2013.

*The Scouting Report*

*Athletic Ability.*.. Johnson has very low body fat, tight waist and hips, good trapezoids and pectoral muscles. He has a strong upper body frame with muscular arms and powerful leg drive, showing decent thickness in his thighs, calves and bubble to power through tackles.

Johnson has very good field vision as a runner. He shows explosive lateral agility and movement and is a threat to break for a long run any time he frees himself along the perimeter. He has the crisp plant and drive agility to make sharp cuts and despite his exceptional quickness, he is a patient runner waiting for blocks to develop. He has outstanding balance on the move, keeping his feet churning to break arm tackles. His acceleration makes him a viable threat on pass routes and he has more than enough moves to defeat a defense on his own to gain separation.

He is best when running off tackle, but he also has the power and hip wiggle to go for big yardage running inside. Johnson possesses excellent balance and body control in his running stride. He has the second gear to make defenders miss in the open field and maintains acceleration and stride when having to change directions. He has the hip flexibility to redirect to the cutback lanes. He gets to top speed in a hurry and needs little room to accelerate. He generates a strong stiff-arm to break some arm tackles and has the body control to adjust to off-target throws.

*Initial Quickness*...Johnson not only shows explosion off the snap, he’s a shifty runner inside a downhill player’s body. Despite his speed, he is a patient runner and he displays good vision to quickly locate the rush lanes, but there are times where he simply runs into spots. He has the strength to push the pile, doing a nice job of protecting his feet from low blocks. He has more than enough wiggle to juke second level defenders when he does clear the line of scrimmage and is consistent sticking his foot in the ground and make jump cuts in traffic.

He is also effective with a straight-line burst, as he does hit the holes hard. Johnson gets out of his stance quickly to attack the rush lanes. He shows the balance and body lean to fall forward and gain additional yardage after the initial hit. He can cut on a dime to break up field and shows good patience waiting for blocks to develop rather than run past his protection. His initial burst allows him to race past the slower defenders into the second level, change direction and redirect through the cutback lane. He has exceptional quickness in the hole and is very crisp changing direction.

*Acceleration/Burst*...Johnson has a good burst into the holes, and does a nice job of keeping his pads low. He has the wiggle and excellent timed speed, along with the vision to locate seams in attempts to elude. He shows great balance running around corners and can get positive yards by using his speed to surge ahead running between the tackles. He has the extra gear to break long runs (see 2018 Bowling Green, Minnesota, Rutgers games), whether on a straight line dash or when taking the ball and weaving up field.

Johnson makes precise cuts when he sees the rushing lanes clogged. He has that sudden burst to get through the pile and the sustained speed and explosive acceleration to elude once he gets into the second level. He takes good angles to the corners and can take the ball to the house once he reaches top speed. He is a slashing type of runner who keeps his balance on the move and is sudden shooting through the gaps.

*Instincts/Balance*...Johnson has the vision and patience needed to locate the cutback lanes when he gets caught in trash. He has valid escape-ability to redirect and bounce away from the pile, but can also deliver as a good downhill runner (displays enough creativity to accomplish much on his own). He scans the field well and has natural run instincts, using his vision in the hole and in space to avoid. He sees threats instantly and can get skinny through the tiniest of cracks to take the ball to daylight. He tries hard to step out of tackles to get up field. With his strong base and body control, second level defenders struggle to mirror him in man coverage.

*Inside Running*...Johnson hits the holes with good force. He stays at a low pad level and knows how to lower a shoulder to push the defender out when going up the crease. He shows a good stiff arm and upper body power to beat arm tackles and shows good ball security heading up the gut. He demonstrates good balance and pick-&-slide ability, as he never seems hesitant locating cutbacks. He runs behind his pads with above average power.

He has the plant-&-drive explosion to redirect, but also shows the leg churn to move the pile. He is conscious of ball security and easily breaks arm tackles in isolated coverage. Because of his size, you can’t consider him a punishing inside banger, but he shows the vision and enough surge to pull through a crowd. His ability to make jump cuts at the holes is because of his skills are creating room for himself with his leg drive. Like Alvin Kamara, he is stronger than his size indicates, as he keeps his feet moving to break tackles and is able to make jump cuts at the hole.

*Outside Running*... When Johnson reaches the corners, slower defenders are soon left grabbing at air. He has exceptionally quick plant and drive agility to locate the cutback lanes and a superb burst along the perimeter. Even with his speed turning the corner, you see that it is the bounce in his step that is difficult for defenders to counter. Once in the open field, his shifty moves become even more evident. As he will consistently out-run his opponent. He has good jump cut moves to redirect and is explosive enough to get the corner turned.

With his playing speed, Johnson must be accounted for any time he takes the ball to the perimeter. He has excellent vision and feel for the cutback lanes and shows good acceleration to elude the initial tackler. His patience letting blocks develop and pull away from the crowd quickness is the result of his outstanding balance bouncing out to the corner. He is a shifty running in the open field. He can accelerate up the seam almost in an instant and makes good cuts to leave the initial tackler grabbing at air, but the team needs to start using him much more in passing situations.

Johnson has the lateral shiftiness to elude second level defenders. He can stop and start in an instant and utilizes his superb leaping ability to hurdle defenders when needed. He has excellent forward body lean and balance and does a fine job of keeping defenders guessing and off-balance with his sharp cuts. With his good vision, he immediately sees threats and has enough hip shake and wiggle to make the defender miss.

*Tackle-Breaking Strength*...Johnson knows how to power it up the gut. He does a nice job of keeping his pads down at initial contact and has the leg drive to run over second level defenders. His lower leg drive lets him “thump it up” when having to move the pile, showing the body control to easily stiff arm without having to rebuild his acceleration after the hit. He's much more than just a “meat-&-potatoes” runner – nothing fancy and takes what the defense gives, but given room to operate, his long distance touchdown runs demonstrate his abilities to take the ball to the house (see 2018 Bowling Green, Minnesota, Michigan, Rutgers games).

When Johnson runs behind his pads, he does a good job of gaining valid yardage between the tackles. He has the leg drive to break arm tackles, but must be conscious of not getting too fancy with his moves in attempts to elude, as he is better off making an instant decision rather than try to get too cute with the ball in his hands. He is best when he uses his spin moves to escape, but even though he might not look the part, he has surprising power taking the ball up the gut.

*Receiving Skills*...Johnson lacks the big mitts you look for in a receiver, but with his concentration and hand extension, he has developed into a capable receiver (no drops the last three seasons). He is especially effective extending outside his framework to secure the side-line throws. With his hand/eye coordination, he is capable of adjusting to the ball in flight and with his vertical leap and timing, he is able to get to the ball at its high point. He does a nice job settling underneath and can easily turn and run over smaller opponents in attempts to separate and gain additional yards after the grab. With his speed, he can create mismatches flexed out wide vs. corners and safeties.

Used mostly as a check-down receiver, Johnson is capable of swinging out of the backfield for the extended pluck and also has good ability for settling under screens. He has even had success when lined up as a bubble receiver on those screens. He runs sharp routes underneath and catches in stride without having to rebuild his acceleration.

*Blocking Ability*...Johnson is a willing position blocker and not one who will bite the defender at the ankles rather than face up when asked to pick up the blitz. He gets into position, keeping his pads proper when asked to cut block, but still needs to do a better job of taking angles when stalking second level defenders. He usually keeps his head on a swivel and will not lose sight of the opponent, but it is very rare to see him be asked to throw a lead block. This is the weakest aspect of his game, but he does have the strength to produce, but will need patient coaching to develop.

*Return Skills.*..Johnson has very good vision and is sudden in his burst through the wedge. He shows good ball security and has superb acceleration and burst in the open. More often than not, Maryland enjoyed very good field position thanks to Johnson’s ability to get the ball up the field.

*Compares To*...Alvin Kamara-New Orleans Saints...Johnson could be a very nice Day Two draft find, especially for his all-purpose running and special teams abilities. He has very good timed speed, despite being built more like a downhill type of runner. While not used often in college, he proved at the 2019 East-West Shrine Game practices that he is an effective receiver working underneath and a physical blocker in pass protection. He has good vision, but he will sometimes run into spots. He is very conscious of ball security. Much like Kamara, he is best served running around the corners, but he can also get the tough yards up the middle.

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