



Defensive Tackles Top 10 Prospects

This is my first time doing full tape watching and evaluating draft prospects in full.

I am basing my decisions purely on what I see, I have given this a great deal of attention, throughout the college season I have watched games due to games being played more in the UK, I have also used highlights as well as watching games as well.

With the playoffs also being shown in the UK and a great deal more attention on this there may be slightly more recency bias in some of these picks.

When I did watch a bit of the defensive tackle guys' tapes I changed my mind several times on who makes the list. The Tackles in this class are ridiculous, there are so many to look at and choose from. It is an incredibly deep class.

1. Mason Graham (Michigan)

Graham will almost certainly be the first defensive tackle taken in this year's draft. He had a fantastic last season with Michigan alongside Grant who we will come to soon. Graham will be a top prospect in this year's draft.

Strengths:

What jumps off the screen when watching Graham is how he attacks the offensive line with power and speed. He is able to shed blocks with ease and disrupt in the backfield. He bullrushes hard in pass protection to make plays for not only himself but also other linemen to get to the quarterback.

With him being able to get off blocks comfortably he is also able to make tackles in the run game. He has a knack of finding holes in the offensive line to stop runners also.

Graham was double teamed quite a bit in college, but he never gives up and gives 100% every single snap. I do think he will be a top player at the next level.

Weaknesses :

I couldn't see any, he does look an amazing prospect in my opinion.

2. Walter Nolan (Ole Miss)

This one may be my biggest call but I just love Walter Nolan. He had an incredible senior bowl where he just destroyed offensive lineman for fun. In the 1 on 1 drills he didn't lose any battle including running over some good offensive lineman there. I expect Nolan will probably be the 3rd or 4th tackle of the board but I would take him second and probably late in the first.

Strengths:

Nolan is hugely disruptive to an offensive line with everything being explosive and violent. He has really fast hands which he uses with his power to get off blocks, push lineman back and he just generally disturbs plays.

He gets lots of quarterback pressures and he seems to always force the quarterbacks out of the pockets.

Overall Nolan is more suited to pass plays at the NFL level right now. In pass rush scenarios I would expect Nolan to be getting on the field. Nolan does show some great plays in the run game and hits holes as often as he can to make tackles but I would expect to see coaches work on his run game to make him a more complete tackle.

Weaknesses:

As mentioned above he could probably do with working on the run game a little more.

I also think sometimes Nolan can over balance making him an easy target for the offensive line to manoeuvre.

3. Kenneth Grant (Michigan)

Michigan not only had one potential first round tackle with Graham but a second with Kenneth Grant. Grant did not have the best combine but his tape is far too good to rule him out of a first round selection. Grant and Graham were outstanding on the defensive line this season and should land in the first round in a few weeks time.

Strengths:

Grant is a big bodied tackle who is comfortable using his size and power for leverage. He uses his length as well to get off blocks.

He is tremendous in the run game and there have been occasions where he has caught up to running backs to make tackles.

Grant does have moves to beat blockers and apply pressures to the quarterback or affect the run game.

Although he ran slow at the combine Grant is really mobile and his tape looks far quicker than his combine showing suggests.

Weaknesses:

Grant could improve in the pass game and be more disruptive.

Sometimes Grant can be blocked comfortably and it appears to be because he plays standing up rather than being lower and leveraging.

4. Derrick Harmon (Oregon)

Harmon is another really big body who could land in the first round if not probably early in the second round. The Oregon man had a fantastic season and boosted his chances of an early pick because of some of his tape.

Strengths:

This is another player who really thrives in the pass rush. Harmon is very disruptive in these situations. He often beats defenders to get into the backfield and apply pressure to quarterbacks. He uses his speed and power to force the pressures and it doesn't matter if he is double teamed or not.

Harmon was also good in the run, he forced several turnovers this year for the Ducks. He hits gaps hard and disrupts running lanes when he sees them.

Harmon could potentially be the second tackle of the board. He has huge upside and could start day 1 at the next level.

Weaknesses:

It may be a harsh criticism, but every now and again in games Harmon seems to lose reps with ease, and it's not clear why. It may be tired legs due to the amount of time on the field, but it could still hurt him in the NFL.

5. Deone Walker (Kentucky)

Wrapping up the top 5 is the big unit from Kentucky. I do think Walker is not likely to be drafted as the 5th but I really like this guy.

Strengths:

Walker is a bully on the field, he forces offensive lines on the back foot which creates pressure, sacks and tackles for loss. Due to his size he is hard to move and is a lineman's nightmare.

He is great in the pass rush but he also tackles well, he hits holes and brings players down.

Weaknesses:

There are two weaknesses to Walker's play I see, firstly due to his size he's not the most athletic in this class. The second is I would like to see more consistency with his play, it could be a size and fitness issue but there were times when he wasn't as effective.

6. Darius Alexander (Toledo)

7. Tyleik Williams (Ohio State)

8. TJ Sanders (South Carolina)

9. Joshua Farmer (Florida State)

10. Omarr Norman-Lott (Tennessee)