



### **Linebacker 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.

I will also state that with the linebackers if Abdul Carter and Jalon Walker are going to play linebacker they will be the top 2 easily in this draft. I would play them on the edge, but with their versatility could play inside as well.

#### **1. Jihaad Campbell (Alabama)**

Campbell is likely to be a top 20 pick in the upcoming draft even at the linebacker spot which is not seen as a primary position pick. There is no denying this is a top talent.

##### **Strengths:**

Campbell is a perfect linebacker, he is built perfectly for the position. He has great speed and strength. Campbell is the sideline to sideline ball hawk type linebacker. He is involved in almost everything on the field as well as being involved with all run tackles.

That isn't all though, when Campbell is asked to play zone coverage he also excels, he knows and sticks to his assignments and will burst into action if he needs to. In man coverage he beats offensive players all over the field. He is fast so even when he gets beat he soon catches up.

When you watch Alabama games it does also appear Campbell is a true leader on the field, you often see him talking and calling out plays, he helps with others assignments and guides them when required.

Weaknesses:

Maybe a tiny bit of work in zone coverage, but he will be outstanding in the NFL.

## **2. Carson Schwesinger (UCLA)**

The linebacker Schwesinger out of UCLA is a really intriguing prospect. He is the clear number two linebacker in this draft, but it will be interesting to see the gap the teams have between him and Campbell. I predict he will end up being selected in the second round but he could fall further down.

Strengths:

Schwesinger is built well, he is strong and has the power and speed. He has good recognition to understand the play whether pass or run and gets himself into the best position to make a play.

The linebacker is a ball hawk, he plays with fire coming out of him to get to tackles. He plays well in zone coverage and can go man for man against tight ends and win.

Weaknesses:

Sometimes Schwesinger can get stuck on blocks and can not make an impact on the run plays.

## **3. Chris Paul Jr (Ole Miss)**

Paul is fairly close to Schwesinger in my opinion. He is another really good defensive player. Paul is another sideline to sideline player who could go in the early 3rd round.

Strengths:

Paul as mentioned above is sideline to sideline, he moves with good speeds and is strong. Paul plays with good instincts and reads the game well. He is a solid tackler and is quick to explode downfield to make tackles.

When Paul is blocked he is quick to get off the blocks and make plays. Paul is a big tackling machine.

Weaknesses:

Paul needs some work in coverage, he sometimes looks like he is out of place.

For some this wouldn't be a negative but Paul can be a bit too overly aggressive at times and he can get himself into bad positions.

## **4. Barrett Carter (Clemson)**

Carter is a little more of a project linebacker than the other 3 who are slightly more refined. However With the right team and the right coaching Carter could be a huge player at the next level.

Strengths:

When you watch Clemson on defense you will nearly always see Carter being close to the ball. He is a freak athlete who is comfy with a sideline to sideline role.

In the pass game Carter breaks really well so he can make tackles, he also trackers players well in coverage.

When tasked with blitzing Carter is the sort of player that can use his athletic ability to make a play.

Weaknesses:

Carter can get stuck on some blocks, he may need some work on that.

Also he has missed a few tackles in the games I've watched, so he could look to work on that.

#### **5. Danny Stutsman (Oklahoma)**

Rounding off the top 5 is another prospect that with the right team and coaching could make an impact in the NFL and that's Strutsman from Oklahoma.

Strengths:

There is a lot to like with Stutsman, he is another quick linebacker and shows good athletic ability. He often blows up plays with big tackles.

Stutsman not only has the big tackles but he also has the big plays, he loves to cause fumbles and this can lead to turnovers.

Stutsman has good instincts on whether it is a pass or run play and can make plays.

Weaknesses:

My biggest concern with Stutsman is his zone coverage, he seems to struggle with his assignments at times and can also get caught out because of this, overall though he is a good player.

- 6. Cody Simon (Ohio State)**
- 7. Jeffrey Bassa (Oregon)**
- 8. Demetrius Knight Jr (South Carolina)**
- 9. Lander Barton (Utah)**
- 10. Shemar James (Florida)**