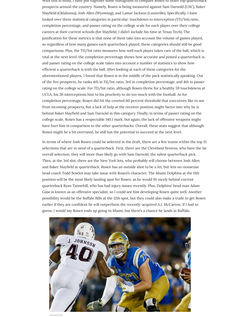
# NFL Draft 2018: Bruin Prospects

By Alex Hernandez • 26 Apr 2018 • 22 min read

It's that time of year again. The 2018 NFL Draft is right around the corner as the event will take place this year not far from the Los Angeles, Texas at the Dallas Cowboys stadium. The draft is a chance for all teams to improve in their own ways, teams at the top of the draft like the Cleveland Browns have to fill their positions of need, while teams at the bottom of the draft like the Super Bowl LII Champion Philadelphia Eagles just need to polish their already strong squads. The draft is also a crucial time for general managers across the league, who will take the responsibility of determining the fates of their respective teams for many years to come. Millions of dollars are at stake, and the ability to make the right decisions can mean the difference between a team's success or shortfalls in drafting players. In addition, it's an exciting time for hundreds of draft prospects who have worked for years to have their football skills. These kids are eager to join the best football teams in the world, where big bucks are made and Lombardi Trophies are chased. Cam Newton was recently named the best value college of 2018 by Forbes, I decided to look exclusively at the NFL prospects coming out of Westwood this year. Specifically, there are five top UCLA prospects I would like to highlight: Josh Rosen, Kolton Miller, Jordan Lasley, Scott Quessenberry, and Kenny Young. I will look at the current campers with prospects of the same position and see how their skill sets may translate to the next level. Through an examination of these five individuals, I hope to provide the best scouting reports and projections for when each prospect will be drafted based on the numbers.

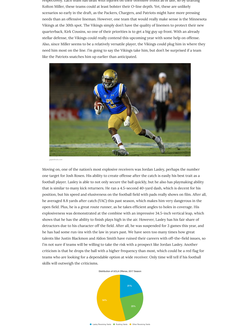
The first prospect I will analyze is Josh Rosen, the quarterback everybody knows will be going to the 1st round. The question many are wondering however, is how early the UCLA product will go. Many coaches like his polished passing style and football intuition, as they believe those traits will translate well to the NFL. Rosen's 2017 season was his best at UCLA, he threw for 3,756 yards and 27 TDs for the same reasons, as a result, they have consistently placed him at the top of their draft boards. Obviously, Rosen's accuracy and competent arm strength bode well for him, but there are concerns as well. First of all, he has interests outside of football. The environment, that may interfere with his desire to play football. This isn't unprecedented, however, as last year's 1st overall pick, Myles Garrett, had questions for potentially, but he performed well in his rookie year. Another criticism of Rosen is his perceived immaturity, as there have been rumors that teammates may see him also as too arrogant and perceived family wealth. Furthermore, Rosen was his under-question due to his skin frame. he has taken were big hits during his college career that he will has to take into account. Hopefully for Rosen there concerns don't become reasons for teams to pass on him, especially since this is projected to be one of the most quarterback heavy drafts in recent memory.




With this in mind, I have put together some histograms to compare Rosen to other top quarterbacks who have recently been drafted. Specifically, I have compared Rosen to Jameis Winston, Marcus Mariota, Deshaun Watson, Jared Goff, Carson Wentz, and Lamar Jackson (Lamar Jackson's Bio Break). I have looked over three statistical categories in particular: touchdown to interception (TD/Int) ratio, completion percentage, and passer rating on the college scale for each player over their college careers at their current schools (for Mariota, I didn't include his time at Texas Tech). The results were quite interesting, as it seems that none of these stats can accurate the volume of games played, so regardless of how many games each quarterback played, these categories should still be good comparisons. Plus, the TD/Int ratio measures how well each player takes care of the ball, which is vital at the next level. the completion percentage shows how accurate and poised a quarterback is, and the passer rating on the college scale combines all three categories together to see how effective a quarterback is with the ball. After looking at each of these categories for the aforementioned players, I found that Rosen is in the middle of the pack statistically speaking. Out of the five prospects, Rosen ranks 4th in TD/Int ratio, 3rd in completion percentage, and 4th in passer rating on the college scale. For TD/Int ratio, although Rosen drove for a healthy 3.0 touchdowns at UCLA for every 1 interception he threw, this kind of admission is very low for an elite Rose Bowl. In completion percentage, Rosen did hit the centered 60 percent threshold that executives like to see from incoming prospects. Rosen's lack of help at the receiver position might factor into why he lagged behind Mariota and Sam Darnold in this category. Finally, in terms of passer rating on the college scale, Rosen has a respectable 1681 mark, but he's not the most efficient passer. Rosen fans have had him in comparisons to the other quarterbacks. Overall, these stats suggest that although Rosen might be a 1st round pick, he will not be the potential to succeed at the next level.

In terms of where Josh Rosen could be selected in the draft, there are a few teams within the top 10 selections that are in need of a quarterback. The Jets, Giants, and the Cleveland Browns have the two overall selections they will more than likely go with Sam Darnold, the talent quarterback pick. The Denver Broncos, the Buffalo Bills, the Arizona Cardinals, the Indianapolis Colts, and Baker Mayfield's quarterback. Rosen has an outside shot to be a lot, but has too numerous head-coach linked-teams may take issue with Rosen's character. The Miami Dolphins at the 10th position will be the most likely spot for Rosen, as he would be a great fit behind veteran quarterback Ryan Tannehill, who has had injury issues recently. Plus, Dolphins' head man Adam Gase is known as an offensive specialist, so I could see him developing Rosen quite well. Another possibility would be the Buffalo Bills at the 11th spot, but they could also make a trade to get Rosen earlier if they are confident he will outperform the recently-acquired A.J. Tech boys. If Rosen is gone, I would say Rosen ends up going to Miami, but there's a chance he lands in Buffalo.

The other potential first-round coming out of UCLA is offensive tackle Kolton Miller, a big left tackle with great athleticism for a guy his size. Despite being 6 foot-8 inch 300 pounds, the man put on a clinic at the NFL Combine in March. Although offensive linemen don't have conventional in-game statistics that quarterbacks and wide receivers do, they showcase their talent through measurables at the combine. For instance, Miller was a top-6 performer among all offensive linemen in the 40-yard dash, the 3-cone drill, the vertical jump, and the broad jump. Miller ran a 5.20 second 40-yard dash (4.8 is the fastest time for a combine record for the broad jump for offensive linemen by a full 2 inches. So, not only is he big, but he's seemingly more agile than guys at his position who are both shorter and lighter than him. This kind of athleticism is very rare for an offensive lineman, so Miller could be a versatile blocker who could play different positions and in different offense schemes. Also, it should come that he has good football instincts, which just strengthens the argument that he could be a versatile lineman. The only concerns with him is that he is extremely tall, so it might be difficult for him to get low and block against smaller defensive linemen. Jordan Zenzah, Kolton Miller reminds me a lot of Sam Tobin; who also came into the league from the Pac-12 and was similar with regard to his size and athleticism. Tobin's issues are Miller as the next coming of Tobin, this would be a great opportunity for Miller.




The other potential first-round coming out of UCLA is offensive tackle Kolton Miller, a big left tackle with great athleticism for a guy his size. Despite being 6 foot-8 inch 300 pounds, the man put on a clinic at the NFL Combine in March. Although offensive linemen don't have conventional in-game statistics that quarterbacks and wide receivers do, they showcase their talent through measurables at the combine. For instance, Miller was a top-6 performer among all offensive linemen in the 40-yard dash, the 3-cone drill, the vertical jump, and the broad jump. Miller ran a 5.20 second 40-yard dash (4.8 is the fastest time for a combine record for the broad jump for offensive linemen by a full 2 inches. So, not only is he big, but he's seemingly more agile than guys at his position who are both shorter and lighter than him. This kind of athleticism is very rare for an offensive lineman, so Miller could be a versatile blocker who could play different positions and in different offense schemes. Also, it should come that he has good football instincts, which just strengthens the argument that he could be a versatile lineman. The only concerns with him is that he is extremely tall, so it might be difficult for him to get low and block against smaller defensive linemen. Jordan Zenzah, Kolton Miller reminds me a lot of Sam Tobin; who also came into the league from the Pac-12 and was similar with regard to his size and athleticism. Tobin's issues are Miller as the next coming of Tobin, this would be a great opportunity for Miller.

In the above graph, we have the top five offensive linemen from this year's combine in terms of the broad jump compared to the historical average of broad jumps of all offensive line positions. This was the event that Miller broke the combine record with his amazing 10 inch leap, which is considered above average even for wide receivers and running backs. In the past 10 years, the most longest jump was Kansas State's Cornelius Philadelphia Jaqui Stevenson Lane Johnson, whose leap was 7 inches shorter than Miller's. But to give everyone an idea of how impressive this feat was in the context of the offensive line position, Philadelphia Eagles Pro Bowl Lineman Lane Johnson's 7 inch jump would have placed him in the top-three. Miller's 10 inch jump would have been almost more impressive. Miller is roughly 5 inches shorter and 10 pounds lighter than Miller. In fact, Miller is the tallest of the five offensive lineman listed, and he is third-heaviest among them. In addition to his record-breaking broad jump, Miller impressed in the 40-yard dash, where his 4.91 second gallop combined strong athleticism with his imposing frame. Miller's time was 0.29 seconds faster than the average for an offensive lineman of any size, but Miller did this despite being one of the largest human-contending players included in the world. The same goes for the other two events he excelled in: his 31.5 inch vertical jump exceeded the impressive 30 inch mark for guys at his position, and his 4.80 second shuttle run placed him near the impressive 4.7 second time that offensive linemen would expect. Clearly, Miller is a physical specimen who has vastly improved his draft stock due to his athleticism and talent.

If I were to have projected Miller before the combine, there's no way he would have shifted the first few rounds. Now, there's a lot that teams have to need of big bodies might consider shifting him in the 1st round. Some squads that might take a look at Miller are the Green Bay Packers, the Los Angeles Rams, the Los Angeles Chargers, the Houston Texans, and the Dallas Cowboys, respectively. Each teams has dealt with injuries on their offensive fronts as of late, so by drafting Kolton Miller, these teams could at least bolster their O-lines depth. Yet, these are unlikely scenarios so early in the draft, as the Packers, Chargers, and Patriots might have more pressing needs than an offensive lineman. However, one team that would really make sense is the Minnesota Vikings at the 28th spot. The Vikings simply don't have the quality of linemen to protect their new quarterback, Sirak Cousins, so one of their priorities is to get a big guy up front. With an already stellar defense, the Vikings could really contend this upcoming year with some help on offense. Also, since Miller seems to be a relatively versatile player, the Vikings could plug him in where they need him most on the line. I'm going to say the Vikings take him, but don't be surprised if a team like the Patriots moves him big up earlier than anticipated.

Moving on, one of the nation's most explosive receivers was Jordan Lasley, playing the number-one receiver position for the Bruins. Lasley's combine results were not the greatest, but he is a dynamic football player. Lasley is able to run only screen the ball quickly, but he also has the ability to catch that is similar to many dick receivers. He ran a 4.5 second 40-yard dash, which is decent for his position, but his speed and elusiveness on the football field with pads really shows on film. After all, he averaged 18.8 yards after catch (YAC) this past season, which makes him very dangerous in the open field. Plus, he is great route runner, as he takes efficient angles to holes to average. His explosiveness was demonstrated at the combine with an impressive 34.5-inch vertical leap, which shows that he has the ability to reach guys high in the air. However, Lasley has his fair share of detractors due to his character off the field. After all he was suspended for 3 games this year, and he was also arrested for DUI last year. Lasley's character issues are a major concern for teams, and he could slide into the 3rd round because of these issues. Lasley's character issues will off-the-field issues, and I'm not sure if teams will be willing to take the risk with a prospect like Jordan Lasley. Another criticism is that he stands 6 foot-2 inch but weighs a lightly-muscular 200 pounds, which could be a red flag for teams who are looking for a dependable option at wide receiver. Only time will tell if his football skills will outweigh the criticisms.

Lasley was a consistent target as a deep threat for the Bruins in 2017, as he averaged 18.3 yards per reception, good for 19th in the nation. He also had quite a lot of volume as the primary option for Josh Rosen, as he accumulated a team-leading 100 receptions for 1,832 yards and 13 touchdowns. When you put together a film and statistical analysis, you get a high-ceiling wide receiver in Jordan Lasley's case. He averaged a total of 1.204 receiving yards, which was 8th among college football receivers with at least 1,000 receptions per game. Above, I've provided a pie chart that shows the distribution of yards for the Bruin offense in the 2017 season to show the impact of Jordan Lasley's skills. In total, UCLA gained 5,983 total yards in the 12 games they played in 2017, and Lasley's 1,832 yards being through the air and the remaining 1,483 (25%) yards being of the ground. This makes sense since Josh Rosen was the focal point of the offense, and the ground game never really gained momentum. As for Lasley, his receiving yards (1,204) in only 9 games made up a staggering 20% of the total offense. The Bruins' ground game contributed more than one-third of the total yards, so the offensive totals shown just how impressive he has been when on the field. He put up at least 80% of the total yards for the Bruins' offense in 3 separate games, and his highest percentage was 94 yards (94% of the total UCLA offense).

Next up is Scott Quessenberry, the heart of the Bruins' offensive line for the past four years or so. He has been a solid presence at center with decent size and above-average agility. his body frame and decent length provide a near-ideal stature for an NFL center. In addition, he uses his hands very well to pass protection, and he is mobile enough to be a good run blocker as well. Plus, he has made the Director's Honor Roll several times, and he was a finalist for the Senior CLASS Award, which is presented to a senior athlete who excels in athletics, academics, and leadership. Yet, there are some concerns that come along with Quessenberry. First of all, he has relatively short arms (32.25 inches), which could be a problem against lanky, athletic defensive linemen. Lengthy arms give linemen their leverage, so this could be a disadvantage for Scott at the next level. Another possible concern is his injury history. he had to take off the 2015 season to get surgery for both of his shoulders, which is worrisome for an offensive lineman's durability. This guy is from Orange County, so he could be a great fit for teams like the Los Angeles Rams, the Los Angeles Chargers, and the New England Patriots. In particular, I could envision the Patriots taking a look at him. this past season, their starting center, David Andrews, was out for an extended time, and the team scrambled to find a backup for him. Plus, Andrews could be a good mentor for Quessenberry to learn the ins and outs of NFL football, so coach Bill Belichick could be looking not only for immediate depth, but also for a potential successor to Andrews. Overall, Scott's talent level may not be up to par with many of this year's prospects, but his grit and great intangibles may enable him to become a continued force for the NFL for years to come.

Perhaps one of the most consistent four-year defensive starters in recent memory for the UCLA Bruins has been Kenny Young, a star inside linebacker prospect. A first-team All-Pac-12 selection, Young has been a tackling machine for the Westwood program. He finished with 1,000 tackles in his career, with his above average speed (4.6 second 40-yard dash) he made plenty of tackles near the line of scrimmage during our plays. Another positive is that he has prototypical size for a guy at his position: he's about 6 foot-3 inches tall, and he comes in at a solid 235 pounds, so it would be hard to argue that he's undersized. In addition to his skills on the field, Young has a tremendous amount of character. He's from Bishop, California (Sonny Bono's hometown), and he received the 2017 Academic Student Services Lecture Award. Plus, he's active in the community, he was a member of the student debate team at one point, and he is the last athlete to wear Jackie Robinson's #42 at UCLA (an his character. However, critics point to his perceived lack of intensity as a potential concern for teams looking to draft him. Young's lack of fire is a confusing factor as opposed to playing strong from there, or he will be taken advantage by bigger athletes in the NFL. Also, he needs to be able to recognize plays more quickly so he can react appropriately and make appropriate angles to the football. Hopefully this skill will improve with good coaching and a willingness on Young's part to study the game. If anything, Young has a shot at being a special teamsmen with his athleticism if things don't work out at linebacker. His added value gives him a great shot at being an NFL player in the upcoming years




Here we have a graph representing the UCLA players with the most career tackles over the past 15 years. Only two individuals have over 300 career tackles: Eric Kendricks, a standout linebacker with the Minnesota Vikings, and Kenny Young. While Kendricks had an amazing 4th tackles, Young's 3rd place mark is still impressive considering the talent that has been at UCLA. Ian Iosmann Jackie Bharad NFL veteran and 2012-2013 Pac-Defensive Series: former Bruin standouts Reggie Carter and Dennis Kyrus, and newly-retired Super Bowl LII Champion Randall Cobb's. This is an impressive list, and being near the top speaks volumes about Young's magic, versatility, and dedication to UCLA football. In addition, the 2017 season was the most prolific for Young in terms of tackles, as he was the first time he eclipsed 100 tackles in a single season, with 71 solo tackles and 33 assists for a total of 104 tackles, which was good for 9.2 tackles per game (had him in the top-10). This 40 league-leading tackled-6.5 tackles for loss (TFL) over 12 games, and he also had a power-defensed, and a fumble recovery. Although this was his best season, Young had a consistent presence in the Bruins' defense for the past four years. Young's 2016 stats: 102 Tackles, 4 Sacks, 1 Fumble Recovery, 1 Pick-Six Pac-12 Defensive Lineman, 2 Pac-12 Defensive Lineman, 304 tackles (will rank in impressive 8th place, behind the likes of NFL standouts Patrick Chung and Eric Kendricks, Ryan Kerrigan, Chris Ashmore, Los Angeles Chargers' Jahleel Addae, and Denver Broncos' Justin Simmons).

Although Kenny Young is a decent shoo-in linebacker, it's hard to say if his skills will translate to the NFL. He definitely has a future in special teams, where he could contribute on kickoffs, punts, and PAT/FG blocks. Young's lack of intensity is a concern, and it's a shame that he wasn't more Ryan Shazier, Lavonte David, or Bobby Wagner

When potential Pro-Bowlers like Roquan Smith and Tremaine Edmunds are the best linebackers in this draft, more obscure players like Young sometimes go undrafted. Also, teams might overlook him due to his main flaw, which is his lack of physicality. But, I have a feeling that at least one team in need of a linebacker will enjoy what they see both on tape and in character evaluations, so I predict Young will be drafted at some point in the 7th and final round. As for a team looking for extra linebackers, the Chicago Bears could use some depth at the position, as they only have three guys listed at inside linebacker: 2016 draft pick Nick Kwiatkoski, NFL veteran Danny Trevathan, and 2015 undrafted pickup John Timu. While Kwiatkoski and Timu are relatively new to the league, Trevathan has been in the league for a while and starred in the Denver Broncos' Super Bowl 50 win as part of that ferocious defense. So, perhaps Young can be mentored by Trevathan if the Bears draft him.

In summary, the UCLA class of 2018 looks to make a splash in this year's draft with five prospects in particular. First, Josh Rosen is a lock to be selected in the 1st round, as there are several teams that are desperate for a franchise quarterback. Then, Kolton Miller looks to be selected in the 1st round by a team that needs a big, athletic lineman, and his combine performance was absolutely legendary. Next, there's Jordan Lasley, a talented yet undisciplined wide receiver who could end up in a multitude of rounds due to his troubles off the field, but due to his upside, it's likely a team takes a chance on him in the 4th round. Moreover, Scott Quessenberry is a solid prospect at center, and teams looking for extra bodies at that position could select him in the 6th round due to both his skill and high character. Likewise, Kenny Young has great intangibles, but his skill set makes it difficult to see him as a starting linebacker; for this reason, he could find himself selected in the 7th round by a team that is in need of depth at linebacker and/or special teams. Overall, the draft is a time for all sides to be excited about, as it has enormous implications for teams and prospects alike. Here's to a successful draft for the UCLA Bruins this year.

All statistics courtesy of sports-reference.com, NFL.com, nflsavant.com, and uclabruins.com.

---

**Subscribe to our newsletter!**

email address Subscribe

© 2020 Bruin Sports Analytics. Follow us on Twitter!