

# Zach Edey

Purdue  
#1 (Tier 1)

- ENGINE
- SHOTMAKER
- STAY HOME RIM PROTECT.



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Zach Edey had one of the best college basketball seasons in history this past year for Purdue. The two-time National Player of the Year, there are nevertheless concerns about Edey's NBA translation. However, with nearly unprecedented strengths in the low post, it will be difficult to stop him where he's at his best.



# Dominance

The calculus of the NBA court is complex: even good NBA players can be rendered useless by creative scheme or specific mismatches. Edey seems to straddle the concept: he cannot defend perfectly in space therefore he cannot play; he cannot be guarded in the post therefore who can he not play against? I tend toward the latter argument. Edey's 80% rim finishing on 274 attempts is about as dominant of a scoring output at a single level as possible.

Edey's counter — assuming he isn't fouled first (Edey took a historic 436 free throw attempts) - is the midrange. He shot 44% on non-rim two pointers, the worst case scenario for an Edey offensive possession. It is fair to question whether these percentages will drop at all. Edey was double teamed almost every single possession in college, oftentimes triple teamed. That cannot happen at the same rate in the NBA given the quality of play finishers who can capitalize on being left open. In single coverage, unless he's facing an Embiid-level defender, and maybe even then, he's nearly unstoppable.



# Swing Skills

**With this level of offensive dominance, further enhanced by leading the NCAA in offensive rebounds, his opponent will have to play a true big. That true big, then, gives Edey someone to guard. The fairest question is how Edey will hold up having to guard endless pick and rolls. The cleanest way to provide rim deterrence is to simply be big. With a 9'7" standing reach, Edey can also move away from the basket in doses. Better POA defense will help, but Edey will most likely always struggle at least a little bit in the cat and mouse game within PNR.**

**The swing skill for Edey is his passing. He will have posted the fourth highest assist rate for a seven footer or taller among NCAA first round picks. That outranks the likes of Evan Mobley, Chet Holmgren and Brook Lopez, always considered very high feel players, Edey is excellent at monitoring where his teammates are, a necessity when help comes so hard.**



## Conclusion

**To take a risk on Edey at the top of this draft is a swing on productivity, size and touch. Armed with an array of post moves, Zach Edey could be the best low block scorer the NBA has seen in a while. With the athleticism and fitness to play big minutes, Edey could be a legitimate option to build around going forward.**



# Reed Sheppard

Kentucky  
#2 (Tier 2)

- MAESTRO
- PHYSICAL TABLE SETTER
- NON-TRADITIONAL RIMPRO



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Reed Sheppard is the master of all things connector, at least in a guard. He is pre-injury Lonzo Ball in a lot of ways, which gives insight into how he might be used in the pros. He is an excellent shooter, in the 99th percentile of efficiency on 109 catch and shoot attempts (51% from three). He is an excellent passer, with a 24% assist rate and 2.2 assist to turnover ratio. He is capable of light probes with the ball to create pockets for his passing even when he's not looking aggressively at the rim.



# Productivity

Sheppard is mostly, simply, effective. On defense he employs perfect technique on his swipes to garner a monster 4.6% steal rate. His timing is excellent to help him earn a 2.5% block rate despite being only 6'3". He may hunt stocks a little much, over-digging, but his nose for defensive playmaking is elite. Much like Lonzo, he is an excellent outlet passer, synergizing well with his glue hands.

But it is difficult to ascribe a particular ceiling on a player of this level of productivity who is also of exceptionally high feel. Sheppard has his problems - most of all his low 2PA volume - but will have chances to figure that out given the strong foundation of the rest of his skill base. He will be able to take and make a high volume of threes, and, when combined with his court vision, will need to be marked closely up to and beyond the three point line.



## Creation

**Sheppard will need to experiment from there, as we saw in doses of self-creation. But the margins are greater than one may think given his ability to hunt for space creatively.**

**Sheppard was highly effective shooting off the dribble in general, at 53% from two and 51% from three, suggesting that more volume is possible for both. Kentucky has been known to suppress guard talent under Calipari, though Sheppard was not exactly a known as a strong rim attacker previously, either.**



## Conclusion

**Betting on Sheppard early in the draft means banking in translatable skills like shooting on volume, ball movement and defensive acumen. That Sheppard was able to show his skill so effectively as a freshman, top ten in the country in Box Plus-Minus, suggests he can dominate his peers in his chosen domains. In fact, Reed is top 20 among high major freshmen since 2008 in BPM, outranking the likes of Joel Embiid, Jaren Jackson Jr., Trae Young, Deandre Ayton...the list goes on. While the hit rate isn't 100%, it's damn close.**





# Ron Holland

G League Ignite  
#3 (Tier 2)

- ENGINE
- 3&D WING
- PHYSICAL TABLE SETTER



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Ron Holland had as difficult of context to gauge his play as any prospect in the 2024 draft. The now-defunct G League Ignite team lacked any advantage creator outside of Holland, with guard play of gunners, crossover-spammers or both. As such, Holland was often left to get downhill from a standstill, far from maximizing his rim attacking abilities. This led to subpar efficiency in the paint for the 18-year-old, though not without some blame to assign to himself as well.



# Offense

At this point in his career, Holland struggles to diagnose which plan to choose when attacking, but showed flashes of figuring it out that made him look dominant should they gain consistency. Most of all, his passing on the move shined, a quick read of where the opening is to be found which matches well with his quickness and speed.

Holland's shot is poor, a pendulum in his gather which he tries to stop suddenly with a stiff release. But a reasonable FT% of 73% suggests the touch is not as bad as the horrific story told by the other numbers. His biggest obstacle to efficiency, however, is his gather point. Holland is inconsistent deciding where to plant his final step before heading to the rim. Once again, we saw moments where it clicked, and at times he was able to lower his shoulder at the optimal point to use his strength beyond his weight.



## Defense

**And then there's the defense. Holland is a menace, guarding on the perimeter and helping in an instant across the court. The feel isn't perfect - again confounded by Ignite's frantic, switch-heavy system - but Holland is always aggressive and has an innate sense of how to make a play on the ball. His reaction time is excellent, as are his hands.**



## Conclusion

**Holland will be productive by virtue of his intensity of play, but also his sudden moments of creativity. The passing is real, and useful in combination with his athleticism. These points altogether make him worthy of consideration at the very top of a weaker draft, even if he needs some patience to maximize the potential.**



# Donovan Clingan

Connecticut  
#4 (Tier 2)

- BODY BAGGER
- SOME HELP RIM PROTECT.



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Donovan Clingan had staggering rim protection numbers. When he was on the floor, UConn held opponents to 43% shooting at the rim, best in the nation and best among his peers Evan Mobley, Chet Holmgren, Walker Kessler and Dereck Lively. But Clingan was also just flat out productive, second in the country in Box Plus-Minus behind Zach Edey.

That's also second among all high major sophomores \*since 2008\*. Simply put, Clingan is in rarified air.



# Defense

To be that productive that size is threatening to an opponent. In particular, Clingan rebounds (top 20 in both offensive and defensive rebound rate) and blocks a ton of shots (#3) without fouling (3.6 per 40 minutes). He spends most of his time blocking out the sun, a large body bounding back and forth in fluid movements. If you had no sense of perspective you might think Clingan was closer to 6'5" based on how coordinated he is on the move. This allows him to move away from the basket as a rim protector while recovering back from distance.

He also has the traditional stuff needed to be an elite rim protector: he is large with a 9'7" standing reach, the same as Zach Edey. He has elite hand eye coordination which combines with his proprioception to allow him to venture just far enough out and to recover exactly on time.



## Offense

**The offensive end is more of a struggle, but Clingan has the tools to be a part of a high function offense. He is an elite screener and also a savvy passer, boasting a stellar 1.9 ATO. He can punish mismatches with decent touch inside, at the 85th percentile for layup finishing and 78th percentile for hook shot efficiency. He may not be shooting threes but he can create advantages with his size, also a convincing roller to the rim.**



## Conclusion

**Donovan Clingan has a chance to be one of the very best rim protectors in the entire NBA. At 7'1.75" without shoes and a 7'6.75" wingspan, Clingan is mobile enough to patrol the paint and even hedge. He can grease the wheels for a high level offense with his connecting abilities and rim pressure. Clingan's defense is as bankable as any in the class, and with more than passable offense. Draft him near the top and lock in your defensive anchor for the next decade.**





# Jonathan Mogbo

San Francisco  
#5 (Tier 2)

- BODY BAGGER
- VERTICAL DOMINATOR



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Jonathan Mogbo is a top ten athlete, top twenty processor and top twenty producer in this draft class. With those ingredients, he has to be ranked as a top ten player. Basketball is a combination of those three: how to run and jump past an opponent, how to read and react to what's happening, and how to make things happen with skill. Mogbo does well in each facet.



## Feel & Athlet.

**His athleticism shows up mostly in his vertical dominance. Mogbo dunked a lot, the third most in the NCAA at 86, and all while being 6'6.25". Mogbo was able to rearrange his footwork in an instant to prep for takeoff, after which he could rely on his 7'2" wingspan's catch radius. He is a very good vertical leaper, quick off the ground and tough to knock off his spot at his level of strength. He is also fast in straight line, ranking fifth in three-quarter sprint at the combine.**

**His processing shows up primarily through his passing. San Francisco ran ample offense through Mogbo this season, letting him operate out of triple threat at the top of the key. While Mogbo had time to go through rotations as a conductor, his quick reaction to teammates getting open and immediate execution bode well for his ability to utilize this skill in a more egalitarian system too.**



# Production

He lacks the complete big man mentality, uncertain at times where to position himself defending the big in PNR, but you can attribute some of that to him only recently playing that role. Mogbo grew from point guard to power forward size over his most recent three seasons, explaining his acumen handling and passing if also his lack of perfection defending near the hoop.

The production was killer in college, #12 in the country in Box Plus-Minus, with the largest caveat being the competition level. However, once again looking at the ingredients, I believe he has the tools to produce at a high level in the pros, too. The limiting factor is his outside shot, only 70% from the line and with only two threes attempted. But his rebounding is durable with his vertical power, his distributing is durable with his passing reads, and he will be devastating finishing near the rim. Not only did he dunk on everyone, but was a 71st percentile finisher on layups, too, many of which were high difficulty.



# Conclusion

**Jonathan Mogbo is also highly switchable, which is production in itself. He will provide a brick wall inside as well as on the perimeter with his impressive lateral sliding to stick with guards. He utilizes his long wingspan in both instances, clubs ready for a drubbing at any given moment.**

**Given where he is being mocked, it feels ridiculous to place him top ten on a board. But Mogbo has the ingredients needed to keep impacting the game at the next level. In addition, his game would only scale positively as he can enable shooters with his passing and enable passing with his play finishing. And, despite his age, there may be more room for improvement compared to most upperclassmen due to his late growth. But there are plenty of reasons to invest in Mogbo.**



# Devin Carter

Providence  
#6 (Tier 2)

- ENGINE
- RIM PROT.
- PHYSICAL TABLE SETTER



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Devin Carter is the most versatile prospect who could be plugged into nearly any playoff team's roster, ready to contribute tomorrow. He fixed his biggest flaw, his shooting, in a major way his third collegiate season. From 117 three point attempts made at a 30% rate his sophomore year to 223 attempts made at a 38% rate his junior year, Carter became one of the deadliest shooters from distance in the country. He took four catch and shoot threes per game and made 40% of them. He took three pull-up threes per game and made 34% of them.



# Offense

**This shooting progression is so important because the rest of Carter's game is so polished, solidified as NBA ready. It starts on the defense, where Carter is one of the best in the country at getting stocks without fouling. He is disciplined but aggressive when needed, and with the athletic tools to accelerate or leap into a play.**

**The NBA ready tools continue on offense, where Carter may lack the handle complexity to be a primary engine but is good enough in many ways to get second side action reps. His efficiency inside the arc has improved, too, up to 56% on 240 two point attempts. He has the fluidity to get into midrange jumpers and the spatial awareness to get to the cup. His athletic tools show up here, too, where he skied with his combine-best 35" standing vertical to reach 26 dunks in**



## Vertical

**Taking Devin Carter in the top ten may feel risky. He's 6'2.25" without shoes, albeit with a 6'8.75" wingspan, and an upperclassman. He would be the first NCAA upperclassman 6'3" or under drafted in the lottery since Davion Mitchell. The main difference is the access to vertical outcomes. First the three point volume, with Carter at three additional attempts per 100 possessions, showcasing a great versatility of attempts. Then the rebounding, where Carter snagged over 3x the boards. And the shotblocking, where Carter blocked 2.5x as shots.**



## Conclusion

**Carter is an easy bet to be a positive defensive player in the NBA. His feel for the game, tools and defensive versatility all speak to this. Layer on top of that plenty of offensive possibilities: three point volume, strong connective passing, some pull-up potential. The defense committed the majority of times he ran PNR, and he was in the 79th percentile of efficiency for those 152 possessions. Carter is ready to do some leading with the ball, some connecting without, and some protecting of the rim. There are few players who can do all three. For this reason he is worthy of a top ten pick.**





# Alexandre Sarr

## Introduction

Perth

#7 (Tier 2)

- 3&D WING

- UNICORN RIM PROTECT.



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

Alexandre Sarr, a bench player for the NBL's Perth Wildcats at age 18, is one of the most aesthetically pleasing to watch in the class with as fluid of movement as you'll see in a seven-foot-plus player. But those movement skills do not always translate into production, a concern at the Australian pro level as it would be in the NBA, as well. Sarr has all the movement skills you'd want: long strides that can become quick if needed, precision of footwork, quick hip flips, backpedaling, a quick leap. But he is missing one key ingredient needed to maximize his size: he



## Tall Wing

**While Sarr will add some strength, the combination of a high center of gravity and a very thin core mean Sarr will be more of a very tall wing than a true big. We have seen issues with Jaren Jackson Jr. and Evan Mobley at the five due to rebounding issues, and Sarr's defensive rebound rate is below both of their freshmen stats at only 18%. Interior physicality is extremely limited for Sarr, as his free throw rate of 0.38 paled in comparison to JJJ's or Mobley's identical 0.57.**



# Strengths

**Sarr has some obvious strengths, and they are all a delight to watch. He is a strong shotblocker, in spite of his lack of physicality, pouncing at opportune times with great hand-eye coordination. According to Synergy, Sarr held opponents to only 42% shooting at the rim, an astounding figure given his weaker frame.**

**He is a very strong ballhandler and good shooter and passer for his size, too. Sarr can be seen leading a break or eurostepping, fading away or up-and-undering smoothly to the hoop. But still, these were not enough to garner above-average efficiency, nor raise his assist rate above 10%.**



## Conclusion

**Alexandre Sarr is a complicated evaluation given his impeccable movement skills but middling overall production. The talent is worth gambling on, undoubtedly, as his athleticism will earn him plenty of chances to experiment. However I struggle to see him worth a #1 pick as many do, given his complete lack of physicality, rather a good bet within the top ten.**



# Rob Dillingham

Kentucky  
#8 (Tier 3)

- ENGINE



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Rob Dillingham proved the doubters wrong quickly into his collegiate career, pouring in points efficiently. No one went off as a scorer like Dilly, even though coming off the bench for Kentucky, prone to a heater at any given moment. Dillingham is also a joy to watch, playing with energy but also a playfulness. Those qualities feed into his playmaking, making him unpredictable in his artful stylistics.



## Offense

What makes Dillingham's outside shooting so special is his ability to score in a variety of ways. He was elite on pull-ups (82nd %ile efficiency on 117 attempts) in addition to catch and shoot (98th %ile efficiency on 90 attempts). But the tape revealed how truly difficult these attempts were, often moving at full speed to stop on a dime. Dillingham's ability to create a shot from scratch was evident in his interior scoring as well, though less efficient at only 53% at the rim given his smaller stature.

The degree of difficulty being sky-high suggests room for efficiency gains as he gets some easier looks in the pros rather than creating from a standstill at Kentucky.



## Defense

**The downside risk for Dillingham lies in his defense. Though he still brings that intensity and energy, he often struggles to match footwork against quick guards, vulnerable to rapid moves. He lacks strength, too, contributing to his 4.5 fouls per 40 minutes.**



## Conclusion

**But primaries often have defensive issues, and Dilly has the potential to be one. Dillingham typically prefers passing out of his scoring gravity rather than table-setting. He loves throwing lobs out of drives as well as finding shooters when the defense is tilted to protect against his perimeter scoring.**

**While certainly a score-first prospect, Dilly is far from a black hole. Primaries are tough to come by, and Dillingham is the best perimeter scoring offensive engine in class.**





# Nikola Topic

KK Crvena Zvezda  
#9 (Tier 3)

- ENGINE



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

There are very few primary bets in the 2024 draft class, which makes Topic's position in the mid-first round, at worst, very safe. He is an excellent passer, with a whopping 34% assist rate, aided by perhaps the best feel in the class (or, at the very least, best feel for age). He is vexed, however, by a middling outside shot, at 34% over the past two seasons on 215 attempts. However he has strong positive touch indicators, how he shot 89% from the line over that period and also 69% at the rim. With Mega he was also very effective shooting off the dribble, in the 70th percentile for efficiency on 45 attempts.



# Athleticism

**The major issue with Topic is his lack of overall athleticism. Though Topic has incredible acceleration, earning him seven rim attempts per game, that mobility does not translate to horizontal movements. Topic was often seen switching to big men rather than have to get through screens. His team encouraged this, instead leaving Topic vulnerable to post mismatches. Despite his lower body strength, Topic, with a poor standing reach for his height, is unable to contest successfully. He does not have the accuracy on swipes to deter bigs by poking the ball free, oftentimes not even trying to disturb the big or fouling soon following the entry pass.**



## Finishing

**Additionally, while Topic is able to get past his initial man easily, and has good forward-leaping, he does not have the upward force needed to dunk through contact. While very relevant for a player with as much constant rim pressure as Topic, he is able to compensate in a couple of ways. First, Topic is excellent sustaining even slight advantages he has against a rim protector. Once he gets a shoulder past he is able to play with pace to bait the defender into making a bad choice. Second, Topic is great at finishing from distance with his strong touch. He shot 63% on rim attempts from clearly outside the restricted area, with Tony Parker-esque touch.**



## Conclusion

**Nikola Topic might be the most difficult evaluation in this class, with unusually strong strengths perhaps helped by context (he had plenty of opportunities to drive, though drive he did...and same with passing) but even his weaknesses are livable. He will be a bad defender but not the worst in the league, which is the barometer we pull out for true offensive engine prospects. His shot is not great but he is very good at hitting them when on-ball. With his feel for the game, you'd want him on-ball anyways. He is not the most scalable prospect in that manner, but we're shooting for upside anyways. There are worse ways to use resources than giving Topic many touches per game to find out.**



# Terrence Shannon Jr.

## Introduction

Illinois

#10 (Tier 3)

-SHOTMAKER

-PHYSICAL TABLE SETTER



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

Terrence Shannon Jr. is one of the best athletes in the class, but offers more than that. His advancement as a movement shooter is tangible, 31-79 on pull-up threes this season after 19-58 the season before, 6-29 two seasons ago. He can more than hold his own as a defender, too. With these two factors we can discuss his scalability. TSJ is an efficient play finisher when downhill who can also create from a standstill when needed.



# Shotmaker

**It is imperative that shotmakers hold their own on the defensive end, as they are tertiary members of the offensive hierarchy. Unlike engines who expend much more energy on offense, shotmakers should be scaled up or down as needed. Therefore, when on the defensive half of the court, they need to be able to scale up or down, as well.**

**TSJ is the perfect example of this. He has a baseline of contribution in transition, a demon in the open court. But the shotmaking volume will likely be context dependent, as would his ballhandling reps (TSJ has a poor handle for position). Shannon Jr. can soak up this difference in defensive effort, an unscreenable defender who can make plays on the ball in an instant.**



## NBA Ready

**Shannon Jr. is not the highest feel player, and has less room to grow than others at already 23. But he has endless avenues to produce events on the court with his speed, physicality and baseline of dribble/pass/shoot skill. He has polished a lot of the latter over his career, and now is NBA ready.**



## Conclusion

**TSJ's athleticism and physicality combo is best seen in his 0.60 free throw rate this season, drawing a free throw on 27% of his drives. When you have to guard his three (42% when unguarded) he blows-by in an instant. Rim protectors cannot rotate in time for his crashing in. These are all NBA traits.**





# Kyle Filipowski

Duke

#11 (Tier 3)

- BODY BAGGER



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Kyle Filipowski is a jack knife, a sharp object who can be applied surgically or brandished wildly. But he's mostly just flat out useful. Filipowski is one of the four players I have given a 4+ rating to for each of scalability, readiness, versatility and specialness (also including Sheppard, Carter and Mogbo). All of those players are clear lotto values on my board, and Filipowski is no different. In fact, at 6'10.75" without shoes, he may have the highest upside of the bunch.



# Offense

On offense, the Duke center is a dribble / pass / shoot big, and all three aspects might be underrated given him being mocked post-lottery. The biggest hangup, by far, is his lack of a substantive wingspan, shorter than his height. But that also may contribute to greater ball control as Filipowski is an excellent handler for position. He was able to leverage this into greater rim pressure this season, top ten in the NCAA in rim attempts among those highly efficient as only a sophomore (Clingan was the only player younger in the group). He expanded his handle into constant spins into an opponent's body, but also tried the odd pull-up here and there - the latter went in at a 96th percentile efficiency.

His passing is strong, as he will be tied with Frank Kaminsky in assist rate among drafted players seven feet or taller in shoes. He excels at connective passing, highly accurate and passing with velocity just as the defense is in rotation. He is highly creative in delivery and using his handle and height in a way that makes the entire halfcourt a hunting ground. The shot is pretty good, at the 66th percentile for catch and shoot (36% from three) but career 72% from the line is middling. Regardless, it should be good enough to command some respect for spacing, and he can get them up with volume if needed.



# Defense

The defensive end is trickier for Filipowski, again harmed by his negative wingspan. But he is extremely mobile, able to switch onto shooting guards if not point guards, but rarely made to look foolish guarding on the perimeter. The limitation is his rim protection, where he was thrust into an unfair defensive role of primary rimpro. Give him a shotblocking five and hone in on his mobility, and Flip could still end up a positive defender. At his height, strength, mobility and solid feel for positioning, the ingredients are there to be a strong team defender. Most importantly, he is a very strong rebounder, again smartly leveraging his strength for position to snag 22.6% of defensive rebounding opportunities.



## Conclusion

**Filipowski is a bet on tools, but he's a bet on a lot of things. He's a bet on a ready made 20 year old prospect who still has untapped upside. He's a bet on scheme flexibility given his skill versatility and mobility. His collection of traits, frankly, are unique in combination. There is always overthinking this time of year. 2024 seems to be unfairly harsh towards Kyle Filipowski's game, an easy lottery prospect on my board.**



# Kel'el Ware

Indiana

#12 (Tier 3)

- **SHOTMAKER**  
- **SOME HELP RIM PROTECT.**



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Kel'el Ware is a special talent, a fluid athlete at seven-feet (without shoes) with sparks of skill across the spectrum. Ware has soft shooting touch, in the 86th percentile on runner efficiency, 82nd percentile in hook efficiency, 76th percentile on layup efficiency. He was in the 82nd percentile for catch and shoot efficiency, too. He's seven feet tall and is an elite play finisher. It's not difficult to see the pitch.



## Pros & Cons

**The downside with Ware is simple: he has sub-optimal feel for the game. This most prominently shows up in his defensive positioning, often making the wrong read or simply standing in the wrong spot, looking a bit lost.**

**Nevertheless, Ware's athleticism made it so it often did not matter. Indiana kept opponents out of the paint more when Ware was on the court, and opponents shot a low 52% against him at the rim. Ware is my top athlete in the class, utilizing his 7'4.5" wingspan while also being nimble enough to sprint out to the three point line and back, slide with guards for at least brief periods, leap quickly and locate the ball in the air.**



## Passing

**Additionally, Ware still showcased moments of it all clicking. Despite the poor feel he still managed a 1.0 assist to turnover ratio. Once or twice per game, you could catch Ware syncing up in lockstep with his teammates, then passing with perfect timing to a teammate on the move.**



## Conclusion

**With Ware, I could easily let the poor defensive feel color my entire perspective. But that is just one weakness, and the strengths are plentiful. He has the athleticism and touch to be an elite play finisher, and is mobile and big enough to still have an impact on defense. The starter upside may be less than likely, but if he hits then good starter outcomes are within reach.**





# Oso Ighodaro

Marquette  
#13 (Tier 3)

- BODY BAGGER
- UNICORN RIM PROTECT.



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Oso Ighodaro has been a favorite of mine for years now, appealing for his versatility as a 6'9.5" (without shoes) big man. As center for Marquette, they were +28 net rating with him on, ten points better than when he sat. But Ighodaro is not perfect, with some glaring flaws that reduce his utility in the modern game.



## Pros & Cons

**First, Oso cannot rebound as a five. With a short 6'11" wingspan, Ighodaro only secured 15% of defensive rebound opportunities, closer to a PF's grade than a center. Second, Oso cannot shoot from the outside. He only shot 62% from the line over 263 rim attempts and made zero threes in his college career. The combination of not big enough for a five and not enough of a shooter to play on the perimeter is tough, but not impossible, to overcome.**

**Ighodaro mitigates these negative factors in several ways. He is extremely scheme versatile guarding the screener in a pick and roll, capable of a full switch and blitz and recover or dropping to the basket. His great hands and quick, high leaping (35 inch vertical) make him a threat to deter possessions from many angles. Despite being short for a primary rim protector, Marquette only allowed 51% shooting at the rim when he was on compared to 67% when off.**



## Offense

Oso also has a killer floater. He shot a shockingly strong 52% from the midrange, just over half of which were assisted, and almost primarily through this through the shoulder push shot. Synergy places him in the 91st percentile for runner efficiency (88 attempts) and 77th percentile for hook shot efficiency (60 attempts). Pair that with rim attacking in the form of 69 dunks in 36 games and you have some scoring value.

In addition, Ighodaro is an extremely good passer. He is particularly adept hitting cutters with stellar timing, feeding the ball through defenders out of the high post. He loves conducting off of dribble hand offs, good enough of a ballhandler to turn and attack if left alone. He may not be an outside shooter but he can enhance an offense while providing a safety valve scoring option with his floater.



## Conclusion

**In all, Oso Ighodaro is one of the more interesting prospects in the 2024 draft. His skills are league-ready, even if he is a tweener athletically. One imagines him thriving in a motion/screen-heavy system where bigs are empowered to pass and move. He can scramble on defense and box out bigger opponents, even if not a mega rebounder himself. Get him in the right system and let him serve as an unusual but high value connector.**



# Isaiah Collier

Southern California  
#14 (Tier 3)

- ENGINE



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Isaiah Collier is special in important ways, one of the top offensive engine prospects in the class. Collier can live in the paint, bursting through to create new advantages and holding space with exceptional strength. From there he can use strong touch to finish around the rim, or find a scorer with high-value assists.



## Progress

**It was not all easy for Collier, in spite of his athletic strengths. Seven of his 27 games played were negative in Box Plus-Minus; importantly, however, five of those occurred early in the season. In particular, Isaiah Collier figured out his turnover problem, starting the season at five per game but ending just above three. This didn't stop him from seeking high-value assists, a risk-taker but now responsible one.**



# Tools

**The biggest downside risk with Collier surrounds his outside shooting projection. He hit only 34% of his 80 three point attempts and 67% of his 156 free throws. But there are reasons for optimism: his touch at the rim was excellent (72nd percentile efficiency), as is his touch as a passer. He also can get to the paint regardless of how tightly covered, and with a midrange counter where he shot 40%. 74% of his rim makes were unassisted as well as 81% of his midrange makes, showcasing how Collier was an elite self-creator.**

**At 6'2.5", it will be an uphill climb for Collier to be a positive defender, but he has the tools for it. While positioning was just okay, with imperfections normal for a freshman, Collier can slide great lengths in an instant and has the physicality to provide a wall of resistance. He does not rebound much, but contributed through thievery with 1.5 steals per game.**



## Conclusion

**Isaiah Collier has a major red flag attached as a short guard somewhat of a non-shooter. But he can create and sustain countless advantages, with finishing touch and passing creativity to compensate. Starting guards need unique athletic traits, and Collier has that with his quickness and strength. While a below the rim player, Collier still knows how to apply his physicality smartly. Take the constant paint touches and add in high feel passing and you can run much of an offense. If the outside shot comes around, Collier could even end up a good starter.**





# Tyler Smith

G League Ignite  
#15 (Tier 3)

- 3&D WING



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Tyler Smith is one of the most difficult evaluations in the class, the most productive of the three Ignite prospects on a per possession basis and also the most efficient. Tyler is a quintessential 3&D wing by look, but has one glaring flaw: he cannot keep track of his man.



## Pros & Cons

**This is an issue, even if just by a little bit, nearly every possession. Transition defense presents an issue for Smith, often out of sync with who he's supposed to cover. The Ignite's chaotic scheme surely did not help, but Tyler looked noticeably worse at staying with his man than his teammates.**

**The good jumps off the page. Smith took 5.4 threes per 36 minutes and converted at a 36% rate, shooting 73% at the line. Not elite numbers but strong for a 6'10.25" inch wing with a 7'1" wingspan. He was particularly good on open catch and shoot attempts, knocking down 46% from three, forcing defenders to close out hard to have a chance to contest. He also flashed signs of a pull-up two, with a clean simple setup and consistent form.**



## Strengths

**Beyond that, Smith also sported a better assist rate than Matas Buzelis, showing that he's not a low feel player in all aspects of the game. He's a very good athlete, a fluid mover for size who can get to the rim quickly. He has a good natural sense of how to be physical, finishing in traffic or taking a charge on defense.**



## Conclusion

**Writing this, I become higher on Smith's upside. Only 19 playing in a pro league, Smith put up 14 points, 5 rebounds, 1.3 assists, 0.9 blocks and 0.8 steals in only 22 minutes per game. More reps and general growth could help Smith figure out his focus issue. It hasn't held him back from being a useful player, and the sky is the limit if he figures it out.**



# Matas Buzelis

G League Ignite  
#16 (Tier 3)

- 3&D WING  
- ROVING RIM PROTECT.



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Against a competition level as tough as the G League, Matas Buzelis was often at a disadvantage, some his own fault while otherwise the context. At this point, he has little by way of comfort on the court, and will likely struggle mightily to start his NBA career. But it will get easier.



# Offense

The obvious swing skill for Matas is his outside shot. He has a solid handle for his 6'8.75" height, but a poor first step to maximize it. Rather, and also due to his lack of shooting gravity, he is left to problem solve creatively a path to the basket or midrange. The form seems okay, good upper body but with a potential lower body misalignment. But the percentages were problematically low, at 26% from three and 70% from the line.

The promise for Matas might be in his pull-up from two, where he shot 18-38 compared to 1-15 on pull-up threes. The fluidity is there, as is the handle getting into shot prep. His deceleration is much stronger than his acceleration, creating room in midrange even when he cannot separate initially.



## Defense

**He has more promise on the defensive end. Buzelis is especially adept as a shotblocker, able to stay in position as he maintains his fluidity of movement when sliding. His 6'10" wingspan is enough to deter shots at the rim and block unsuspecting drivers, especially combined with durable leaping and good timing.**

**Buzelis is not the quickest - he'll get blown by when takes with checking quicker wings - and not strong enough to handle any true big in the post. His projection is simple as a roving PF, with the awareness to make plays in help.**



## Conclusion

**Matas Buzelis is a tough evaluation, as Ignite afforded no easy buckets to its own team while having no semblance of a defensive structure. Buzelis seems like a player who would thrive in structure, a good rule-follower who needs others to get him up. His level of production is a major question mark, a good shotblocker but uncertain as a contributor everywhere else. Ultimately, I side with Buzelis' strong feel for the game compensating for his good enough production and good enough athleticism. He displayed enough creativity making plays on both ends it is easy to imagine some aspects sticking. While not worth a high draft pick given his inconsistencies, an end of lotto swing on archetype makes sense.**





# DaRon Holmes II

## Introduction

Dayton

#17 (Tier 3)

- BODY BAGGER
- VERTICAL DOMINATOR



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

Perhaps the most versatile big in the class (yes, even compared to Alex Sarr), DaRon Holmes II dominated the A-10. The conference's player of the year, Holmes averaged 20.4 points, 8.5 rebounds, 2.6 assists, 0.9 steals and 2.1 blocks per game. He did this while shooting 39% on 83 threes, 59% on 316 twos and 71% on 289 free throws. There are few holes in Holmes' game.



## Pros & Cons

**Beneath this coat of consistency nevertheless there are some weaknesses. Holmes is unlikely to be a center-level rebounder or rim protector nor quick enough to guard the faster power forwards. However, he makes up for it with his strong feel. He times his sliding well and is disciplined as a rim protector.**

**Additionally, he is prepared for a pro offense. While his most used play type is post up (typically out of drives), Holmes was frequently running the early offense from the top of the key. He pick and popped as often as he rolled to the basket or slipped. While he was just above average efficiency on pops and slips, he'll make his money as a roller to the basket, where he shot 74%.**



## Body Bagger

**This combination of dunking and passing, especially when combined with strong screening, is deadly. He fits my Body Bagger archetype to a tee, a bruising big with some mobility, capable of setting strong screens and also conducting more complex reads out of DHOs. With his newfound three point shot, this potent formula only intensifies.**



## Conclusion

**Holmes fits on a modern offense with his quick read of the court and scoring versatility. He can survive at either position on the defensive side, assuming some scheme flexibility to keep him in optimal spots. But the skill and tools are convincing, applied smartly with high feel.**



# Ryan Dunn

Virginia  
#18 (Tier 3)

- ROVING RIM PROTECT.
- VERTICAL DOMINATOR



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Ryan Dunn is one of the most polarizing prospects due to the polarities of his game. He is the best defensive prospect in the class, and the worst offensive one. These aren't exaggerations: Dunn is a menace on the defensive end, disrupting actions at the level in addition to at the rim. On offense he shot under 19% from three, 5 for 27 on unguarded catch and shoot. But the defense may be that good, providing a cushion for his offensive value.



## Pros & Cons

Dunn doesn't have to be great on offense to be a positive contributor: he just has to be a serviceable one. Though the bad aspects of his offense are agonizing (the misses are bad misses), I believe there may still be a role for him at the next level. He can dribble a little bit and has okay connective passing instincts. He is also athletic enough to be a compelling rim finisher, assuming he has a runway. Dunn shot a 75th percentile 73% off of cuts, and was in the 93rd percentile by shooting 75% in transition.

Basketball is about producing some events while limiting others, and Dunn checks every box on the defensive end. He is excellent in any pick and roll defensive scheme, quick enough to switch, agile enough to hedge or blitz, and a good enough shotblocker to drop. His strides are very long but still quick. His wingspan is long as well (7'1.5"), and Dunn is highly accurate with his hand placement.



## Defense

**He was enabled to chase stocks in UVA's grinding system, and get stocks he did. In fact, only Nerlens Noel exceeded all of his steal, block and defensive rebounding rates, according to the barttorvik.com database which goes back to 2008. If you relax the filters, only four other high major underclassmen drafted come close (Anthony Davis, Nerlens Noel, Willie Cauley-Stein and Jordan Bell). And while he certainly hunts for blocks, it does not prevent him from staying in position. Dunn made very few mistakes, with only AD from that list having fewer fouls per 40 minutes.**



## Conclusion

**Dunn is a smart player, a fantastic athlete and one of the highest producing defensive players in recent memory. If he can stay on the court, he will become an All-Defense caliber player. The offense may be ugly for the most part, but he is too good of an athlete while having some baseline of ball skills (he can dribble and pass better than most bigs, and Dunn blocks shots and rebounds like a big). While Dunn is a flawed prospect, no one is perfect, and his strengths are extremely reliable. If he can figure out some offensive basics, his ceiling might be much higher than is being credited for.**





# Stephon Castle

Connecticut  
#19 (Tier 3)

- BODY BAGGER  
- PHYSICAL TABLE SETTER



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

## Introduction

Stephon Castle is not a perfect athlete, but it might not matter. Specifically, he has poor lateral foot speed and can get ‘stuck in the mud,’ unable to get vertical pop unless he has a full head of steam. Counteracting that, and significantly, is his strong feel for the game and internal wiring. Castle, and quite easily, has top 10 feel for the class, perhaps even top 5. On top of that, he is a tall 6’5.5” without shoes for someone who can play guard, with a 6’9” wingspan and 210 pounds he uses well.



# Production

Castle was also flat-out productive as a starter for champion UConn. His 3.1 Offensive Box Plus-Minus and 2.4 Defensive Box Plus-Minus point to someone who contributed heavily on both ends of the floor. These were marks eclipsed by only three other high major freshmen. He got stocks, assists without turnovers, and rebounds. Castle was also often seen taking on the most difficult defensive assignments, acquitting himself nicely in spite of aforementioned foot speed.

His feel shows up in many ways. He makes up for his poor lateral mobility by taking clever routes as well as reacting in an instant, predicting exactly where his opponent will go. One imagines there were more assists available to him if he were to run pick and roll more often, as we saw in high school (Castle views himself as a point guard). He reacts quickly with the ball in his hand as well as not, picking up points as a cutter or even a lob threat.



# Shooting

**The major issue with Castle is the shot, only 27% from three and 35% from midrange while shooting a better, if not great, 76% from the line. His shot is not very adaptable, slow and a heavy two-motion trebuchet. The heavy majority of his catch and shoot looks were unguarded, and he shot terribly on those. But, once again, we see his strong feel compensating. Even when opponents gave a cushion, Castle was able to seek out driving routes with some success: either shallow drives to find space for a passing idea, or getting under an opponent's shoulder to draw a foul or make a tough finish.**



## Conclusion

**And with a player as high in feel as Castle, it is difficult to write off future improvements. Even if the shot never comes around you can count on him to find ways to contribute, and if it does he may even have primary-esque capabilities. Given that risk-reward profile, I view Castle as a top 20 pick in the 2024 NBA draft.**



# Carlton Carrington

## Introduction

Pittsburgh  
#20 (Tier 3)

- MAESTRO - ENGINE  
- SHOTMAKER



SCALABILITY



READINESS



SPECIALNESS



VERSATILITY

Carlton “Bub” Carrington is a perfect litmus test for what you value in a player. The highs are very high - Bub took 250 pull-up attempts and hit them at an 83rd percentile clip. He did this handling PNR hedges, too, as he shot 43% on 127 threes as pick and roll ball handler when the defense commits. He was also top ten among high major freshmen in assist rate, assisting one of every four teammate makes.



# Specialness

**On the downside, Bub looks like a mediocre athlete by the stats. He had a 1% steal rate and 0.9% block rate and only two dunks despite being 6'5". He could hit the defensive glass but was ineffective on the offensive one. He very rarely got to the line. In addition, he took a modest number of catch and shoot attempts and had subpar efficiency on those attempts.**

**But boy, was Bub a flamethrower. When he was on, he was on, scoring 15 or more points about half of his games with a 27 point and two 24 point outings. In the former, he hit seven threes out of twelve attempts. His scoring is scalable, and is his ball movement: Bub delivers crisp passes right into shooting pockets, with a calm demeanor for such a young player (he was youngest in the ACC at 18 until July).**



# Optimism

**I tend to fall on the optimistic side for one major reason: Bub will get stronger, and those athletic deficiencies will diminish. When I watch tape I see Bub increasingly searching for paths to the rim as the season went on. The numbers stayed low, but I see a path to Carrington hitting the minimum athletic thresholds to keep him on the court.**

**The second reason for optimism is Bub's sense of exploration. When you shoot that many pull-ups, you have to have a tight handle and many avenues to volume. The Pittsburgh system encouraged that, but also speaks to his upside as a creator.**



# Conclusion

**The second reason for optimism is Bub's sense of exploration. When you shoot that many pull-ups, you have to have a tight handle and many avenues to volume.**

**The Pittsburgh system encouraged that, but also speaks to his upside as a creator. If he can become a floater threat to keep opponents honest near the three point line, he could become a devastating scorer. Finally, aesthetically, Carrington has an elevated shot with a springboard release that makes this pull-up volume safe at the next level, if enabled.**

**Carrington is one of the most complex evaluations in the 2024 class. But with star-making shooting and passing upside, I find it easy to ignore the floor outcomes in favor of searching for his lofty ceiling.**

