



NEXT LEVEL FOOTBALL POSITIONAL GRADING SYSTEM

GRADING SCALE

5 EXCEPTIONAL...high end, effortless, stands out, special

4 SOLID...performs consistently, skilled, talented but not special

3 BORDERLINE...some talent, little flash, effort and technique are important to his success. Candidly speaking, a 3 is not good enough

2 UNRELIABLE...struggles, has some talent, but not going to get it done enough of the time

1 UNACCEPTABLE...irrelevant of effort or coaching, not good enough

SYMBOLS: (+) OR (-) can be used next to any number 3 or above...(+) reflects the player is at the high end of grade and a (-) the low of the grade.

CRITICAL TRAITS FOR ALL POSITIONS

ATHLETIC ABILITY...Body control, ease of movement, quickness, maintains balance after engaging an opponent

PLAY SPEED...The speed he plays at to carry out assignments or make plays

PLAY STRENGTH...Wins the one-on-one physical confrontations. Finishes in a dominant position, at worst can hold his ground

COMPETITIVE NATURE...Top effort level, plays with a high level of intensity regardless of situation

INSTINCTS...Reads and reacts quickly, top mental speed, a sixth sense, a real feel for the position

PRODUCTION...Game day results based on the player's talent, effort and execution of carrying out his assignment

OFFENSIVE POSITION-SPECIFIC TRAITS

QB

ACCURACY: Ability to hit the receiver in stride on short, intermediate and/or downfield throws without making receiver adjust his route

ARM STRENGTH: Ability to generate and maintain velocity on the ball for intermediate throws 15-20 yards beyond the line of scrimmage while creating little arc (air) under the ball prior to the reception

DEEP BALL: Ability to get the ball downfield past 30 yards without the nose of the ball turning vertical

POISE: Decision making under pressure (i.e., when the designed play breaks down or the rush penetrates protection); more to do with his intuitive thinking;



not doing anything mindless with the ball

EXTEND A PLAY: Ability to keep a play ‘alive’ when things break down by creating enough space to make an accurate throw

TOUCH (Emphasis on shorter throws around the line of scrimmage): ability to put the right speed and trajectory on the ball without making the receiver adjust his body or disrupt his route

WR

HANDS: Catches the ball with ease with soft or strong hands; few drops; top eye/hand coordination

SEPARATION QUICKNESS: Can create instant space between him and the defender while running precise, disciplined routes

BLOCKING: Can make contact with a defender and sustain his block after contact (emphasis on feet and use of hands)

ADJUST TO BALL (Body Control): Can extend his body in any direction to make a grab; has a wide catching radius

YAC (Yards After Catch): Consistent ability to gain positive yards after the catch; this trait can be exhibited through his mental toughness, physical strength, or athletic prowess (or a combination of all three)

FB

IN-LINE BLOCKING: Gets movement or a solid stalemate on a defender inside the tackle-box

FINESSE BLOCK: Can adjust to a “moving” defender or make a block in the perimeter

HANDS: Can make a grab w/ his hands while adjusting to the ball

IN-LINE RUNNING: Can get the tough yards inside because of his vision (pick and slide) or his ability to keep his momentum going forward after contact; determined mindset

RB

BURST: Gets to top speed instantly from a standing or slightly moving position; sudden acceleration; ability to elude pursuit with a burst of speed



ADJUST TO BALL: Ability to adjust to the ball w/ his hands while maintaining his feet and upfield momentum

RUN AFTER CATCH: Ability to take on and break a tackle or elude defenders while gaining positive yards (5 or more yards)

YARDS AFTER CONTACT: Ability to maintain balance and forward progress after impact for extra yards

VISION/CREATE: Ability to find daylight or improvise for positive yards when a play breaks down

BLOCKING: Willingness to take on a defender and create a stalemate or neutralize his upfield momentum

OL

ANCHOR: Functional strength on contact; to hold ground as a pass protector or in run blocking

USE OF HANDS: Ability to leverage with hands while locking on to an opponent and controlling him in his assigned area

DRIVE BLOCK: Can get movement and/or seal an opponent off after contact while securing or creating a running lane

FINESSE BLOCK: Ability to sustain a block directionally without giving ground

PASS PRO: Ability to engage and stay between rusher and QB without giving any or little ground

TE

IN-LINE BLOCK: Can get movement and/or seal an opponent off after contact while securing or creating a running lane

PASS PRO: Ability to set up and hold enough ground w/o getting collapsed into the pocket

FINESSE BLOCK: Ability to sustain a block directionally without giving ground

GET OPEN: Has the separation quickness to uncover and make himself an open target; ability to find the soft spots in zone coverage

H-BACK TRAITS: Can act as a fullback or be used moving laterally along the line of scrimmage pre-snap and/or lines up as a slot receiver (demonstrates he can play effectively at another position)

HANDS/ADJUST TO BALL (Hands/Body Control): Ability to make a grab with his hands while extending himself



DEFENSIVE POSITION-SPECIFIC TRAITS

DC

MAN TO MAN COVERAGE: Ability to mirror a receiver, making it difficult for a QB to target him

ZONE AWARENESS: Feel for playing a receiver in his zone while maintaining eye contact with QB

MAKE PLAYS ON BALL: Ability to get hands on the ball by playing through a receiver to deflect, strip, or intercept the ball

RUN SUPPORT: Ability to force and constrict a running lane; sure tackling for a minimal gain

OPEN-FIELD TACKLING: Ability to take down a runner in space with sure tackling

CHASE IN COVERAGE: Ability to stay w/ a receiver downfield without losing ground

FS AND SS

OPEN-FIELD TACKLING: Ability to come from “high” to “low” and make a sure tackle

RUN SUPPORT: Filling a running lane at, or near, the line of scrimmage for a sure tackle

MAN TO MAN COVERAGE: Ability to mirror a receiver, making it difficult for a QB to target him

RANGE: Ability to overlap to either side of the field from the middle of the field and/or to the end zone from half field

MAKE PLAYS ON BALL: Ability to get hands on the ball by playing through a receiver to deflect, strip, or intercept the ball

DE

UPFIELD BURST: Take-off quickness and straight-line speed up the field; “Get-off” once the ball is snapped

USE OF HANDS: Ability to maneuver or escape blockers w/ hands while getting to the ball

PASS RUSH: Ability to get upfield and to the QB while engaging a blocker; a knack for utilizing strength, quickness, speed, instincts, athletic ability, and use of hands to rush the passer

VS. RUN: Ability to read, react, and play through blockers to get to the ball and/or the ability to hold the “point” to disrupt the play

DT

INITIAL QUICKNESS: Reaction quickness; ability to disrupt and play across the line of scrimmage



PASS RUSH (Upfield Push): Generates enough pressure to prevent QB from stepping up into the pocket

VS. RUN: Ability to read, react, and play through blockers in his assigned area to make, or assist in making, a tackle (Focus on his ability to accelerate off a blocker)

USE OF HANDS: Ability to create space, leverage, and shed a blocker w/ his hands (doesn't get tied up w/ a blocker)

TACKLING: Ability to down a runner on contact

OLB

VS. RUN AT HIM: Ability to take on and shed or slip a blocker to make a play in his assigned area

VS. RUN IN PERIMETER: Ability to make or affect plays in long pursuit or in space

PASS RUSH: Sufficient speed, strength, and/or knack for getting upfield and to the QB

ZONE AWARENESS: Ability to drop in coverage while keeping his head on a swivel, sensing receivers, and breaking and reacting to the ball

MAKE PLAYS ON BALL: Ability to get hands on the ball by playing through a receiver to deflect, strip, or intercept the ball

MAN TO MAN COVERAGE: Ability to mirror a TE or RB downfield making it difficult for a QB to target his receiver

MLB

INSTINCTS: Ability to read and react instantly to the run or pass; disciplined and not easily fooled; great feel for the position

VS. INSIDE RUN: Ability to disrupt by taking on or slipping blocks to make, or assist in making, the tackle in his assigned area

VS. RUN IN PERIMETER: Ability to get outside the tackle box and make plays in the open field

ZONE AWARENESS: Ability to drop in coverage while keeping his head on a swivel, sensing receivers, and breaking and reacting to the ball

MAKE PLAYS ON BALL: Ability to get hands on the ball by playing through a receiver to deflect, strip, or intercept the ball

SCHEME:

CONCERNS:

POSITIVES:

SUMMARY: