

BASIC PROSPECT INFORMATION											
	Name   Caleb Downs		Position   Safety		School   Ohio State (Alabama Transfer)			Class   Junior			
	Date of birth   12/10/2004		Jersey Number   #2		247 Recruit Rating   ★★★★★			Draft Class   2026 NFL Draft			
	MEASUREMENTS										
	Height   6' 0"		Weight   206 lbs		Arm Length   30 1/4"			Hand Span   9 1/2"			
NOTABLE AWARDS											
Consensus First-Team All-American, 2025 Jim Thorpe Award, Big Ten Nagurski-Woodson Defensive 2025 Lott IMPACT Trophy,											
NFL TRANSITION											
Draft Grade: First Round		Player Comparison   Budda Baker		Scheme Fit   Split-safety/Match Zone Safety			Player Archetype   Versatile defensive chess piece who plays the role of "defensive quarterback"				
NFL COMBINE ATHLETIC TESTING											
40 Yard Dash		10 Yard Split		Bench Press		Vertical Jump		Broad Jump		3 Cone Drill	20 Yard Shuttle
DNP		DNP		DNP		DNP		DNP		DNP	DNP
CAREER TACKLING STATISTICS (PFF)											
Years:	Games Played	Tackles	Assist Tackles	Missed Tackles	Missed Tackle %	Defensive Stops	Forced Fumbles	Sacks	Hits		
2025	14	58	11	9	11.5%	35	2	1	2		
2024	16	70	15	10	10.5%	31	0	1	0		
2023 (UA)	14	85	24	14	11.4%	30	0	0	0		
Career	44	213	50	33	11.1%	96	2	2	2		
CAREER PASS COVERAGE STATISTICS (PFF)											
Years:	Targets	Receptions Allowed	Catch % Allowed	Yards Allowed	YAC Allowed	Touchdowns Allowed	Interceptions	Pass Break-Ups	Penalties		
2025	39	26	66.7%	171	96	0	2	1	2		
2024	32	20	62.5%	188	138	0	2	3	0		
2023 (UA)	51	33	64.7%	453	255	2	2	3	2		
Career	122	79	64.8%	812	489	2	6	7	4		
SCOUTING REPORT											
Home Games Scouted:		Texas, Grambling, Ohio, Minnesota, Penn State, UCLA, Rutgers				Away Games Scouted:		Washington, Illinois, Wisconsin, Purdue, Michigan			
Conference Championship Games, Bowl Games, and College Football Playoff (CFB) Games Scouted:					Indiana (Big Ten Championship), Miami (CFP)						
<p>Summary — Caleb Downs enters the 2026 NFL Draft as the premier safety in the class and one of the most complete defensive prospects available. A true hybrid defender, Downs wins with elite football intelligence, positional versatility, and consistent snap-to-snap execution rather than rare size or overwhelming physical traits. He thrives in split-safety, quarters, and disguise-heavy systems where his processing speed, anticipation, and downhill trigger allow him to close space and erase throwing windows before they fully develop. Downs projects as an immediate NFL starter capable of aligning in the box, operating as a robber, rotating post-snap, or functioning from depth in match-zone coverage. While he has not been tasked with single high responsibilities often, he certainly has the football intelligence and ability to operate in this role at a high level as well, though his skillset is maximized in the aforementioned box, robber, cover-2, and match-zone concepts. In the run game, he is highly reliable and a technically sound tackler. Where Downs brings another level to a defense is as a defensive communicator where he consistently elevates the structure of the unit around him. He can be seen identifying tendencies and communicating these observations to others within the defensive structure and correcting out-of-position defenders prior to the snap. When it comes to hesitations within Downs' game, they are for the most part out of his control. When it comes to safeties being selected in the top 5 or even 10 in the NFL Draft, typically the NFL requires them to be more physically imposing or hyper-athletic. Downs, however, has average size and athleticism. His superpower does not come from his physique profile but from between the ears where he operates as a coach on the field. Additionally, while his ball production can be slightly modest, his tape reflects a controlled, disciplined playmaker with a long-term Pro-Bowl outlook and the potential to become an All-Pro caliber defensive cornerstone. Overall, Downs profiles as a defensive cornerstone for an NFL defense—a modern hybrid safety whose value transcends positional labels and whose impact should be felt immediately at the next level.</p>											
<p><b>What Encouraged Me</b></p> <p><b>Durability</b> — Three-year starter with no significant injury history or games missed due to injury. He has proven his availability and workload tolerance, which is likely to translate to the next level seamlessly.</p> <p><b>Positional Versatility</b> — Downs aligns effectively as a split safety, box defender, robber, nickel, and occasional single-high. His ability to function across multiple roles allows defensive coordinators to disguise intentions without substituting personnel.</p> <p><b>Football IQ and Mental Processing</b> — Downs' elite football intelligence allows him to process information at an elite level both pre and post-snap, consistently diagnosing route concepts, run schemes, and offensive intent before plays fully develop. He functions as a defensive stabilizer, reducing mental errors across the unit and enabling coverage disguise. He sees the game faster than most defensive backs, allowing him to close throwing windows, undercut routes, and trigger downhill before blockers can climb. His speed of recognition is more impactful than pure timed speed.</p> <p><b>Communication</b> — Operates as a back-end quarterback, directing traffic and adjusting alignments pre-snap. Teammates clearly rely on him for structural organization.</p> <p><b>Zone Coverage</b> — Downs demonstrates advanced spatial awareness and route recognition in quarters and match-zone structures. He rarely vacates his landmark and consistently squeezes windows without overcommitting.</p> <p><b>Run Defense</b> — Downs will consistently explode downhill with urgency and take disciplined pursuit angles. He fits gaps cleanly from depth and limits explosive runs before they reach the second level.</p> <p><b>Tackling</b> — Generally a technically sound and controlled tackler in space, regularly breaking down and coming to balance leading into contact. Consistently ended up as a leading tackler in multiple roles while playing in two different programs.</p> <p><b>Intangibles and Leadership</b> — Downs brings day-one leadership presence to the secondary, functioning as a defensive quarterback with strong communication and command pre-snap. Highly competitive, durable, and assignment-reliable, he elevates the structure and confidence of the unit around him. He will be a steady presence in a quality NFL secondary for 10+ years.</p>					<p><b>Areas for Growth or Concern</b></p> <p><b>Lacks Elite Size</b> — Lacks prototype mass for a full-time enforcer role. Durability has not proven to be an issue to this point, but extended seasons in a box safety role can take a toll over the course of a season. Adding more functional mass would benefit Downs in his transition to the league if his role is going to be predominantly in a box alignment.</p> <p><b>Average Athlete</b> — Downs does not have many elite traits from an athletic perspective. He plays fast due to processing, but doesn't demonstrate the elite level athleticism of safety prospects historically considered in the top five to ten selections in the draft.</p> <p><b>Coverage Limitations</b> — Downs can be challenged at the catch point against longer tight ends or stacked by quicker route runners in pure man situations. Downs wins more with positioning than physical dominance. There has also been a low number of instances where Downs has had the opportunity to operate in a single-high look. His ball skills don't always represent how intelligent he is as a player as he is regularly in the right place, but often doesn't get targeted. He will also occasionally lock onto the quarterback's eyes too long, allowing experienced passers to manipulate him and open voids behind him.</p> <p><b>Over-Aggression</b> — While Downs frequently comes to balance in tackle situations, at times he still will occasionally get caught hunting the impact plays and arriving slightly out of control, leading to missed tackle or leverage compromise. With a 11.1% missed tackle rate, the rate isn't glaring, but Downs needs to increase his wrap up tackling consistency as there are too many instances for a prospect of his caliber that he dives for feet or ankles which resulted in the majority of his missed tackles.</p>						