

	BASIC PROSPECT INFORMATION								
	Name Kayden McDonald	Position Interior Defensive Line	School Ohio State	Class Junior					
	Date of birth 03/12/2005	Jersey Number #98	247 Recruit Rating ★★★★★	Draft Class 2026 NFL Draft					
	MEASUREMENTS								
	Height 6' 2 1/8"	Weight 326 lbs	Arm Length 32 1/4"	Hand span 9 3/4"					
NOTABLE AWARDS									
Unanimous First-Team, All-American, Big Ten Defensive Lineman of the Year, First-Team All-Big Ten									
NFL TRANSITION									
Draft Grade: Second Round	Player Comparison DJ Reader	Scheme Fit 3-4 Nose Tackle	Player Archetype Massive run-game anchor with developmental pass-rush upside						
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 (PPF)									
Years:	Games Played	Total Tackles	Missed Tackles	Missed Tackle %	Defensive Stops	Forced Fumbles	Sacks	Hits	Hurries
2025	14	43	2	3.2%	34	2	4	0	11
2024	16	14	3	13.0%	10	0	0	0	3
2023	6	2	0	0.0%	1	0	0	0	0
Career	36	59	5	5.7%	45	2	4	0	14
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 — Kayden McDonald is a powerful, space-eating interior defensive lineman with a dense frame, strong anchor, and high-level run defense ability. Built with a thick, well-proportioned body, he has the size and strength to align as a nose or 1-technique, making him a natural fit for gap-control schemes. His physical profile and play style allow him to consistently absorb contact, occupy multiple blockers, and control the interior, providing a strong foundation as an early-down impact defender. McDonald's game is defined by his ability to dominate at the point of attack in the run game. He consistently plays with heavy hands, strong leverage, and outstanding anchor, making him extremely difficult to move even against double teams. He shows advanced run recognition, keeping his eyes in the backfield while maintaining gap integrity, and does an excellent job stacking, shedding, and locating the football. His ability to reset the line of scrimmage, clog rushing lanes, and force runs to redirect makes him one of the more reliable and disruptive run defenders in the class. As a pass rusher, McDonald currently projects as a power-based interior presence with developmental upside. He shows flashes of initial burst and hand strength to generate pocket push and collapse the interior, but his pass rush plan remains underdeveloped. He relies heavily on brute force, with limited counters and modest bend restricting his ability to consistently finish plays. His shorter arms and occasional high pad level can further limit his effectiveness when attempting to disengage or sustain pressure through the rep. Overall, McDonald projects as a high-floor, early-down interior defender whose value is rooted in his ability to control the run game and anchor the middle of a defense. While his pass rush ceiling may be limited, his strength, discipline, and physical presence give him a clear role at the next level. In the right scheme, particularly one that emphasizes gap control and interior physicality, he has the potential to develop into a dependable multi-year contributor with upside to provide situational interior pressure as his technique continues to improve. McDonald is an instant plug and play nose tackle who can stuff run games while developing as a pass rusher who earned an early second round grade but will likely go in the second half of the first round in the 2026 NFL Draft.</p>									
<p>What Encouraged Me</p> <p>Physical Profile — McDonald possesses a dense, well-built frame ideal for interior play. His thickness and natural mass allow him to clog gaps, absorb blocks, and function as a true space-eater along the defensive line. He has the size and build to play both nose and 1-tech, offering interior versatility within gap-control fronts.</p> <p>Strength and Power — He plays with heavy, powerful hands that generate immediate shock on contact. His ability to create knock-back and control blockers at the point of attack stands out, allowing him to establish leverage early in reps. McDonald consistently shows the ability to stack and shed, using his strength and hand power to disengage and locate the football.</p> <p>Run Defense — McDonald is an outstanding run defender who consistently controls the line of scrimmage. He does an excellent job digging in against double teams, maintaining his ground, and preventing displacement. His anchor is a defining trait, as he routinely resets the line of scrimmage and forces runs to redirect. He shows high-level run scheme recognition, keeping his eyes in the backfield while maintaining gap integrity. His ability to two-gap, stack, shed, and finish makes him one of the more reliable interior run defenders in the class. Additionally, he displays strong awareness and processing in the run game, quickly diagnosing blocking schemes and locating ball carriers. McDonald consistently creates separation, reads through blocks, and reacts with discipline, allowing him to make plays both at and behind the line of scrimmage.</p> <p>Pass Rush — McDonald offers flashes of pass rush ability, primarily through power and initial burst. He can generate pocket push by collapsing the interior and has shown glimpses of winning with hand usage. While not consistent, there is developmental upside as a power-based interior rusher.</p> <p>Motor — He plays with a hot motor and strong awareness, consistently working through the whistle. His effort and competitiveness show up in both phases, particularly when pursuing plays in tight quarters.</p>			<p>Areas of Growth/Concern</p> <p>Pad Level — McDonald can play too high at times, which limits his ability to fully maximize his power. When his pad level rises, it reduces his effectiveness as a bull rusher and can allow blockers to gain leverage underneath him.</p> <p>Athleticism — While effective in tight spaces, there are questions about how well his range and play speed will translate when defending outside zone or wider run concepts. He is most effective in confined areas rather than when asked to cover ground laterally.</p> <p>Arm Length — He has shorter arms for the position, which can limit his ability to consistently control and separate from blockers. This can show up when longer interior linemen are able to get into his frame first.</p> <p>Pass Rush Development — His current pass rush profile is modest and heavily reliant on brute force. He lacks a refined pass rush plan, with limited counters and inconsistent hand usage. Once his initial push stalls, he can struggle to disengage and finish plays.</p> <p>Bend, Flexibility, and Change of Direction Ability — McDonald shows limited bend and lower-body flexibility, which affects his ability to redirect and finish as a pass rusher. He can be taken out of plays when he cannot flatten or adjust within the pocket. A tighter lower half can limit his ability to redirect quickly or react to movement, particularly in pass rush situations. This can make it difficult for him to convert pressures into sacks.</p>						