

# Sammy Watkins on the NFL Combine: 'I Am Definitely Going to Break Records'

Zac Clark - [stack.com](http://stack.com)

Feb 21, 2014

It's undisputed that Sammy Watkins is the No. 1 wide receiver prospect in the 2014 NFL Draft. The reasons for that are many: His 101 receptions and 1,464 receiving yards last year set Clemson single-season records; he's described by many as sure-handed, seeming to "pluck" the ball out of the air; and he's routinely shown that he possesses the top-end speed that can blow open coverages and leave defenders trailing hopelessly behind him.

The only question scouts seem to have about Watkins' physical abilities concerns his height. The NFL lists him at 6-feet, ESPN/Scouts Inc. has him a half-inch taller than that, and the Clemson Tigers official athletics site (perhaps generously) puts him at 6-foot-1.

Whatever his height, when STACK visited Watkins at Performance Compound in Tampa, Fla., where he was preparing for the NFL Combine earlier this month, he stood out for a different reason: his work ethic. Long after most of the prospects departed for lunch, Watkins remained on the field with fellow WR prospect Bruce Ellington, running practice routes and refining his footwork to precision.

We caught up with Watkins after that workout, and we had the chance to speak with him about his goals for the Combine and his mindset as he approaches the most important job interview of his young career.

**Your performance at the Orange Bowl on January 3 was absolutely dominant — 16 catches for 227 yards and two TDs in a victory over Ohio State. Now here you are a month later preparing for the NFL Combine. What was that first week of Combine training like?**

I came here kind of stiff and out of shape. I wasn't looking like the Sammy Watkins from the Ohio State game. [Laughs] The workouts were pretty intense. I was real sore and hurting a lot, but once that first week went by, I definitely got into it and started realizing how much the workouts had helped me in just one week.

**How is the Combine prep different from the program at Clemson?**

Clemson was more of a powerhouse; we did a lot of heavy lifting, and it was all about repetition. Here, we're working on what we need to improve the most. For me, I'm working on single-leg strength to balance both legs so they're firing in the same pattern.

**How has the training helped improve your performance?**

The Performance Compound has definitely brought my potential up. The coaches have done a great job of teaching us the proper steps, movement and angles for the drills we'll see at the Combine. For me it was just doing the things they were coaching me on and finishing hard on every rep.

**What have you learned most about yourself throughout this process?**

I've learned that I still have a lot more to improve on, and it's a continuous grind. You've got to come prepared every day. You've got to have the mindset of "I'm going to get better every day," and for me, it's just waking up every morning and coming out here and putting my best foot forward and giving 110 percent.

**What excites you most about the Combine?**

The Combine is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. For me, it's going out there and being competitive and having fun with the other athletes and representing myself, my agency and my school. I am definitely going to be the top prospect and run the fastest time in the 40 and break records at the Combine.

# Sammy Watkins on the NFL Combine: 'I Am Definitely Going to Break Records' Cont...

Zac Clark - stack.com

Feb 21, 2014

## **What are your goals and expectations for your NFL rookie season?**

I feel I can make an impact right away just as DeAndre Hopkins and Keenan Allen did as rookies last year. I feel like I am on their level. I just have to go in there and have the same mindset I had in college. I have been performing against the best in the ACC and playing against players who are in the NFL now.

## **Do you see yourself fitting into a particular offensive scheme?**

I think I can play in any offense. I have the speed and agility but also the knowledge of the game. I know how to read defenses and coverages, which will help me a lot going up against the best cornerbacks in the NFL.

## **What's with the extra work you've been putting in at the end of each workout session?**

You can get by in college by being good, but when you are going against some of the greatest players of all time, you have to work on the little things. I'm fast, quick and explosive, but there are a lot of things I need to fix from a wide receiver's standpoint: knowing when to run full speed and when not to run full speed, working on break points and being quick out of my breaks. It's one thing to be fast, but if you are quick and fast out of your breaks, you could be unstoppable in the NFL. Those are the things that separate the good players and great players.

## **What advice do you have for younger athletes, who may look up to you and strive to be the next Sammy Watkins?**

It's not about talent. At the end of the day, it's about who wants it the most. And just focus on being a great athlete. It's about doing the right things and being a great citizen off the field. The game can only take you so far. Focus on your image and being a great person, and it will take you a long way beyond football.