

Scouting Report - Kevin Jones

Written by Ed Isaacson

Wednesday, 25 January 2012 15:09

Today's NBA Draft Blog Scouting Report looks at a senior who has turned himself into a threat from all parts of the court, and is one of the best rebounders in the country – West Virginia's Kevin Jones. The body of a power forward with an always improving perimeter jumper, Jones certainly has a future in the NBA. Will his incredible rebounding ability make him a first rounder? Let's take a look at Kevin Jones:



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Kevin Jones, □ West Virginia - Senior

Forward - □ 6'8, 260

20.6 ppg, □ 11.5 rpg, 55.4% FG, □ 75.0% FT

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Offense

Post Skills- Jones certainly has the body to operate in the low post. He has a strong upper body and a wide base. When he gets his back to the basket, he does a good job getting low to seal off his defender and gives his teammates a big target to get him the ball. He has developed solid dropstep and up-and-under moves, but is much more comfortable going over his left shoulder than right. He has nice touch around the rim, and for his size, is more of a finesse player than power player. However, he does do a good job finishing through contact and finding ways to get shots off in traffic.

Footwork- Jones' footwork has certainly improved in 4 years, but he is still not very fluid, especially in the post. He uses his wide body to back people down, but when trying to make a move in the post, he uses too many steps and too many dribbles trying to set the move up. He needs to work on catching the ball in the post, and being able to go right into his move without hesitation. As I mentioned, he has developed a few nice post moves, but he needs to become comfortable making these moves over either shoulder. His footwork is much better over his left shoulder than his right.

Ballhandling/Hands/Penetration- Ballhandling is probably the weakest part of Jones' offensive game. In the post, he tends to over-dribble while making a move, leaving him vulnerable to double teams and being pushed out of position. On the perimeter, Jones does a decent job keeping the ball close to his body and away from defenders, but he really needs to be able to go to his left hand more often when handling the ball. At the next level, he will easily be forced to his left if he can't improve. That being said, he does avoid turning the ball over while handling it for the most part, but the team does a good job keeping him from having to do it often. Jones has great hands – he gets a solid grip on the ball, gets them out to give a good target and can handle difficult passes. Jones has shown the ability to get into the lane, but he isn't very smooth once he gets by his man. When he gets momentum going with that body, it is difficult for him to pull up or make a quick move. If he gets a clear path to the basket, he can finish and absorb contact from any weakside help defenders at the rim. He needs to work on being able to use screens better to make a couple of quick dribbles and hitting the mid-range jumper.

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Perimeter Shooting- Jones has shown the ability to hit both the mid-range and long-range jumper, but with his size, he tends to settle on those shots too often. He has decent form on his shot – a high release point, good arc, good rotation, though he could do a better job spacing his feet to get better lift on the shot, as well as allowing him to use pump and ball fakes better to get to the rim. His shot selection has improved slightly, though as noted, he tends to settle for the jumper too often. He does a good job acting as a pick and pop option on the perimeter, and should continue to get better at it at the NBA level.

Rebounding/Passing- Jones is a fantastic offensive rebounder, combining the physical tools to create space around the basket with great instincts to know how missed shots will come off the rim. With the space he creates, he is usually then able to get off a quick putback before defenders can react, and for his size, he has excellent quickness with his 2

nd jumps. When it comes to passing, the one key area where Jones needs to improve is in the post – reacting to double teams quicker and knowing instinctively where cutters or open men will be.

Free Throw Shooting - Jones is a solid free-throw shooter, though there is plenty of room to improve. One area he really needs to work on is getting to the line more often. A player of his size should get to the line more often, but because of his tendency to settle on the perimeter, he averages less than 4 attempts a game. □

Defense

Post Defense- Jones is a strong post defender, though his strength lies in being able to use his body to keep players from getting close to the basket. He is not a great jumper and doesn't have good shot-blocking ability, so his best bet is to use his lower body to keep pushing players away from the rim. He needs to also do a better job of denying the entry pass to the post. He moves his feet well though he doesn't anticipate offensive players' moves, so he is almost always in reaction mode. He needs to improve his lateral foot speed to stop quicker post players. He is a good help defender, though it is based more on instinct than speed of getting to the spot, and he has become much better hedging on high screens and recovering to his man.

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Perimeter Defense- Jones has made great improvement as a perimeter defender, but he still has a long way to go to be consistent at the NBA level. The key is to improve his lateral movement and quickness. He positions himself well, and has very good court awareness. He also does a good job handling screens, having the strength to get through them or the instincts to know when to switch. He does a decent job closing on shooters, but just doesn't have the speed to always get to the man quick enough to affect the shot.

Rebounding/Blocking- Jones is one of the best rebounders in the country. Everything about the way he approaches rebounding is done right – blocking out, positioning, going after the ball and securing it. The only thing he could really improve on here would be improving his athleticism to get to the ball quicker, but it's not as big an issue with him because his wide body makes it tough for players to get around him to the ball. As I noted earlier, he isn't much a shot-blocker, and he will only really attempt to block a shot if he can get to it easily.

Summary & Intangibles

Athleticism – Average

BB IQ - High

Jones has done a great job developing his game over the last 4 seasons. He has found a way to combine a solid post presence with a reliable mid-range perimeter game, and eventually a long-range perimeter game. What makes Jones special though is his rebounding ability, especially on the offensive end. The amount of extra possessions he creates for his team every game keeps them always competitive. He still needs to become more reliable in the post, and

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to improve his defensive movements, but he has the type of instincts that winning NBA teams love. I would look for him to be drafted in the top half of the 2nd round, most likely in the first in the 35-45 range.

Check back tomorrow for a special 2 player report on the Kentucky freshmen – Anthony Davis and Michael Kidd-Gilchrist. Remember, leave any comments below, follow me on Twitter - [@NBADraftBlog](#), or feel free to email me at the link up top.