C – Jusuf Nurkic

*“Stronger than he looks”*

Martin Knezevic

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BANKABLE NBA SKILL: Size and length inside; knack for drawing contact, getting offensive rebs.

SIZE FOR POSITION: Listed: 6’11” More Like: 6’10” Weight: 270 lbs (right-handed)

BEST STYLE/FIT: Picture Chris Anderson (Heat), floating on the baseline and following the ball for put-backs/dump-offs. Defensively, he’s better helping from the top than from weak-side.

DEFENSIVE LIABILITY? On the perimeter, Jusuf may struggle to adapt to more mobile centers that can space the floor. On the block, however, he’s stronger than he looks and can hold ground. His length and anticipation on-ball makes him difficult to score on. Help-side defense could be better.

POSITIONING GRADE: (does he put himself in position to do following, regardless of set plays?)

Scoring – Average (follows ball extremely well on teammates’ drives, positions himself well)

Shooting – Mediocre (find open spots on perimeter well)

Passing – Average (flashes to high post well to make next pass off pressure)

Help Defense – Mediocre (he does this average but not nearly good enough for NBA offenses)

On-ball/Post Defense – Good (knows how to use his body and make scoring down low hard)

Rebounding – Very Good (crashes glass well, also keeps body b/w offensive player & basket)

ATTITUDE: Nurkic is a very team-first guy. He does dip at times in his focus, understandable for a 19 year-old.

POSITIVES: Jusuf gas a great motor for attacking the offensive glass. He also has good strength down low on the block, which helps him get to the line often. His passing out of the post is also good. Nurkic is also a good finisher inside, catching passes high and finishing quickly. At the high post, he has good court awareness and usually makes the right pass.

INSIDER: As the case with most young ‘bigs’ overseas, Nurkic doesn’t start many games for Cedevita. This will bode well when he is given spot duty at the start of his NBA career.

CONCERNS: Jusuf shoots a two-handed set-shot from outside, and often shoots off-balance. On help defense, he also has a habit of trying to block shots with two hands, like a volleyball player. This limits his extension and range on the contest. He also struggles to get into proper position when helping.

FORECAST: Some are forecasting Nurkic to be in the middle of the 1st round in 2014. I think this is a bit much. He is a late 1st round pick and may even be an early 2nd rd pick in a very deep draft. He does get to the line well and also has knack for the ball, which will help him carve out an NBA career.

SIMILAR PRO PLAYERS:

* **Tyler Zeller** – minus the perimeter shot.
* **Jan Vesely** – w/ less athleticism.
* **Mike Muscala** – similar young prospect overseas (2013 2nd rd pick by Hawks)

VIDEO CLIPS:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFYT8n_BREg>

Gets back to block dunk by former NBA swingman Darryl Strawberry.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivcswSipnS4

2:54 mark – In crunchtime, dives to basket and chases drive w/ putback dunk .

http://www.abaliga.com/a6958/League\_Video/Round\_15\_Krka\_Cedevita\_full\_match\_video\_.html

1:00:45 - scores inside w/ contact, showing both touch and strength. This was a huge basket late for Cedevita.