**Teddy Bridgewater:**

For the NFL, Bridgewater appears to possess the mental and intangible traits necessary to succeed at the next level, but does not quite possess the prototypical physical traits for the next level.  His arm strength is good but not great and he possesses a lean frame and an injury history that has caused some concerns.  Bridgewater seems to be able to read defenses, scan the field well, throw the ball accurately and with zip, and possess many of the qualities that teams want a *quarterback* to have but does appear to come in the ideal physical wrapping.  Nevertheless, Bridgewater may not have the most upside in this class but he is the best out of the gate and can be a franchise quarterback at the next level and warrants a 2nd round pick.   Ultimately, he is NOT the best QB in the 2014 draft….I believe that to be Blake Bortles, and even he doesn’t warrant a #1 overall pick.

**Vitals & Build**

Bridgewater measured in 6’2 ¼” 214lbs at the scouting combine with 9 5/8” hands.  His height is just a quarter inch less than ideal, but is not an issue that should negatively impact him and he has big hands.  Bridgewater possesses a lean build, which has caused some concerns for some considering the injuries he has sustained and played through during his collegiate career, but it is nothing that should be a deal breaker for a team.  There is no reason to think Bridgewater is struggling to carry weight or should not be able to continue getting stronger and he just has a lean appearance.  His potential is in just how much stronger and more he can fill out because if Bridgewater is able to continue getting stronger and get around 225lbs or more, the talk that his body was too lean will be something laugh about in a few years as a major concern.

**Arm Strength**

Bridgewater’s arm strength is good, but not great.  He does have some trouble pushing the ball way a significant distance down the field.  Bridgewater can throw it around 50 yards or a little more than that, but his accuracy dies as he takes his off of the target in order to drive the ball further down the field.  Bridgewater’s arm strength is unlikely to have anyone suggest he cannot play in a particular offense or climate, but he does not have the prototype arm strength.

In terms of zip, Bridgewater is more than capable to throw a fastball and fit passes into tight windows.  Whatever he lacks in his ability to push the ball down the field, he is more than able to make do when it comes to zip and putting speed on the football.

**Accuracy & Touch**

On passes from 0-15 yards, Bridgewater is pretty lights out on his accuracy.  He throws the ball on time, in a spot for his receiver to maximize the play and with the right amount of touch.  Not only does he throw an accurate pass, he throws an extremely catchable ball that always seems to a relatively easy looking catch.

From about 15-25 yards, Bridgewater’s accuracy gets a little less consistent and balls tend to float from lack of arm strengrth.  He is still extremely effective but there are more misfires that tend to go high, but can be inside or outside of the intended target.  He can throw effective touch passes but really throws a nice fastball when he needs one.

The deeper Bridgewater gets, the less consistent and more iffy his passes can become.  At times, he seems to be in rhythm and seems tough to stop, but he also seems to possess the ability to miss some passes he really should not.  Additional arm strength and confidence should only help him in this area as some of it may be in his own head.  The less he thinks and the more he reacts, the better and seemingly more uncanny the results.  Some of the most spectacular throws Bridgewater has made this year were almost entirely on instinct with a healthy amount of luck in the mix.

When Bridgewater wants to push the limits with his deep ball, his accuracy will fall off dramatically.  The reason is simply due to the fact that in order for him to get as much force to drive the ball as far as he can, his head becomes part of his throwing motion and he takes it off the target.  Obviously, if he cannot see the target, it is difficult to hit it and he has to use every bit of arm strength he has to get the job done in that part of his game.

**Mechanics & Footwork**

Bridgewater has an unorthodox throwing motion with his arm.  Part of the reason it is unorthodox is it is not the same on every throw.  When Bridgewater has time, he will hold the ball high, pull it down so his throwing elbow is parallel to the ground before he pulls the ball back behind his head and drives it forward.  In situations where he is pressed, Bridgewater has a shorthand version where the ball goes directly back behind his head and forward with the football.

Bridgewater’s throwing motion looks different because of how he will have his elbow out and on some of the throws, he sort of snaps the ball back and throws it.  While his throwing motion would be called overhand, it is not a traditional overhand and is slightly out but not anywhere that would be considered a three quarters delivery.  The quicker the throwing motion needed, the further out his arm will go to the side.

Bridgewater’s throwing motion can look clunky, but it does not prove problematic.  The roundabout way he can wind up could be cleaned up, but his arm goes through quickly enough where he does not make it easy for opponents to pick up on it and jump the pass.

Bridgewater’s feet, on the other hand, are good and should only get better with time and effort.  He has quick feet, makes deliberate steps and is usually able to keep his balance and throwing base in almost any situation, with the ability to set up and throw accurately, quickly.  Bridgewater can hop to his throwing stance and side step into a strong throwing motion effectively and while there are situations where his feet will get too close together, it is infrequent and quickly corrected.  He adjusts to adverse situations effectively and gets himself in a good position to deliver the football.

**Pocket Awareness**

Part of the reason Bridgewater’s feet are so good is that he is always poised in the pocket.  He rarely looks uncomfortable, is not afraid to move around and find spaces to throw the ball (Russell Wilson?), but does have the ability to evacuate and extend the play outside if needed.

Bridgewater is able to slide and move with bodies around him while keeping his feet and body poised to throw a good ball.  He is not afraid to work from tight spaces or climb the pocket and throw or tuck it and run, depending on what he sees down the field.  Bridgewater has also not been afraid to throw the ball when he knows he is going to get hit by an opponent he sees coming.

Combined with his footwork, Bridgewater’s poise and awareness in the pocket is what sets him apart from most quarterbacks.  There are times when Bridgewater’s calmness in the pocket will result in a bad sack, but for the most part, teams will live with it with the idea that they will live to play another down.

**Decision Making & Anticipation**

Bridgewater is smart, aware and sees the field well.  He does a great job of reading defenses, finding weaknesses and making it look like a defense awful, exploiting them for big plays.   Bridgewater is able to process information quickly and adjust on the fly effectively.  As a result, there are situations where Bridgewater is able to process through a number of reads and get to his third or fourth option.

Bridgewater shows the ability to throw receivers open and throw the ball on time.  He also tries to do his best to minimize his lack of top end arm strength by throwing deeper passes early, making it difficult for defenders to adjust and giving his receivers the ability to get under the pass and make a play.

Even when under duress, Bridgewater generally makes good decisions with the ball and is able to see well.  He is not afraid to pull the ball down and run with it when necessary, but he is far more inclined to find a receiver or try to draw the defense in to open up a throwing lane.

For as good as Bridgewater tends to be with his decisions, he will curiously force passes into tight windows at times.  It does not seem as though he does not see the defender because much of the time, he seems to be trying to aim the ball around them, which can lead to mixed results.  For the most part, Bridgewater minimizes risk and protects the ball effectively, but at times when he feels pressured over time, he can get tunnel vision.

**Mobility**

Bridgewater’s feet and mobility are good, but he seems to understand his limits.  He can extend plays, find space to make a throw and pull it down when needed.  For the most part, Bridgewater is content to pick up a few yards, a first down and get down to avoid getting a significant hit.  There are certainly times when he will not see a guy coming or get greedy and take a bigger hit than teams would prefer.  Some of these hits work to reinforce concerns about his frame and injuries.

Bridgewater is also able to throw on the run effectively.  He is accurate with the football and can still deliver with varying degrees of touch.  Bridgewater can still put a good amount of zip on the ball, particularly when rolling to his right.  He is not as comfortable or as able to turn and point his shoulders in the right direction when rolling to the left, but Bridgewater is still more than happy to go that way when he sees fit.

Bridgewater’s athleticism actually exceeds his mobility because he is a pocket passer at heart and he does seem to account for risk when it comes to taking hits.  The injury concerns play into that and while Bridgewater could play in an offense with read option and designed quarterback runs, his body is not suited to do it.  Bridgewater can absolutely make plays with his legs and it is valuable for what he can for an offense, but it should be a secondary or even tertiary option on any given play.  Aside from an occasional changeup to score in the red zone or a key first down pick up, Bridgewater is best served to win from the pocket or extend plays to throw the ball.

**System Fit**

Bridgewater is suited for a horizontal, timing based offense or a spread type offense.  It just allows him to do more of what makes him standout as a player; spread the field, let him read the defense and pick opponents apart.

Bridgewater should not have an issue picking up an offense in the NFL and his ability from the pocket could allow him to make a quick transition in the league, so he can start immediately for a team.  He is pretty fearless from the pocket, can slide and adjust well to find throwing lanes, so in a good situation, Bridgewater could enjoy success early in his career.

**Draft Projection**

All of the qualities that teams seem to want their quarterback to exhibit, Bridgewater seems to have most.  He has good poise and pocket awareness, is able to find and throw receivers open, read defenses and throw the ball with zip albeit a little wobbly sometimes.  Bridgewater does not have ideal physical characteristics, but that does not change the fact that he is the best quarterback in this draft and can be a franchise quarterback.  What he does well makes up an overwhelming amount of the game and what he lacks, such as ideal arm strength, generally has a small impact on an average game.  Bridgewater warrants a 2nd round pick and while he is not an elite quarterback prospect, he is an excellent one and has the ability to lead a franchise in the NFL but not in year one.