

Mike Wallace - One Trick Pony?

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Much has been made about Mike Wallace being a one trick pony, but many of his receptions are of the short or intermediate variety.

Wallace's numbers diminished from 2011 to 2012. This is mostly attributed to Todd Haley's system forcing Wallace to run shorter, quicker routes so Ben Roethlisberger could get rid of the ball quicker to avoid being hit.

In 2011, he had 75 receptions for 1219 yards, 16.3 yards per reception and 8 touchdowns.

In 2012, he had 64 receptions for 838 yards, 13.1 yards per reception and 8 touchdowns.

First, let's look at Wallace's receptions by direction for 2011 courtesy of Pro Football Focus.

Wallace actually did a good bit of damage on short throws, catching 49 of his 75 receptions on throws of 9 yards or shorter. Two of his eight touchdowns were on short throws and he gained 514 yards on short passes. Wallace was targeted 65 times on short throws, catching 75.4% of short passes he was targeted on. He only dropped one short pass.

On throws of 10-19 yards, what we would call intermediate throws, Wallace had 16 receptions for 227 yards and 1 TD. He dropped 2 passes. He was targeted 30 times, catching only 53% of the intermediate passes he was targeted on.

On deep throws, Wallace had 10 catches for 478 yards and 5 TDs, dropping two deep passes down the middle. He was targeted 27 times and caught 37% of deep passes.

Fast forward to 2012.

On short throws, Wallace caught 43 passes for 367 yards and 2 TDs. Wallace was targeted 54 times on short throws. He caught 80% if them, actually appearing to improve in the short game.

On intermediate throws, Wallace caught 15 passes for 208 yards and 2 TDs. He was targeted 31 times, catching 48.4% of intermediate passes.

On deep throws, he had 6 catches for 263 yards and 4 TDs. He was targeted 31 times on deep throws, more than 2012, but only caught 19.4% of these.

One thing to note here is that Wallace did not catch any of the 8 deep targets he got down the left sideline.

Based on these numbers, it actually appears as if the Steelers targeted Wallace just as much on deep and intermediate throws in 2012, he simply just caught less of them. It also appears as if Wallace did more of his damage down the middle of the field than one would think. Wallace had 34 catches for 420 yards and 3 touchdowns down the middle of the field.

It will be interesting to see how the Dolphins use Wallace. Certainly he'll run some go routes and double moves, as well as posts to attack the deep secondary. But don't be surprised if they also try to hit him on some quick passes when the corner is playing off and ask him to use his speed and quickness to gain some yards after the catch.

Speaking of YAC, in 2011 Wallace had 505 yards after the catch. In 2012, he only had 279.

It may have still been the system that caused Wallace's diminished production, but they seemed to target him just as much as go deep to him just as much in 2012 as they did in 2011.

He simply didn't produce as much.

Let's hope we got the Mike Wallace of 2011.

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