

# 2014 Outback Bowl: LSU wideouts pose threat

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

TAMPA, Fla. – Ask Iowa defensive coordinator Phil Parker and any of his players, and they'll all say their first priority as a defense is to stop the run. That mantra is no different for the 2014 Outback Bowl when the Hawkeyes play a team in No. 14 LSU that prides itself on running the football.

But there's another challenge regarding the Tiger offense that Iowa has to account for. Actually, make it two challenges. Their names are Jarvis Landry and Odell Beckham, Jr.

This duo of junior wideouts is as good a 1-2 punch of receivers as Iowa has seen in a long time. To put this into perspective, both Landry and Beckham, Jr., rank in the top 25 nationally this season in receiving yards and LSU is the only team in the country who can claim two 1,000-yard receivers of their caliber. Landry has 1,172 receiving yards to his name, while Beckham, Jr., has 1,117.

To date, Iowa has only faced one receiver all season with 1,000-plus receiving yards – Michigan's Jeremy Gallon. Last season, the Hawkeyes didn't face a single wideout that posted as many yards as either LSU wideout and the last time Iowa played a team possessing two 1,000-yard receivers like this was the 2011 Insight Bowl against Oklahoma.

"I think they're probably two first-round draft picks," senior free safety Tanner Miller said Sunday about the LSU duo. "There's different things you can do, whether it's putting multiple guys on them or different types of coverages to be able to slow them down and things like that."

“But we know they’re going to make their plays because they’re just great athletes.”

Both receivers have identical heights and weights. Landry is listed at 6-1, 195 pounds, while Beckham, Jr., is listed at 6-0, 193 pounds. With identical body types and identical numbers, one would think there aren’t many differences between the two. But Landry said there’s one noticeable difference that he believes allows them to complement each other as well as they have.

“It’s speed and his ability to make big plays in chunks. I think that has been his biggest asset,” Landry said. “For me, it has just been my quick twitch. You know, my short-area quickness and using my mind to be on the same page with the quarterback.”

The worry Iowa has about Landry and Beckham, Jr. “making their plays” are specifically the big play. For the first two-thirds of the season, the majority of touchdowns given up by the Hawkeye defense came on pass plays covering 20-plus yards. This is an area that has noticeably improved over the course of Iowa’s current three-game winning streak.

“At the beginning of the year, I think we struggled a little bit,” Parker said of his secondary. “I think they’ve come together as a group and I just think the guys are committed to preparing for games.

“They’re a lot farther ahead than they were last year just as far as what’s going on on the field, so it has been fun to coach them.”

So how will Iowa go about being able to contain both Landry and Beckham, Jr.? Sophomore linebacker Travis Perry said the biggest key is the ability to consistently jam them both at the line of scrimmage.

“If they get out in space without being touched, they can make

great plays,” Perry said. “So we’ve got to make sure we can get our hands on them and try to re-route them to help the safeties out.”

***\*Be sure to visit [HawkeyeDrive.com](http://HawkeyeDrive.com) for ongoing coverage from Tampa, Fla., of the 2014 Outback Bowl between Iowa and No. 14 LSU.***