



PRESEASON GAME 2

WEEKLY RELEASE



AT



AUGUST 15, 2025



TENNESSEE TITANS

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUGUST 11, 2025



TITANS TRAVEL TO ATLANTA FOR PRACTICES AND PRESEASON GAME



Tennessee Titans (0-1) at Atlanta Falcons (0-1)

Friday, Aug. 15, 2025 • 7 p.m. EDT/6 p.m. CDT • Mercedes-Benz Stadium • Atlanta, Ga. • TV: WKRN

NASHVILLE — The Tennessee Titans (0-1) are scheduled to spend the week in Atlanta for a pair of joint practices and a preseason game with the Falcons (0-1). Kickoff for the game at Mercedes-Benz Stadium (capacity 72,000) is scheduled for 7 p.m. EDT/6 p.m. CDT on Friday, Aug. 15.

Before they square off Friday night, the two clubs will engage in a pair of joint practices at IBM Performance Field (4400 Falcon Parkway, Flowery Branch, Ga.) on Tuesday, Aug. 12, and Wednesday, Aug. 13. Each practice session will begin at 10 a.m. EDT and last approximately two hours.

This is the second leg of a Titans road trip that began last week with a trip to Tampa Bay. The Titans and Buccaneers shared the practice field on Thursday prior to their game on Saturday. Following that contest, the Titans flew directly to Atlanta. They will return to Nashville following Friday night's game after nine total nights away from home.

THE BROADCAST

This week's contest will be televised regionally on the Titans Preseason TV Network, including flagship WKRN-News 2 in Nashville. Play-by-play announcer **Paul Burmeister** and analyst **Charles Davis** will call the action, and **Cory Curtis** will report from the sidelines.

During the preseason, fans in the Nashville market are able to livestream the broadcast on their mobile devices from the Titans Mobile App (iOS and Android), as well as on desktop computers and mobile web at [TennesseeTitans.com](https://www.tennesseetitans.com). Restrictions apply.

Additionally, fans outside of Nashville can access live Titans preseason games with NFL+, which offers [access to out-of-market preseason games across all devices](#), live local and primetime regular season and postseason games on mobile devices, live local and national audio for every game, and more.

The Titans Radio Network and Nashville flagship 104.5 The Zone carry all Titans games across the Mid-South with play-by-play announcer **Taylor Zarzour**, analyst **Dave McGinnis**, executive producer **Rhett Bryan**, gameday host **Lucas Panzica**, and sideline reporters **Amie Wells** and **Will Boling**.

WARD MAKES DEBUT IN PRESEASON OPENER

At Raymond James Stadium last week, Titans rookie quarterback **Cameron Ward** made his preseason debut. The first overall selection in the 2025 NFL Draft started against the Buccaneers and played the first two offensive series, completing five of eight passes for a team-high 67 yards and an 89.1 passer rating. An 11-play, 65-yard touchdown drive included five completions on six passing attempts by Ward, including a 27-yard strike to wide receiver **Calvin Ridley**. Two of Ward's completions converted third downs.

Ridley caught three total passes for a team-high 50 yards, while starting running back **Tony Pollard** scored the Titans' lone touchdown on a one-yard run. The Buccaneers kept the Titans off the scoreboard for the remainder of the game and won 29-7.

All three Titans quarterbacks saw action. Once Ward exited, veteran **Brandon Allen** finished the second quarter and took snaps through most of the third quarter. **Tim Boyle** finished the game as the third quarterback.

On defense, several regular starters opened the game and played one series. Undrafted rookie cornerback **Davion Ross** created the defense's lone takeaway, forcing a fumble and recovering the ball in the third quarter.

THE FALCONS

The Falcons went 8-9 and finished second in the NFC South in 2024, their first full season under head coach **Raheem Morris**. He was Tampa Bay's head coach

2025 TITANS SCHEDULE

PRESEASON

DAY	DATE	OPPONENT	RESULT/ TIME (CT)	SCORE/ TV
Saturday	Aug. 9	at Tampa Bay	L	7-29
Friday	Aug. 15	at Atlanta	6 p.m.	WKRN
Friday	Aug. 22	MINNESOTA	7 p.m.	CBS

REGULAR SEASON

DAY	DATE	OPPONENT	TIME (CT)	TV
Sunday	Sept. 7	at Denver	3:05 p.m.	FOX
Sunday	Sept. 14	L.A. RAMS	12 p.m.	CBS
Sunday	Sept. 21	INDIANAPOLIS	12 p.m.	CBS
Sunday	Sept. 28	at Houston	12 p.m.	CBS
Sunday	Oct. 5	at Arizona	3:05 p.m.*	CBS*
Sunday	Oct. 12	at Las Vegas	3:05 p.m.*	FOX*
Sunday	Oct. 19	NEW ENGLAND	12 p.m.*	CBS*
Sunday	Oct. 26	at Indianapolis	3:25 p.m.*	CBS*
Sunday	Nov. 2	L.A. CHARGERS	12 p.m.*	CBS*
Sunday	Nov. 16	HOUSTON	12 p.m.*	FOX*
Sunday*	Nov. 23*	SEATTLE	12 p.m.*	FOX*
Sunday*	Nov. 30*	JACKSONVILLE	12 p.m.*	CBS*
Sunday*	Dec. 7*	at Cleveland	12 p.m.*	FOX*
Sunday*	Dec. 14*	at San Francisco	3:25 p.m.*	FOX*
Sunday*	Dec. 21*	KANSAS CITY	12 p.m.*	CBS*
Sunday*	Dec. 28*	NEW ORLEANS	12 p.m.*	CBS*
TBD	TBD	at Jacksonville	TBD	TBD

* Subject to flex scheduling

All games on Titans Radio

from 2009 to 2011 and also served as Atlanta's interim head coach for 11 games in 2020.

Morris' team hosted the Detroit Lions last week to open the preseason and fell by a final score of 17-10. Neither second-year quarterback **Michael Penix Jr.**, who was born in Cookeville, Tenn., nor four-time Pro Bowler **Kirk Cousins** played against the Lions. Easton Stick got the starting nod and threw for 149 yards and a touchdown.

GAME INFORMATION

Date of Game	Friday, Aug. 15, 2025
Kickoff Time	7 p.m. EDT/6 p.m. CDT
Venue	Mercedes-Benz Stadium
Location	Atlanta, Ga.
Opened in	2017
Surface	FieldTurf
Capacity	72,000 (expandable to 75,000)

Visiting Team	Tennessee Titans (0-1)
Website	www.TennesseeTitans.com
Media Guide	www.tennesseetitans.com/mediaguide
Franchise since	1960 (1960-96 Houston Oilers; 1997-98 Tennessee Oilers)
Ownership	Amy Adams Strunk (Controlling Owner/ Co-Chairman, Board of Directors); Kenneth S. Adams, IV (Board of Directors Co-Chair); Barclay Adams; Susan Lewis
President/CEO	Burke Nihill
President/Football Operations	Chad Brinker
General Manager	Mike Borgonzi (since 2025)
Head Coach	Brian Callahan (since 2024)
Special Teams Coordinator	John Fassel
Offensive Coordinator	Nick Holz
Defensive Coordinator	Dennard Wilson
2024 Record	3-14 (4th place, AFC South)
2024 NFL Offensive Rank	26 (Total), 19t (Rush), 26 (Pass)
2024 NFL Defensive Rank	2 (Total), 26 (Rush), 2 (Pass)

Home Team	Atlanta Falcons (0-1)
Website	www.atlantafalcons.com
Franchise since	1966
Owner and Chairman	Arthur M. Blank
General Manager	Terry Fontenot (since 2021)
Head Coach	Raheem Morris (since 2024)
Offensive Coordinator	Zac Robinson
Defensive Coordinator	Jeff Ulbrich
Special Teams Coordinator	Marquice Williams
2024 Record	8-9 (2nd place, NFC South)
2024 NFL Offensive Rank	6 (Total), 10 (Rush), 5 (Pass)
2024 NFL Defensive Rank	23 (Total), 15 (Rush), 22 (Pass)

Referee	Brad Allen

Television	WKRN News 2

Play-by-Play	Paul Burmeister
Analyst	Charles Davis
Reporter	Cory Curtis

TITANS PRESEASON TELEVISION AFFILIATES:

Nashville/Flagship	WKRN Ch. 2 (ABC)
Bowling Green, Ky.	WNKY Ch. 40 (NBC 40.1/CBS 40.2)
Cape Girardeau, Mo.	KBSI Ch. 23 (FOX)
Chattanooga, Ten.	WRCB Ch. 3 (NBC)
Huntsville, Ala.	WHNT Ch. 19 (CBS)
Jackson, Ten.	WJKT Ch. 16 (FOX)
Knoxville, Ten.	WATE Ch. 6 (ABC)
Memphis, Ten.	WREG Ch. 3 (CBS)
Paducah, Ky.	WDKA Ch. 49 (MyTV)
Tri-Cities, Ten.	WJHL Ch. 11 (ABC)



SERIES AT A GLANCE

- Overall series (regular & postseason): **Titans lead 9-7**
- Regular season series: **Titans lead 9-7**
- Postseason series: **None**
- Total points: **Titans 365, Falcons 364**
- Current streak: **Two wins by Titans**
- Titans at home vs. Falcons: **6-2**
- Titans on road vs. Falcons: **3-5**
- Longest winning streak by Titans: **5 (1993–2007)**
- Longest losing streak by Titans: **3 (1978–1984)**
- Titans vs. Falcons at Nissan Stadium: **3-1**
- Last time at Nissan Stadium: **Falcons 23 at TITANS 28 (10-29-23)**
- Titans vs. Falcons at Mercedes-Benz Stadium: **1-0**
- Last time at Mercedes-Benz Stadium: **TITANS 24 at Falcons 10 (9-29-19)**
- First time: **Oilers 10 at FALCONS 20 (12-3-72)**
- Brian Callahan's record vs. Falcons: **0-0**
- Raheem Morris' record vs. Titans: **0-1 (0-1 with Tampa Bay)**
- Brian Callahan's record vs. Raheem Morris: **0-0**

A TITANS VICTORY WOULD ...

- Give the Titans a **1-1** preseason record in 2025 going into the preseason finale against the Minnesota Vikings at Nissan Stadium on Aug. 22.
- Give Brian Callahan a **4-1** career record in preseason games.
- Improve the Titans' all-time preseason record against the Falcons to **7-5**.

Radio	Titans Radio Network
Flagship	WGFX 104.5 FM-The Zone
Streaming	Titans Mobile App (Nashville market only), TennesseeTitans.com (Nashville), NFL+ (outside of Nashville)
Satellite Radio	SiriusXM 380, SXM App , Internet 830
Play-by-Play	Taylor Zarzour
Analyst	Dave McGinnis
Executive Producer	Rhett Bryan
Gameday Host	Lucas Panzica
Reporters	Amie Wells, Will Boling



UPCOMING MEDIA SCHEDULE

Titans Media Schedule | August 11-18

Central and eastern times as indicated

Tuesday, August 12 – IBM Performance Field (4400 Falcon Parkway, Flowery Branch, Ga.)

10:00 a.m. ET: Practice with the Atlanta Falcons

12:00 p.m. ET: Players available after practice

Wednesday, August 13 – IBM Performance Field (4400 Falcon Parkway, Flowery Branch, Ga.)

9:40 a.m. ET: Head Coach Brian Callahan available before practice

10:00 a.m. ET: Practice with the Atlanta Falcons

12:00 p.m. ET: Players available after practice, including QB Cameron Ward

Thursday, August 14

No availability

Friday, August 15 – Mercedes-Benz Stadium

7 p.m. ET: Titans at Falcons

Saturday, August 16 – Ascension Saint Thomas Sports Park

Time TBD: Brian Callahan press conference

Sunday, August 17

No availability

Monday, August 18

No availability

QUICK CLICKS

From Last Week's Game

[Game Center](#)

[Gamebook \(PDF\)](#)

[Watch Highlights](#)

[Postgame Press Conference Video: Brian Callahan](#)

[Jim Wyatt: Six Things That Stood Out](#)

[Game Photos](#)

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SERIES HISTORY

After 16 meetings in the regular season, the Titans lead the all-time series with the Falcons 9-7. The history dates back to 1972, three seasons into the AFL-NFL merger.

The series has had significant momentum swings. Prior to a win by Tennessee in 2019, the Falcons won the previous two matchups in 2011 and 2015 after the Titans took five consecutive meetings from 1993 to 2007. The Falcons won four out of the first five contests from 1972 to 1984.

In the 2019 clash, the Titans traveled to Atlanta to make their first appearance at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, which opened in 2017. Titans rookie wide receiver **A.J. Brown** scored the first two touchdowns of his career, and outside linebacker **Harold Landry III** accounted for two of the team's five sacks against Falcons quarterback **Matt Ryan**. **Derrick Henry** added 100 rushing yards in a 24-10 victory.

The Titans are 3-1 versus the Falcons at Nissan Stadium, which opened in 1999. The last meeting there was played on Oct. 29, 2023 with then-rookie quarterback **Will Levis** making his first career start for the Titans in place of **Ryan Tannehill**. Levis became the third player in NFL history with four touchdown passes in his NFL debut (**Marcus Mariota** and **Fran Tarkenton**), leading the Titans to a 28-23 victory.

From 1992 to 2016, the Falcons made their home at the Georgia Dome, where the Titans/Oilers finished 2-1. The Titans also played in Super Bowl XXXIV at the Georgia Dome against the St. Louis Rams.

The Titans and Falcons have met seven times in the preseason during the "Titans era" (1999-present). The first preseason game ever played at Nissan Stadium was a 17-3 victory for the Titans over the Falcons on Aug. 27, 1999.

MOST RECENT MATCHUPS

2011 Week 11 • Nov. 20, 2011 • Titans 17 at FALCONS 23

Trailing 23-3, rookie quarterback Jake Locker enters the game in the second half for Matt Hasselbeck (elbow injury) and throws two touchdown passes to Nate Washington (nine receptions for 115 yards), but the Titans' rally falls short ... Falcons' Matt Ryan passes for 316 yards, including 147 to Roddy White, while running back Michael Turner rushes for 100 yards and a score.

2015 Week 7 • Oct. 25, 2015 • FALCONS 10 at Titans 7

Starting for an injured Marcus Mariota, Titans quarterback Zach Mettenberger is intercepted twice, including once in the final two minutes with the Titans in Atlanta territory ... Falcons running back Devonta Freeman rushes for 116 yards on 25 carries ... Matt Ryan passes for 251 yards for the Falcons, while Julio Jones records 92 receiving yards and the game-winning touchdown in the third quarter ... The Titans produce a late goal-line stand to keep the deficit at three points ... The Falcons limit the Titans to one-of-nine on third down.

2019 Week 4 • Sept. 29, 2019 • TITANS 24 at Falcons 10

The Titans end a two-game losing streak as Marcus Mariota passes for 227 yards and three touchdowns, including a pair of scoring tosses to rookie wide receiver A.J. Brown (94 total yards) ... Corey Davis adds five catches for 91 yards and a score ... Derrick Henry has 18 rushing attempts for 71 yards in the second half alone, ending with 27 carries for 100 yards ... The Titans defense records five sacks against Matt Ryan, including a pair by outside linebacker Harold Landry III.

2023 Week 8 • Oct. 29, 2023 • Falcons 23 at TITANS 28

With veteran quarterback Ryan Tannehill inactive due to an ankle injury, rookie Will Levis makes his first career start ... Levis passes for 238 yards and becomes the third player in NFL history with four touchdown passes in his NFL debut (Marcus Mariota and Fran Tarkenton) ... DeAndre Hopkins catches four of Levis' passes for 128 yards and three touchdowns (47, 16 and 61 yards) ... Taylor Heinicke relieves starting quarterback Desmond Ridder in the third quarter and engineers four scoring drives before a final series is thwarted by the Titans defense ... Derrick Henry logs 101 rushing yards for the Titans.

ALL-TIME SERIES RESULTS

TITANS vs. FALCONS

Titans lead 9-7

Date	Site	W/L	Score
12-3-72	Atl	L	10-20
11-28-76	Hou	W	20-14
9-3-78	Atl	L	14-20
11-29-81	Hou	L	27-31
9-23-84	Atl	L	10-42
10-25-87	Hou	W	37-33
9-9-90	Atl	L	27-47
12-5-93	Hou	W	33-17
10-13-96	Atl	W	23-13
12-19-99	Tenn	W	30-17
11-23-03	Atl	W	38-31
10-7-07	Tenn	W	20-13
11-20-11	Atl	L	17-23
10-25-15	Ten	L	7-10
9-29-19	Atl	W	24-10
10-29-23	Ten	W	28-23



TITANS-FALCONS: THE LAST MEETING

2023 Week 8: Titans 28, Falcons 23

Sunday, Oct. 29, 2023 • 12:00 p.m. CT • Nissan Stadium



In Week 8 of the 2023 season, the Titans came off their bye to take on the Atlanta Falcons and won by a score of 28-23 with rookie **QB Will Levis** making his Titans starting debut and throwing for four touchdowns and 238 yards.

The Falcons got on the board first with a 29-yard field goal from **K Younghoe Koo** after recovering a fumble at the Titans 28-yard line on the opening possession. Atlanta drove down to the Tennessee seven-yard line, but **OLB Harold Landry III** sacked **QB Desmond Ridder** for a three-yard loss on third-and-five to force the field goal. It was one of six sacks the Tennessee defense had on the day.

Later in the first quarter, Tennessee scored its first touchdown of the day on a four-play, 61-yard drive ending with a 47-yard pass from Levis to **WR DeAndre Hopkins** to take the 7-3 lead.

In the middle of the second quarter, **DT Jeffery Simmons** stripped-sacked Ridder and the fumble was recovered by **LB Azeee Al-Shaair** at the Atlanta 33-yard line. Tennessee capitalized on the turnover with another Levis to Hopkins touchdown connection, this time for a 16-yard score.

Atlanta opened the second half with a 49-yard field goal from Koo to make it 14-6 with 12:02 left in the third.

With 3:02 left in the third, Koo made his third field goal of the day after **QB Taylor Heinicke** drove the Falcons down to the Tennessee 21-yard line with three completions to three different receivers for 49 yards.

The Titans answered on the ensuing drive with a third touchdown for Levis and Hopkins. **RB Derrick Henry** opened the drive with a 14-yard rush, he would go on to finish with 101 rushing yards. Levis then found Hopkins for the 61-yard touchdown to make it 21-9 with 1:37 left in the third.

Atlanta responded with their first touchdown of the day on a 13-yard touchdown run by **RB Bijan Robinson** to cut the lead to five. Heinicke connected with **WR KhaDarel Hodge** for a 52-yard gain to put the Falcons at the Tennessee 22-yard line before the score.

The two teams traded punts before Tennessee took over at their own 15-yard line. The Titans strung together a nine-play, 85-yard touchdown drive highlighted by a 23-

yard run by **RB Tyjae Spears** that culminated in a 33-yard touchdown toss from Levis to **WR Nick Westbrook-Ikhine** to take a 28-16 lead which proved to be the difference.

Falcons responded on the next drive with a eight-play, 75-yard drive, ending in a eight-yard touchdown pass from Heinicke to **WR Scotty Miller** to make it 28-23 with 3:46 left in the game.

The Titans held on for the win as the Falcons were unable to gain another first down as Tennessee ended in victory formation.

SCORING

	1	2	3	4	Final
Falcons	3	0	6	14	23
Tennessee	7	7	7	7	28

TEAM	SCORING PLAY	TIME
Falcons	Y.Koo 29 yd. Field Goal	1-9:47
Titans	D.Hopkins 47 yd. pass from W.Levis (N.Folk kick)	1-2:28
Titans	D.Hopkins 16 yd. pass from W.Levis (N.Folk kick)	2-5:27
Falcons	Y.Koo 49 yd. Field Goal	3-12:06
Falcons	Y.Koo 39 yd. Field Goal	3-3:02
Titans	D.Hopkins 61 yd. pass from W.Levis (N.Folk kick)	3-1:37
Falcons	B.Robinson 13 yd. run (Y.Koo kick)	4-14:17
Titans	N.Westbrook-Ikhine 33 yd. pass from W.Levis (N.Folk kick)	4-6:59
Falcons	S.Miller 8 yd. pass from T.Heinicke	4-3:46

Missed FGs: None

Attendance: 68,008

Time of Game: 3:12

Weather: 77°, Cloudy, Wind WSW 7 mph

Referee: Clay Martin

[CLICK TO WATCH HIGHLIGHTS](#)

TEAM STATISTICS

	Falcons	Titans
TOTAL FIRST DOWNS	17	17
THIRD DOWN EFFICIENCY	4-15-26.7%	5-15-33.3%
FOURTH DOWN EFFICIENCY	1-2-50.0%	1-1-100.0%
TOTAL NET YARDS	342	375
Plays - Avg.	66-5.2	67-5.6
NET YARDS RUSHING	140	149
Rushes - Avg.	26-5.4	36-4.1
NET YARDS PASSING	202	226
Sacks - Yards Lost	6-44	2-12
PASS ATT-COMP-INT	34-20-0	29-19-0
PUNTS - Avg.	6-50.8	8-52.5
Net Punting Average	45.5	46.8
PUNT RETURNS - Yards	1-6	5-32
KICKOFF RETURNS - Yards	2-39	1-13
INTERCEPTIONS - Yards	0-0	0-0
PENALTIES Number and Yards	3-15	6-53
FUMBLES Number and Lost	1-1	1-1
TOUCHDOWNS	2	4
EXTRA POINTS Made-Attempts	2-2	4-4
RED ZONE EFFICIENCY	2-3-67%	1-1-100%
GOAL TO GO EFFICIENCY	1-1-100%	0-0-0%
SAFETIES	0	0
GIVEAWAYS	1	1
TAKEAWAYS	1	1
TIME OF POSSESSION	27:01	32:59

FALCONS STARTERS

OFFENSE				DEFENSE			
TE	81	J.Smith	OLB	48	B.Dupree		
LT	70	J.Matthews	DL	90	D.Onyemata		
LG	65	M.Bergeron	DL	97	G.Jarrett		
C	67	D.Dalman	DL	93	C.Campbell		
RG	63	C.Lindstrom	ILB	55	K.Elliss		
RT	76	K.McGary	ILB	53	N.Landman		
TE	8	K.Pitts	OLB	17	A.Ebiketie		
WR	15	V.Jefferson	CB	24	A.Terrell		
WR	5	D.London	CB	1	J.Okudah		
QB	9	D.Ridder	S	3	J.Bates		
RB	7	B.Robinson	S	27	R.Grant		

TITANS STARTERS

OFFENSE				DEFENSE			
TE	88	T.Wesco	DE	96	D.Autry		
TE	85	C.Okonkwo	DT	98	J.Simmons		
LT	78	N.Petit-Frere	DE	95	K.Peko		
LG	77	P.Skoronski	OLB	49	A.Key		
C	55	A.Brewer	ILB	2	A.Al-Shaair		
RG	60	D.Brunskill	ILB	50	J.Gibbens		
RT	66	C.Hubbard	S	24	E.Molden		
WR	16	T.Burks	CB	33	E.Garror		
WR	10	D.Hopkins	CB	0	S.Murphy-Bunting		
QB	8	W.Levis	CB	26	K.Fulton		
RB	22	D.Henry	S	37	A.Hooker		

FALCONS INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
B.Robinson	11	62	5.6	25	1
T.Allgeier	8	31	3.9	9	0
D.Ridder	3	26	8.7	23	0
T.Heinicke	2	14	7.0	11	0
C.Patterson	2	7	3.5	4	0
Total	26	140	5.4	25	1

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	TD	Lg	IN	Rt
T.Heinicke	21	12	175	1	52	0	100.3
D.Ridder	12	8	71	0	13	0	82.3
J.Smith	1	0	0	0	0	0	39.6
Total	34	20	246	1	52	0	91.1

Receiving	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
D.London	5	55	11.0	21	0
K.Hodge	3	75	25.0	52	0
K.Pitts	3	35	11.7	14	0
V.Jefferson	3	24	8.0	11	0
M.Hollins	2	27	13.5	20	0
S.Miller	2	14	7.0	8	1
J.Smith	1	13	13.0	13	0
M.Pruitt	1	3	3.0	3	0
Total	20	246	12.3	52	1

Interceptions	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None					

Leading Tacklers (Press Box Totals)

K.Elliss 8-6-2; R.Grant 8-5-3; N.Landman 8-4-4
Sacks: B.Dupree 1, A.Ebiketie, FF: None
FR: C.Campbell

TITANS INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
D.Henry	22	101	4.6	14	0
T.Spears	3	27	9.0	23	0
W.Levis	7	11	1.6	5	0
M.Willis	2	4	2.0	4	0
C.Okonkwo	1	4	4.0	4	0
A.Hooker	1	2	2.0	2	0
Total	36	149	4.1	23	0

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	TD	Lg	IN	Rt
W.Levis	29	19	238	4	61	0	130.5
Total	29	19	238	4	61	0	130.5

Receiving	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
D.Hopkins	4	128	32.0	61	3
C.Okonkwo	4	23	5.8	12	0
D.Henry	4	21	5.3	8	0
K.Philips	3	24	8.0	10	0
T.Spears	3	9	3.0	5	0
N.Westbrook-Ikhine	1	33	33.0	33	1
Total	19	238	12.5	61	4

Interceptions	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None					

Leading Tacklers (Press Box Totals)

A.Al-Shaair 11-6-5; K.Fulton 8-5-3

Sacks: H.Landry 2, J.Simmons 2, D.Autry 1, J.Gibbens 1,
FF: J.Simmons 1
FR: A.Al-Shaair 1



2024 TALE OF THE TAPE

OFFENSE	TEN	ATL	NFL/Avg
GAMES (W-L-T)	3-14-0	8-9-0	---
FIRST DOWNS	309	359	335.3
Rushing	112	133	115.1
Passing	164	198	190.8
Penalty	33	28	29.5
YDS GAINED (tot)	5172	6287	5736.3
Avg per Game	304.2	369.8	337.4
RUSHING (net)	1855	2219	2036.7
Avg per Game	109.1	130.5	119.8
Rushes	450	495	459.0
Yards per Rush	4.1	4.5	4.4
PASSING (net)	3317	4068	3699.7
Avg per Game	195.1	239.3	217.6
Attempts	530	559	556.6
Completions	336	364	363.4
Completion Pct	63.4%	65.1%	65.3%
Yards Gained	3621	4283	3969.5
Sacked	52	32	41.1
Yards Lost	304	215	269.8
Had Intercepted	21	19	12.1
Yards Opp Ret	295	274	135.7
Opp TDs on Int	4	1	0.9
PUNTS	75	47	63.9
Avg Yards	49.2	47.0	47.3
PUNT RETURNS	34	21	27.3
Avg Return	7.4	9.5	9.9
Returned for TD	0	0	0.2
KICKOFF RETURNS	40	30	28.8
Avg Return	27.0	26.4	27.6
Returned for TD	0	0	0.2
PENALTIES	132	99	109.6
Yards Penalized	1030	828	887.9
FUMBLES BY	28	21	19.8
Fumbles Lost	13	5	8.5
Opp Fumbles	16	18	19.8
Opp Fumbles Lost	7	6	8.5
POSS. TIME (avg)	30:44	29:32	30:00
TOUCHDOWNS	33	43	43.3
Rushing	11	18	16.0
Passing	22	21	25.3
Returns	0	4	2.1
EXTRA POINT KICKS	28/28	38/38	95.8%
2-PT CONVERSIONS	3/4	2/4	40.7%
FIELD GOALS/ATT	25/27	29/41	84.0%
POINTS SCORED	311	389	389.5
DEFENSE	TEN	ATL	NFL/Avg
POINTS ALLOWED	460	423	389.5
OPP FIRST DOWNS	314	347	335.3
Rushing	118	131	115.1
Passing	157	200	190.8
Penalty	39	16	29.5
OPP YARDS GAINED (tot)	5291	5868	5736.3
Avg per Game	311.2	345.2	337.4
OPP RUSHING (net)	2277	2051	2036.7
Avg per Game	133.9	120.7	119.8
Rushes	503	458	459.0
Yards per Rush	4.5	4.5	4.4
OPP PASSING (net)	3014	3817	3699.7
Avg per Game	177.3	224.5	217.6
Pass Attempts	473	578	556.6
Pass Completions	314	404	363.4
Completion Pct	66.4%	69.9%	65.3%
Yards Gained	3216	4004	3969.5
Sacked	32	31	41.1
Yards Lost	202	187	269.8
INTERCEPTED BY	11	12	12.1
Yards Returned	86	187	135.7
Returned for TD	0	3	0.9
OPP PUNT RETURNS	47	22	27.3
Avg Return	13.9	13.9	9.9
Returned for TD	1	0	0.2
OPP KICKOFF RETURNS	28	27	28.8
Avg Return	32.1	27.3	27.6
Returned for TD	0	0	0.2
OPP TOUCHDOWNS	55	47	43.3
Rushing	21	11	16.0
Passing	27	34	25.3
Returns	7	2	2.1

2024 SCHEDULE & RESULTS



REGULAR SEASON		
Date	Opponent	Result
W1- 9/8	at Chicago	L, 17-24
W2- 9/15	NEW YORK JETS	L, 17-24
W3- 9/22	GREEN BAY	L, 14-30
W4- 9/30	at Miami	W, 31-12
W6- 10/13	INDIANAPOLIS	L, 17-20
W7- 10/20	at Buffalo	L, 10-34
W8- 10/27	at Detroit	L, 52-14
W9- 11/3	NEW ENGLAND	W, 20-17 (OT)
W10- 11/10	at L.A. Chargers	L, 17-27
W11- 11/17	MINNESOTA	L, 13-23
W12- 11/24	at Houston	W, 32-27
W13- 12/1	at Washington	L, 19-42
W14- 12/8	JACKSONVILLE	L, 6-10
W15- 12/15	CINCINNATI	L, 27-37
W16- 12/22	at Indianapolis	L, 30-38
W17- 12/29	at Jacksonville	L, 13-20
W18- 1/5	HOUSTON	L, 14-23

REGULAR SEASON		
Date	Opponent	Result
W1- 9/8	PITTSBURGH	L 10-18
W2- 9/16	at Philadelphia	W 22-21
W3- 9/22	KANSAS CITY	L 17-22
W4- 9/29	NEW ORLEANS	W 26-24
W5- 10/3	TAMPA BAY	W 36-30 (OT)
W6- 10/13	at Carolina	W 38-20
W7- 10/20	SEATTLE	L 14-34
W8- 10/27	at Tampa Bay	W 31-26
W9- 11/3	DALLAS	W 27-21
W10- 11/10	at New Orleans	L 17-20
W11- 11/17	at Denver	L 6-38
W13- 12/1	L.A. CHARGERS	L 13-17
W14- 12/8	at Minnesota	L 21-42
W15- 12/16	at Las Vegas	W 15-9
W16- 12/22	NEW YORK GIANTS	W 34-7
W17- 12/29	at Washington	L 24-30 (OT)
W18- 1/5	CAROLINA	L 38-44 (OT)

2024 REGULAR SEASON INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

Passing		Att	Cmp	Yds	Pct	Y/Att	TD	Int	Lg	Sack/Lost	Rtg
Titans	W. Levis	301	190	2,091	63.1	7.0	13	12	98t	41/233	81.4
	M. Rudolph	228	146	1,530	64.0	6.7	9	9	47	11/71	80.1
Falcons	K. Cousins	453	303	3,508	66.9	7.7	18	16	60	28/201	88.6
	M. Penix	105	61	775	58.1	7.4	3	3	42	4/14	78.9

Rushing		No.	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
Titans	T. Pollard	260	1,079	4.2	41	5
	T. Spears	84	312	3.7	23	4
Falcons	B. Robinson	304	1,456	4.8	37t	14
	T. Allgeier	137	644	4.7	25	3

Receiving		No.	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
Titans	C. Ridley	64	1,017	15.9	63	4
	C. Okonkwo	52	479	9.2	70t	2
	T. Pollard	41	238	5.8	30	0
	T. Boyd	39	390	10.0	40	0
	N. Westbrook-Ikhine	32	497	15.5	98t	9
Falcons	D. London	100	1,271	12.7	39	9
	D. Mooney	64	992	15.5	49	5
	R. McCloud	62	686	11.1	60	1

Interceptions		No.	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
Titans	A. Hooker	5	68	13.6	30	0
Falcons	J. Bates	4	55	13.8	55t	1

Punting		No.	Yds	Avg	Net	TB	In	Lg	B
Titans	R. Stonehouse	73	3,691	50.6	38.6	7	22	75	2
Falcons	B. Pinion	47	2,209	47.0	38.8	4	14	65	0

Punt Returns		No.	FC	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Titans	J. Jackson	28	7	215	7.7	20	0
Falcons	A. Williams	20	18	185	9.3	28	0

Kickoff Returns		No.	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
Titans	J. Jackson	16	412	25.8	34	0
Falcons	A. Williams	15	408	27.2	38	0

Scoring/Kickers		PAT	FG	Pts
Titans	N. Folk	25/25	21/22	88
Falcons	Y. Koo	26/26	25/34	101

Sacks	Total
Titans	H. Landry 9.0
Falcons	A. Ebiketie 6.0

Tackles	Total	Solo	Asst
Titans	K. Murray 95	57	38
Falcons	K. Elliss 150	84	66



2024 INDIVIDUAL NFL RANKINGS

(qualifiers only, where applicable)

Category	Team	Player	Stat	NFL Rank
Passer Rating	Titans	Will Levis*	81.4*	--
	Falcons	Kirk Cousins	88.6	20
Passing Yards	Titans	Will Levis	2,091	27
	Falcons	Kirk Cousins	3,508	18
Passing TDs	Titans	Will Levis	13	26t
	Falcons	Kirk Cousins	18	20t
Rushing Yards	Titans	Tony Pollard	1,017	12t
	Falcons	Bijan Robninson	1,456	3
Rushing Average	Titans	Tony Pollard	4.2	31t
	Falcons	Bijan Robninson	4.8	12t
Rushing TDs	Titans	Tony Pollard	5	29t
	Falcons	Bijan Robninson	14	5t
Receptions	Titans	Calvin Ridley	64	45t
	Falcons	Drake London	100	9t
Receiving Yards	Titans	Calvin Ridley	1,017	21
	Falcons	Drake London	1,271	4
Receiving TDs	Titans	Nick Westbrook-Ikhine	9	9t
	Falcons	Drake London	9	9t
Sacks	Titans	Harold Landry III	9.0	18t
	Falcons	Arnold Ebiketie	6.0	50t
Interceptions	Titans	Amani Hooker	5	6t
	Falcons	Jessie Bates	4	10t

* Did not qualify based on attempts

NOTABLE PERFORMANCES VS. THE FALCONS

LB CODY BARTON

- On 10/15/23 at Atlanta, Barton set a career-high with 15 tackles as a member of the Commanders.
- On 11/17/24 against Atlanta, Barton tallied four tackles for the Broncos as well as the fourth interception of his career.

S QUANDRE DIGGS

- On 9/13/20 at Atlanta, Diggs recorded four tackles and one interception with the Seahawks.

WR TYLER LOCKETT

- On 10/27/19 at Atlanta, Lockett tallied six receptions for 100 yards with the Seahawks.

DT JEFFERY SIMMONS

- On 10/29/23 against Atlanta, Simmons recorded five tackles, two sacks and one forced fumble. It was the second game of his career to tally multiple sacks and a forced fumble.

S XAVIER WOODS

- On 11/12/17 at Atlanta, Woods tallied four tackles and his first career interception with the Cowboys.
- On 12/17/23 against Atlanta, Woods recorded three tackles and one interception for the Panthers.

2024 SITUATIONAL RECORDS

TENNESSEE TITANS		ATLANTA FALCONS	
Total	3 - 14	Total	8 - 9
Home	1 - 7	Home	4 - 5
Away	2 - 7	Away	4 - 4
Grass	1 - 3	Grass	3 - 2
Turf	2 - 11	Turf	5 - 7
AFC	3 - 9	AFC	1 - 4
NFC	0 - 5	NFC	7 - 5
In Division	1 - 5	In Division	4 - 2
Out Division	2 - 9	Out Division	4 - 7
Indoor	1 - 2	Indoor	5 - 5
Outdoor	2 - 12	Outdoor	3 - 4
January	0 - 1	January	0 - 1
September	1 - 3	September	2 - 2
October	0 - 3	October	3 - 1
November	2 - 2	November	1 - 2
December	0 - 5	December	2 - 3
Sunday	2 - 14	Sunday	5 - 9
Monday	1 - 0	Monday	2 - 0
		Thursday	1 - 0

THIS WEEK'S NFL SCHEDULE

All Times Central/p.m.

Friday, Aug. 15

Tennessee	at Atlanta	6:00	NFLN
Kansas City	at Seattle	9:00	NFLN

Saturday, Aug. 16

Miami	at Detroit	12:00	
Carolina	at Houston	12:00	
Green Bay	at Indianapolis	12:00	
New England	at Minnesota	12:00	
Cleveland	at Philadelphia	12:00	NFLN
San Francisco	at Las Vegas	3:00	NFLN
Baltimore	at Dallas	6:00	
L.A. Chargers	at L.A. Rams	6:00	
N.Y. Jets	at N.Y. Giants	6:00	NFLN
Tampa Bay	at Pittsburgh	6:00	
Arizona	at Denver	8:30	NFLN

Sunday, Aug. 17

Jacksonville	at New Orleans	12:00	NFLN
Buffalo	at Chicago	7:00	FOX

Monday, Aug. 18

Cincinnati	at Washington	7:00	ESPN



WHERE THE TEAMS RANKED IN 2024

2024 OFFENSIVE STATISTICS AND NFL RANKING

OFFENSIVE CATEGORY	TITANS	BUCCANEERS
	STAT (RANK)	STAT (RANK)
Yards / Game	304.2 (26)	369.8 (6)
Yards / Play	5.01 (27)	5.79 (8)
Rushing Yards / Game	109.1 (19t)	130.5 (10)
Rushing Yards / Play	4.12 (22)	4.48 (12)
Passing Yards / Game	195.1 (26)	239.3 (5)
Passing Yards / Play	6.26 (23)	7.28 (8)
Interception Rate	3.96% (32)	3.40% (29)
Sacks / Pass Attempt	9.81% (27)	5.72% (7)
First Downs / Game	18.2 (24)	21.1 (8)
Punt Return Avg	7.4 (28)	9.5 (19)
Kickoff Return Avg	27.0 (22)	26.4 (24)
Field Goals Made	92.59% (5)	70.73% (31)
3rd Down Pct	37.67% (19)	39.23% (17)
4th Down Pct	39.13% (30)	67.74% (6)
Red Zone Pct	53.33% (24)	54.72% (20)
Goal to Go%	65.00% (27)	69.23% (22)
Avg Time of Possession	30:44 (9)	29:32 (22)
Points / Game	18.3 (27)	22.9 (13t)
Turnover Margin	-16 (30)	-6 (23t)

2024 DEFENSIVE STATISTICS AND NFL RANKING

DEFENSIVE CATEGORY	TITANS	BUCCANEERS
	STAT (RANK)	STAT (RANK)
Yards / Game	311.2 (2)	345.2 (23)
Yards / Play	5.25 (8)	5.50 (20)
Rushing Yards / Game	133.9 (26)	120.6 (15)
Rushing Yards / Play	4.53 (21)	4.48 (18)
Passing Yards / Game	177.3 (2)	224.5 (22)
Passing Yards / Play	6.37 (9)	6.60 (16)
Interception Rate	2.33% (15)	2.08% (20)
Sacks / Pass Attempt	76.92% (22)	5.36% (31)
First Downs / Game	18.5 (5t)	20.4 (25t)
Punt Return Avg	13.9 (32)	13.9 (31)
Kickoff Return Avg	32.1 (31)	27.3 (13)
3rd Down Pct	41.31% (22)	45.28% (31)
4th Down Pct	76.92% (31t)	53.85% (15)
Red Zone Pct	63.16% (25t)	64.91% (28)
Goal to Go%	73.33% (15)	77.78% (23)
Points / Game	27.1 (30)	24.9 (23)
Point Differential / Game	-8.8 (30)	-2.0 (19)
Yard Differential / Game	-7.0 (20)	24.6 (8)

FALCONS HEAD COACH RAHEEM MORRIS

RAHEEM MORRIS AT A GLANCE

- Regular season record: 29-47
- Postseason record: 0-0
- Overall record: 29-47
- vs. Titans: 0-1
- On the road vs. Titans: 0-1
- At home vs. Titans: 0-0
- vs. Brian Callahan: 0-0
- Year as Falcons head coach: 2
- Year as NFL head coach: 5



Raheem Morris' Assistant Coaching Staff:

Tim Berbenich	Pass Game Specialist/Game Management
K.J. Black	Offensive Assistant
Shawn Flaherty	Assistant Offensive Line
Jerry Gray	Assistant Head Coach/Defense
Ike Hilliard	Wide Receivers
Justin Hood	Secondary
Dave Huxtable	Senior Defensive Assistant
Nick Jones	Assistant Offensive Line
Steven King	Special Teams Assistant
Kevin Koger	Tight Ends
Patrick Kramer	Offensive Assistant
Dwayne Ledford	Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line
Nate Ollie	Defensive Line
Michael Pitre	Running Backs
Zac Robinson	Offensive Coordinator
Mike Rutenberg	Defensive Pass Game Coordinator
Barrett Ruud	Inside Linebackers
Lance Schulters	Defensive Assistant
Jacques Smith	Outside Linebackers
John Timu	Defensive Assistant
Jeff Ulbrich	Defensive Coordinator
D.J. Williams	Defensive Assistant
Marquice Williams	Special Teams Coordinator
T.J. Yates	Passing Game Coordinator
Ken Zampese	Senior Offensive Assistant

Raheem Morris enters his second season with Atlanta after being named the 19th head coach in Falcons history on Jan. 25, 2024. Morris spent the previous three seasons (2021-23) as defensive coordinator for the Los Angeles Rams.

In 2024, the Falcons' defense finished the season allowing the third-least opponent plays of 20-or-more yards (52). Offensively, Atlanta finished sixth in offensive yards per game (369.8), fifth in passing yards per game (239.3) and 10th in rushing yards per game (130.5). Running back Bijan Robinson and special teamer KhaDarel Hodge both were elected to their first-career Pro Bowls while guard Chris Lindstrom was elected to his third consecutive Pro Bowl. Led by Morris, the team finished with a 4-2 record against NFC South opponents.

During his tenure with the Rams, Los Angeles made two postseason appearances and captured a title in Super Bowl LVI. With Morris, Los Angeles' defense recorded the fourth-best red zone efficiency rating and the seventh-fewest rushing yards per game in the NFL.

During the 2021 season that culminated in a Super Bowl title, the Rams defense averaged 1.5 takeaways per game and featured three players – Aaron Donald, Leonard Floyd and Von Miller – ranked in the top 20 in sacks. Additionally, Morris' unit ranked third in sacks (50) and fifth in tackles for loss (85) during the regular season.

Prior to Los Angeles, Morris spent six seasons (2015-20) with the Falcons in a variety of roles including assistant head coach/passing game coordinator (2015, 2017-18), assistant head coach/wide receivers (2016), assistant head coach/wide receivers/secondary (2019) and defensive coordinator (2020) before serving as Atlanta's interim head coach for the final 12 weeks of the 2020 season.

Morris joined the Falcons after spending three seasons as defensive backs coach for the Washington Commanders. Prior to arriving in Washington, Morris spent three seasons as the head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers from 2009 to 2011. Morris was the league's youngest head coach in 2009 and in 2010. The Buccaneers made their best turnaround in franchise history in 2010 at 10-6 after going 3-13 in 2009.

Morris made his NFL coaching debut with Tampa Bay as a defensive quality control coach in 2002, when the club won Super Bowl XXXVII.

Morris played safety at Hofstra from 1994-97 and received his Bachelor of Science degree in physical education.

RAHEEM MORRIS' COACHING BACKGROUND

2024-present:	Atlanta Falcons	Head Coach
2021-23:	Los Angeles Rams	Defensive Coordinator
2020:	Atlanta Falcons	Interim Head Coach
2020:	Atlanta Falcons	Defensive Coordinator
2019:	Atlanta Falcons	Assistant Head Coach/Wide Receivers
2018:	Atlanta Falcons	Assistant Head Coach/Passing Game Coordinator
2017:	Atlanta Falcons	Assistant Head Coach/Passing Game Coordinator/Wide Receivers
2016:	Atlanta Falcons	Assistant Head Coach/Wide Receivers
2015:	Atlanta Falcons	Assistant Head Coach/Passing Game Coord.
2012-14:	Washington Redskins	Defensive Backs
2009-11:	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	Head Coach
2007-08:	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	Defensive Coordinator
2006:	Kansas State	Defensive Coordinator
2004-05:	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	Assistant Defensive Backs
2003:	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	Defensive Assistant
2002:	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	Defensive Quality Control
2001:	New York Jets	Defensive Minority Intern
2000-01:	Hofstra	Defensive Backs
1999:	Cornell	Defensive Backs/Special Teams Assistant
1998:	Hofstra	Undergraduate Assistant

TITANS-FALCONS CONNECTIONS

COLLEGE CONNECTIONS



T JC Latham (2021-23)



S DeMarco Hellams (2019-21)



TE Gunnar Helm (2021-24)
NT T'Vondre Sweat (2019-23)



RB Bijan Robinson (2020-22)



WR Van Jefferson (2018-19)

TE Kyle Pitts (2018-20)



QB Cameron Ward (2024)

DL Simeon Barrow Jr. (2024)



WR Jha'Quan Jackson (2019-23)
RB Tyjae Spears (2019-22)

WR Darnell Mooney (2016-19)



WR Chimere Dike (2020-23)

OL Jack Nelson (2020-24)

NFL CONNECTIONS



QB Brandon Allen (2020-22)
Brian Callahan (2019-24)
Steve Jackson (2020-21)

S Jessie Bates (2018-22)



Bill Callahan (2015-19)
Randy Jordan (2014-23)

QB Kirk Cousins (2012-17)

TITANS WITH GEORGIA HOMETOWNS

ATLANTA

OLB Arden Key
Tracy Rocker

ATHENS

Frank Bush

Dacula

OL Corey Levin

DEMOREST

WR Mason Kinsey

HEPHZIBAH

CB Darrell Baker Jr.

LEESBURG

LB Otis Reese IV

POWDER SPRINGS

TE Chig Okonkwo

WARNER ROBINS

CB Davion Ross

HOMETOWN RETURN



Titans outside linebacker **Arden Key** is a native Atlanta, Ga. and attended Hapeville Charter Academy where he was unanimously rated as a four-star prospect by Rivals, 247Sports, Scout and ESPN. After racking up 15.5 sacks as a senior, he was regarded as the No. 4 overall prospect in the state of Georgia. Key is known for his energetic and positive personality that he credits to his Atlanta roots. "That's just me. I don't know any quiet person from Atlanta," Key told The Tennessean in 2023. "I think that's just in our nature."



Titans tight end **Chig Okonkwo** is a native of Powder Springs, Ga., about 20 miles northeast of Atlanta. Okonkwo attended Hillgrove High School where he was a consensus three-star recruit and also competed in basketball and the triple jump in track and field. Okonkwo committed to play at Maryland in August of 2017.

COACHING CONNECTIONS

Titans linebackers coach **Frank Bush** spent three seasons with the Falcons in the same role from 2021-23.

Titans secondary/safeties coach **Steve Jackson** spent two seasons with the Falcons as senior offensive assistant (2022) and secondary coach (2023).

Titans tight ends coach **Luke Stocker** spent two seasons with the Falcons as a player from 2019-20.

Falcons inside linebackers coach **Barrett Ruud** played linebacker for the Titans in 2011.

Falcons defensive assistant **Lance Schulters** played safety for the Titans from 2002 to 2004.

Falcons assistant head coach/defense coach **Jerry Gray** spent a season with the Oilers as a player in 1992 before joining the team's coaching staff as defensive quality control coach in 1997-98. Gray would serve as Tennessee's first defensive backs coach of the Titans era from 1999-2000 and would return to Tennessee as defensive coordinator from 2011-13.

TRACY ROCKER



Titans defensive line coach **Tracy Rocker** is a native of Atlanta, Ga., and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in Atlanta in 2004 and the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame in 2018. Rocker attended Fulton High School (Atlanta, Ga.) before playing at defensive tackle at Auburn where he was a two-time All-American and three time First-team All-Southeastern Conference defensive tackle. He was honored with the Lombardi Award (nation's top college football player) and Outland Trophy (nation's top interior lineman) as a senior in 1988, becoming the first player in SEC history to earn both accolades, on top of earning conference Player of the Year honors. As a coach, Rocker coached defensive line at the University of Georgia from 2014-2016.



CAREER GAME-BY-GAME STATS VS. THE FALCONS: TITANS OFFENSE

QUARTERBACKS

Brandon Allen (Passing)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Att	Cmp	Pct	Yds	Yd/A	TD	TD%	Int	Int%	Lg	Sk	Lst	Rate
None																
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0

Brandon Allen (Rushing)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	0.0	0	0

Trevor Siemian (Passing)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Att	Cmp	Pct	Yds	Yd/A	TD	TD%	Int	Int%	Lg	Sk	Lst	Rate
11/7/21	Atl	L	QB	41	25	61.0	249	6.07	2	4.9	0	0.0	25	1	15	94.5
1/9/22	@Atl	W		15	9	60.0	71	4.73	2	13.3	0	0.0	13t	1	4	111.4
12/3/23	Atl	L		13	5	38.5	66	5.08	0	0.0	0	0.0	25	3	12	55.3
Totals		1-2	3/1	69	39	56.5	386	5.59	4	5.8	0	0.0	25	5	31	91.8

Trevor Siemian (Rushing)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
11/7/21	Atl	L	QB	0	0	-	-	0
1/9/22	@Atl	W		2	-1	-0.5	0	0
12/3/23	Atl	L		1	8	8.0	8	0
Totals		1-2	3/1	3	7	2.3	8	0

Cameron Ward (Passing)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Att	Cmp	Pct	Yds	Yd/A	TD	TD%	Int	Int%	Lg	Sk	Lst	Rate
None																
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0

Cameron Ward (Rushing)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	0.0	0	0

RUNNING BACKS

Julius Chestnut

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rushing					Receiving				
				Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None													
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0

Jermar Jefferson

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rushing					Receiving				
				Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None													
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0

Jordan Mims

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rushing					Receiving				
				Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
1/7/24	Atl	W		0	0	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0
9/29/24	@Atl	L		0	0	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0
11/10/24	Atl	W		2	10	5.0	9	0	1	4	4.0	4	0
Totals		2-1	3/0	2	10	5.0	9	0	1	4	4.0	4	0

Kael Mullings

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rushing					Receiving				
				Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None													
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0

Tony Pollard

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rushing					Receiving				
				Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
9/20/20	Atl	W	RB	2	6	3.0	3	0	1	3	3.0	3	0
11/14/21	Atl	W		11	42	3.8	15	0	6	56	9.3	19	0
Totals		2-0	2/1	13	48	3.7	15	0	7	59	8.4	19	0

Tyjae Spears

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rushing					Receiving				
				Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
10/29/23	Atl	W		3	27	9.0	23	0	3	9	3.0	5	0
Totals		1-0	1/0	3	27	9.0	23	0	3	9	3.0	5	0



CAREER GAME-BY-GAME STATS VS. THE FALCONS: TITANS OFFENSE

WIDE RECEIVERS

Elic Ayomanor

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0

Chimere Dike

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0

Jha'Quan Jackson

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0

Van Jefferson

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
9/8/24	@Atl	W	WR	1	1	1.0	1	0
Totals		1-0	1/1	1	1	1.0	1	0

Mason Kinsey

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0

Matt Landers

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0

Tyler Lockett

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
10/16/16	Atl	W	WR	3	23	7.7	10	0
11/20/17	Atl	L	WR	4	37	9.3	14	0
10/27/19	@Atl	W	WR	6	100	16.7	20	0
9/13/20	@Atl	W	WR	8	92	11.5	20	0
9/25/22	Atl	L	WR	9	76	8.4	20	0
10/20/24	@Atl	W	WR	4	45	11.3	16	0
Totals		4-2	6/6	34	373	11.0	20	0

Bryce Oliver

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0

James Proche II

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
12/24/22	Atl	W		0	0	0.0	0	0
Totals		1-0	1/0	0	0	0.0	0	0

Xavier Restrepo

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0

Calvin Ridley

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
10/1/23	Atl	W	WR	2	38	19.0	30t	1
Totals		1-0	1/1	2	38	19.0	30t	1

TJ Sheffield

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0

TIGHT ENDS

Drake Dabney

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0

Gunnar Helm

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0

David Martin-Robinson

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0

Thomas Odukoya

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0

Chig Okonkwo

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
10/29/23	Atl	W	TE	4	23	5.0	12	0
Totals		1-0	1/1	4	23	5.0	12	0

Josh Whyle

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0	-	-	0



CAREER GAME-BY-GAME STATS VS. THE FALCONS: TITANS OFFENSE

RETURNERS

Chimere Dike

Date	Opp	W-L	PR	FC	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	KR	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None													
Totals		0-0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0

Jha'Quan Jackson

Date	Opp	W-L	PR	FC	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	KR	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None													
Totals		0-0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0

Mason Kinsey

Date	Opp	W-L	PR	FC	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	KR	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None													
Totals		0-0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0

James Proche II

Date	Opp	W-L	PR	FC	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	KR	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
12/24/22	Atl	W	2	1	14	7.0	9	0	0	0	-	-	0
Totals		1-0	2	1	14	7.0	9	0	0	0	-	-	0

Tyjae Spears

Date	Opp	W-L	PR	FC	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	KR	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
10/29/23	Atl	W	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0
Totals		1-0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0

KICKERS

Joey Slye

Date	Opp	W-L	FGM	FGA	Pct	XPM	XPA	1-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	Lg	KO	TB
11/17/19	Atl	L	1	1	100.0	0	0	0-0	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0	31	2	2
12/08/19	@Atl	L	2	2	100.0	2	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	2-2	0-0	46	3	3
10/11/20	@Atl	W	3	3	100.0	2	2	0-0	1-1	2-2	0-0	0-0	39	6	4
10/29/20	Atl	L	1	1	100.0	2	2	0-0	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0	39	4	4
11/27/22	Atl	W	2	2	100.0	1	2	0-0	0-0	1-1	1-1	0-0	45	5	3
10/15/23	@Atl	W	1	1	100.0	3	3	0-0	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0	37	5	5
Totals		3-3	10	10	100.0	10	11	0-0	1-1	6-6	3-3	0-0	46	25	21

PUNTERS

Johnny Hekker

Date	Opp	W-L	Num	Blk	Yds	Avg	Lg	TB	In20	NetAvg
9/15/13	@Atl	L	6	0	298	49.7	63	0	0	49.0
12/11/16	Atl	L	7	0	340	48.6	57	0	6	48.6
10/20/19	@Atl	W	3	0	95	31.7	43	0	1	33.7
10/30/22	@Atl	L	3	0	141	47.0	52	0	1	40.7
11/10/22	Atl	W	5	0	216	43.2	52	0	2	38.6
9/10/23	@Atl	L	5	0	266	53.2	69	0	1	52.4
12/17/23	Atl	W	5	0	235	47.0	53	1	2	41.2
10/13/24	Atl	L	3	0	120	40.0	58	0	1	30.3
1/5/25	@Atl	W	3	0	155	51.7	57	0	2	48.7
Totals		4-5	40	0	1,866	46.7	69	1	16	43.9
Playoffs										
1/6/18	Atl	L	5	0	218	43.6	66	0	5	42.8
Totals		0-1	5	0	218	43.6	66	0	5	42.8



CAREER GAME-BY-GAME STATS VS. THE FALCONS: TITANS DEFENSE

Darrell Baker Jr. (CB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Cody Barton (LB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
10/27/19	@Atl	W		1	0.0	0	0	0
9/13/20	@Atl	W		0	0.0	0	0	0
9/25/22	Atl	L	MLB	6	0.0	0	0	0
10/15/23	@Atl	W	MLB	15	0.0	0	0	0
11/17/24	Atl	W	MLB	4	0.0	1	0	0
Totals		4-1	5/3	26	0.0	1	0	0

Joshuah Bledsoe (S)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Philip Blidi (DT)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Josiah Bronson (DT)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
11/7/21	Atl	L		0	0.0	0	0	0
Totals		0-1	1/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Kendell Brooks (DB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Mike Brown (S)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Jarvis Brownlee Jr. (CB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Amari Burney (LB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
12/16/24	Atl	L		0	0.0	0	0	0
Totals		0-1	1/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Quandre Diggs (S)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
9/24/17	Atl	L		1	0.0	0	0	0
9/13/20	@Atl	W	FS	4	0.0	1	0	0
9/25/22	Atl	L	FS	2	0.0	0	0	0
Totals		1-2	3/2	7	0.0	1	0	0

Desmond Evans (OLB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Ali Gaye (OLB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Joe Gaziano (DE)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

David Gbenda (LB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Cedric Gray (LB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Jaylen Harrell (OLB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Jermari Harris (CB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Marcus Harris (CB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Amani Hooker (S)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
9/29/19	@Atl	W		4	0.0	0	0	0
10/29/23	Atl	W	S	7	0.0	0	0	0
Totals		2-0	2/1	11	0.0	0	0	0

Timmy Horne (DT)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Cam Horsley (DT)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Curtis Jacobs (LB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Gabe Jeudy-Lally (CB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Dre'Mont Jones (OLB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
11/8/20	@Atl	L	DE	2	1.0	0	0	0
10/20/24	@Atl	W	LB	2	1.0	0	0	0
Totals		1-1	2/2	4	2.0	0	0	0

Sebastian Joseph-Day (DE)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
10/20/19	@Atl	W	NT	1	0.0	0	0	0
11/6/22	@Atl	W	DT	2	0.0	0	0	0
Totals		2-0	2/2	3	0.0	0	0	0



CAREER GAME-BY-GAME STATS VS. THE FALCONS: TITANS DEFENSE

Arden Key (OLB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
11/29/20	@Atl	L		0	0.0	0	0	0
12/19/21	Atl	W		1	1.0	0	0	0
10/29/23	Atl	W	OLB	2	0.0	0	0	0
Totals		2-1	3/1	3	1.0	0	0	0

Jalen Kimber (CB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Clarence Lewis (CB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

James Lynch (DL)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
10/18/20	Atl	L		0	0.0	0	0	0
Totals		0-1	1/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Roger McCreary (CB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Oluwafemi Oladejo (OLB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Anfernee Orji (LB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
9/29/24	@Atl	L		0	0.0	0	0	0
11/10/24	Atl	W		0	0.0	0	0	0
Totals		1-1	2/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Amani Oruwariye (CB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
10/25/20	@Atl	W	CB	4	0.0	0	0	0
Totals		1-0	1/1	4	0.0	0	0	0

Isaiah Raikes (NT)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Otis Reese IV (LB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Davion Ross (CB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Jeffery Simmons (DT)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
10/29/23	Atl	W	DT	5	2.0	0	1	0
Totals		1-0	1/1	5	2.0	0	1	0

L'Jarius Sneed (CB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
12/27/20	Atl	W		7	1.0	0	0	0
Totals		1-0	1/0	7	1.0	0	0	0

T'Vondre Sweat (NT)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Jihad Ward (OLB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
9/18/16	Atl	L	DE	2	0.0	0	0	0
11/28/21	Atl	L		2	0.0	0	0	0
12/8/24	Atl	W		2	0.0	0	0	0
Totals		1-2	3/1	6	0.0	0	0	0

Carlos Watkins (DL)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
11/14/21	Atl	W	RDT	1	0.0	0	0	0
11/3/24	@Atl	L		1	0.0	0	0	0
Totals		1-1	2/1	2	0.0	0	0	0

James Williams Sr. (LB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Kevin Winston Jr. (S)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Julius Wood (DB)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
None								
Totals		0-0	0/0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Xavier Woods (S)

Date	Opp	W-L	G/S	Tackle	Sack	Int	FF	FR
11/12/17	@Atl	L		4	0.0	1	0	0
11/18/18	@Atl	W	FS	9	0.0	0	0	0
9/20/20	Atl	W	S	6	0.0	0	0	0
10/30/22	@Atl	L	SS	5	0.0	0	0	0
11/10/22	Atl	W	SS	8	0.0	0	0	0
9/10/23	@Atl	L	S	2	0.0	0	0	0
12/17/23	Atl	W	S	3	0.0	1	0	0
10/13/24	Atl	L	S	9	0.0	0	0	0
1/5/25	@Atl	W	S	5	0.0	0	0	0
Totals		5-4	9/8	51	0.0	2	0	0



LAST WEEK VS. THE BUCCANEERS



Preseason Week 1: Titans 7, Buccaneers 29

Saturday, Aug. 9, 2025 • 7:30 p.m. EDT • Raymond James Stadium



The Titans opened the 2025 preseason with a 29-7 loss at Raymond James Stadium against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in a contest that saw 80 different Titans players appear in the game.

Tampa Bay won the coin toss and opened the game with a seven-play, 55-yard drive that culminated in a 45-yard field goal by **K Chase McLaughlin** to give the Buccaneers an early 3-0 lead.

After the Buccaneers defense forced a three-and-out on the Titans first offensive possession, Tampa Bay took over at their own 20-yard line. **QB Kyle Trask** engineered a 17-play, 80-yard drive that took 10 minutes and 48 seconds off the clock and ended in a two-yard touchdown run by **RB Sean Tucker** to give the Buccaneers a 10-0 lead early into the second quarter.

The Titans responded with a touchdown drive of their own. **QB Cameron Ward** led the team 65 yards on 11 plays including three completions to **WR Calvin Ridley** for 50 yards. **RB Tony Pollard** punched it in for the score on a one-yard run to make it 10-7 with 8:17 left in the second quarter.

To open the second half, **QB Brandon Allen** marched the Titans down to the Tampa Bay eight-yard line, but was unable to convert on fourth-and-two and turned the ball over on downs.

The Titans defense forced a three-and-out on the next possession. Allen took over at the Titans 26-yard line after a 33-yard punt return by **WR James Proche II** was negated due to a holding penalty. Allen was intercepted five plays later by **LB Nick Jackson**.

On the ensuing Buccaneers' offensive possession, **CB Davion Ross** punched the ball out from **WR Jacob Harris** and was able to recover the fumble to give Tennessee the ball back at their own 11-yard line.

Both teams then traded punts before Tampa Bay took over at the Tennessee 41-yard line in the middle of the fourth quarter. **RB Owen Wright** brought the Buccaneers down to the 18-yard line on three carries for 23 yards before Tampa Bay was forced to settle for a 36-yard field goal by **K Ryan Coe** to make it 16-7 with 5:36 left in the fourth quarter.

QB Tim Boyle took over at quarterback for the Titans and was intercepted on his third

play from scrimmage to give Tampa Bay the ball back at the Tennessee 30-yard line. The Buccaneers capitalized on the turnover and scored three plays later on a 15-yard touchdown run by Wright to give the Buccaneers the 22-7 advantage with 3:25 left in the game.

On the next Titans drive, Boyle was intercepted again, this time for a pick-six by **CB Roman Parodie** to make the final score 29-7 and drop the Titans to 0-1 in the preseason.

SCORING

	1	2	3	4	Final
Tennessee	0	7	0	0	7
Tampa Bay	3	10	0	16	29

TEAM SCORING PLAY

TEAM	SCORING PLAY	TIME
Buccaneers	C. McLaughlin 45 yd. Field Goal	1-11:41
Buccaneers	S. Tucker 2 yd. run (C. McLaughlin kick)	2-14:55
Titans	T. Pollard 1 yd. run (J. Slye kick)	2-8:17
Buccaneers	C. McLaughlin 23 yd. Field Goal	2-0:09
Buccaneers	R. Coe 36 yd. Field Goal	4-5:33
Buccaneers	O. Wright 15 yd. run (kick failed, wr)	4-3:19
Buccaneers	R. Parodie 39 yd. interception return (R. Coe kick)	1-1:21

Missed FGs: None

Attendance: 60,488

Time of Game: 2:58

Weather: 82°, Cloudy, Wind SE 2 mph

Referee: Alan Eck

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TEAM STATISTICS

	Titans	Buccaneers
TOTAL FIRST DOWNS	11	20
THIRD DOWN EFFICIENCY	5-13-38.5%	7-16-43.8%
FOURTH DOWN EFFICIENCY	1-3-33.3%	1-1-100.0%
TOTAL NET YARDS	201	348
Plays - Avg.	56-3.6	67-5.2
NET YARDS RUSHING	66	178
Rushes - Avg.	21-3.1	41-4.3
NET YARDS PASSING	135	170
Sacks - Yards Lost	2-18	1-7
PASS ATT-COMP-INT	33-15-3	25-18-0
PUNTS - Avg.	4-44.5	3-49.0
Net Punting Average	40.3	42.0
PUNT RETURNS - Yards	1-1	1-17
KICKOFF RETURNS - Yards	6-152	1-19
INTERCEPTIONS - Yards	0-0	3-45
PENALTIES Number and Yards	7-61	5-45
FUMBLES Number and Lost	0-0	2-1
TOUCHDOWNS	1	3
EXTRA POINTS Made-Attempts	1-1	2-3
RED ZONE EFFICIENCY	1-2-50%	2-5-40%
GOAL TO GO EFFICIENCY	1-1-100%	1-2-50%
SAFETIES	0	0
GIVEAWAYS	3	1
TAKEAWAYS	1	3
TIME OF POSSESSION	25:01	34:59

TITANS STARTERS

OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
WR 11	V. Jefferson	DL 69	S. Joseph-Day
LT 75	D. Moore	DT 94	T. Horne
LG 77	P. Skoronski	DL 97	J. Lynch
C 62	C. Levin	OLB 45	D. Jones
RG 76	A. Ruppich	OLB 7	O. Oladejo
RT 55	J. Latham	LB 50	C. Barton
TE 85	C. Okonkwo	LB 52	J. Williams
TE 84	G. Helm	CB 29	J. Brownlee
WR 0	C. Ridley	CB 39	D. Baker
QB 1	C. Ward	S 25	X. Woods
RB 20	T. Pollard	S 37	A. Hooker

BUCCANEERS STARTERS

OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
WR 9	E. Egbuka	OLB 98	A. Nelson
LT 77	C. Heck	DL 52	C. Brewer
LG 75	R. O'Neal	DL 96	G. Gaines
C 79	E. Klein	DL 97	A. Gotsis
RG 72	L. Haggard	OLB 43	C. Braswell
RT 60	M. Jordan	LB 45	D. Jones
TE 87	P. Durham	LB 8	S. Dennis
TE 41	K. Kieft	CB 25	J. Parrish
WR 15	J. McMillan	CB 32	J. Hayes
QB 2	K. Trask	S 29	C. Izien
RB 1	R. White	S 6	K. Merriweather

TITANS INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
K. Mullings	7	33	4.7	12	0
J. Chestnut	3	18	6.0	8	0
T. Pollard	4	9	2.3	5	1
J. Mims	3	8	2.7	7	0
T. Spears	3	-1	-0.3	3	0
B. Allen	1	-1	-1.0	-1	0
Total	21	66	3.1	12	1

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	TD	Lg	IN	Rt
T. Boyle	13	4	24	0	12	2	0.6
B. Allen	12	6	62	0	16	1	30.6
C. Ward	8	5	67	0	27	0	89.1
Total	33	15	153	0	27	3	21.4

Receiving	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
C. Ridley	3	50	16.7	27	0
J. Mims	2	5	2.5	6	0
G. Helm	1	16	16.0	16	0
T. Spears	1	13	13.0	13	0
T. Sheffield	1	12	12.0	12	0
B. Oliver	1	11	11.0	11	0
C. Okonkwo	1	10	10.0	10	0
J. Chestnut	1	8	8.0	8	0
D. Martin-Robinson	1	8	8.0	8	0
J. Whyte	1	7	7.0	7	0
T. Lockett	1	7	7.0	7	0
C. Dike	1	6	6.0	6	0
Total	15	153	10.2	27	0

Interceptions	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
None					

Leading Tacklers (Press Box Totals)

T. Horne 7-3-4, C. Gray 7-2-5
Sacks: J. Ward 1 FF: D. Ross 1 FR: D. Ross 1

BUCCANEERS INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
O. Wright	18	87	4.8	15	1
S. Tucker	13	50	3.8	23	1
R. White	6	28	4.7	12	0
K. Trask	3	8	2.7	6	0
J. Harris	1	5	5.0	5	0
Total	41	178	4.3	23	2

Passing	Att	Cmp	Yds	TD	Lg	IN	Rt
K. Trask	16	12	129	0	25	0	98.2
C. Bazalak	9	6	48	0	18	0	79.9
Total	25	18	177	0	25	0	91.6

Receiving	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
R. Miller	6	66	11.0	21	0
G. Greene	2	22	11.0	13	0
D. Culp	2	13	6.5	8	0
J. Harris	2	8	4.0	6	0
O. Wright	2	4	2.0	6	0
J. McMillan	1	25	25.0	25	0
E. Egbuka	1	21	21.0	21	0
R. Jarrett	1	18	18.0	18	0
S. Tucker	1	0	0.0	0	0
Total	18	177	9.8	25	0

Interceptions	No	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
R. Parodie	1	39	39.0	39	1
T. Funderburk	1	6	6.0	6	0
N. Jackson	1	0	0.0	0	0
Total	3	45	15.0	39	1

Leading Tacklers (Press Box Totals)

N. Jackson 6-6-0, J. Roberts 5-4-1
Sacks: N. Jackson 1, W. Peoples 1
FF: None FR: None



NOTES FROM LAST WEEK'S GAME

TEAM NOTES

- The Titans fell to the Buccaneers by a score of 29-7 in the 2025 preseason opener.
- The game marked the first Titans preseason game under new general manager **Mike Borgonzi**, who was hired in January.
- The Titans captains for the game were long snapper **Morgan Cox**, wide receiver **Calvin Ridley**, safety **Amani Hooker** and outside linebacker **Jaylen Harrell**.
- Eight of the team's nine draft picks received their first NFL preseason experience, with the lone exception being third-round safety **Kevin Winston Jr.**

TEAM NOTES - OFFENSE

- The starting offense for the Titans included quarterback **Cameron Ward**; running back **Tony Pollard**; wide receivers **Calvin Ridley** and **Van Jefferson**; tight ends **Chig Okonkwo** and **Gunnar Helm**; left tackle **Dan Moore Jr.**; left guard **Peter Skoronski**; center **Corey Levin**; right guard **Andrew Ruppich**; and right tackle **JC Latham**. Ward and Helm were the two rookie starters on offense. The majority of the starting offense played two series.
- Twelve different players caught at least one pass in the contest.

TEAM NOTES - DEFENSE

- The starting defense included cornerbacks **Jarvis Brownlee Jr.** and **Darrell Baker Jr.**; safeties **Amani Hooker** and **Xavier Woods**; linebackers **Cody Barton** and **James Williams Sr.**; outside linebackers **Dre'Mont Jones** and **Oluwafemi Oladejo**; and defensive linemen **Sebastian Joseph-Day**, **James Lynch** and **Timmy Horne**. Oladejo was the only rookie starter on defense.
- On cornerback **Davion Ross'** fumble recovery in the third quarter, the Titans recorded their first defensive fumble recovery in the preseason since Aug. 25, 2023 against the Patriots, when **Jayden Peevy** recovered a strip sack by **Denico Autry**.

QB BRANDON ALLEN

- Made his Titans preseason debut.
- Entered the game in the second quarter and finished with six completions on 12 pass attempts for 62 yards in his first action with the Titans.
- Connected with tight end **Gunnar Helm** for a 16-yard gain in the third quarter.

WR ELIC AYOMANOR

- Made his rookie preseason debut.

LB CODY BARTON

- Started in his Titans preseason debut and recorded a tackle.

S JOSHUAH BLEDSOE

- Finished fifth on the defense with five tackles in his Titans preseason debut.

QB TIM BOYLE

- Made his Titans preseason debut and completed four passes for 24 yards.

S MIKE BROWN

- Posted four tackles and added a pass defended.

CB JARVIS BROWNLEE JR.

- Started at cornerback and notched a pass defended.

RB JULIUS CHESTNUT

- Rushed for 18 yards on three attempts and added an eight-yard reception.

WR CHIMERE DIKE

- Made his rookie preseason debut.
- Recorded one reception for six yards and returned a kickoff for 32 yards.

LB CEDRIC GRAY

- Tied for the team lead with seven tackles.

P JOHNNY HEKKER

- Made his Titans preseason debut.
- Punted four times for 178 yards and a 44.5-yard average (40.3 net), including a 53-yard long.

TE GUNNAR HELM

- Started in his rookie preseason debut.
- Contributed a 16-yard catch on third-and-two in the third quarter.

S AMANI HOOKER

- Started at safety and recorded two tackles.



NOTES FROM LAST WEEK'S GAME

DT TIMMY HORNE

- Made his Titans preseason debut and tied for the team lead with seven tackles, including a tackle for loss.
- His seven tackles tied for the most by a Titans defensive lineman in a preseason game since 2017 and were the most by a Titans defensive lineman since **Jayden Peevy** and **Sam Okuayinonu** each had seven tackles against Arizona on Aug. 27, 2022.

WR JHA'QUAN JACKSON

- Returned a kickoff for 23 yards and also saw action at wide receiver.

WR VAN JEFFERSON

- Started in his Titans preseason debut.

OLB DRE'MONT JONES

- Started in his Titans preseason debut.

DE SEBASTIAN JOSEPH-DAY

- Started at defensive end and notched a quarterback hit.

WR TYLER LOCKETT

- Made his Titans preseason debut.
- Converted a third-and-six with a seven-yard grab in the second quarter.

T DAN MOORE JR.

- Started at left tackle in his Titans preseason debut.

RB KALEL MULLINGS

- Made his rookie preseason debut.
- Led the offense with seven carries for a team-high 33 yards, including a 12-yard rush in the third quarter.

TE CHIG OKONKWO

- Started at tight end.
- Converted a third-and-nine with a 10-yard reception during a touchdown drive in the second quarter.

OLB OLUWAFEMI OLADEJO

- Started at outside linebacker in his rookie preseason debut.
- Finished with four tackles.

WR BRYCE OLIVER

- Converted a third-and-10 with an 11-yard grab on a pass from **Brandon Allen** in the third quarter.
- Also participated in punt coverage as a gunner.

**RB TONY POLLARD**

- Started at running back and carried four times for nine yards.
- Scored a one-yard touchdown on the Titans' second drive to culminate an 11-play, 65-yard march.

WR JAMES PROCHE II

- Made his Titans preseason debut.
- Returned a kickoff for 21 yards and also saw time at wide receiver.

NT ISAIAH RAIKES

- Made his rookie preseason debut.
- Finished with four tackles and a pass defended.

WR CALVIN RIDLEY

- Started at wide receiver and recorded a team-best three receptions for 50 yards.
- Posted a catch on three consecutive plays in the second quarter, two of which resulted in a first down. He connected with quarterback **Cameron Ward** for a 27-yard completion, followed by receptions of 10 yards and 13 yards. The drive ended with a Titans touchdown.

CB DAVION ROSS

- Created a turnover in the third quarter, forcing a fumble against wide receiver Jacob Harris and then recovering the fumble.
- Added three tackles.

WR TJ SHEFFIELD

- Recorded a 12-yard reception in his first NFL preseason action as a rookie.
- Also notched a team-high 52 kickoff return yards on two attempts, including a 29-yard return in the fourth quarter.

K JOEY SLYE

- Made his Titans preseason debut and made his only extra point attempt in addition to handling kickoff duties.

NOTES FROM LAST WEEK'S GAME

RB TYJAE SPEARS

- Recorded a 13-yard reception before leaving the contest with an injury in the second quarter. He also had three rushing attempts.

QB CAMERON WARD

- Started in his rookie preseason debut and played two series.
- Completed five of eight passes for a team-high 67 yards and an 89.1 passer rating.
- Led an 11-play, 65-yard touchdown drive in the second quarter. He completed five of his six attempts on the drive, including a pair of completions to convert third downs. All but one completion went for 10 yards or more.
- His first completion was a 27-yarder to **Calvin Ridley** in the second quarter, the first of three completions on three consecutive plays—each to Ridley for at least 10 yards.
- Also connected with **Chig Okonkwo** for a gain of 10 yards on third-and-nine.

OLB JIHAD WARD

- Recorded the defense's first sack of the preseason, dropping Buccaneers quarterback Kyle Trask in the first quarter.

TE JOSH WHYLE

- Caught a seven-yard pass in the fourth quarter.



LB JAMES WILLIAMS SR.

- Started and tied for third on the defense with six tackles, including a tackle for loss.
- Helped force a punt with a two-yard tackle for loss on third down in the second quarter.
- Added a special teams tackle.

S JULIUS WOOD

- Tied for third on the defense with six tackles.

S XAVIER WOODS

- Started in his Titans preseason debut.

SELECT TITANS POSTGAME QUOTES

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9, 2025

HEAD COACH BRIAN CALLAHAN

Opening Statement

A couple [of] things – some good, some bad. A lot of guys [got] their first NFL action which was good to see. I thought Cam (Ward) played well in his two series that he got. Kind of a weird first half with three possessions. [Cam Ward] had one three-and-out then came back and led a touchdown drive, I thought he looked good. He started to feel a little bit more comfortable, he was begging to go back in but that wasn't in the cards for tonight. I thought he did some good things, and it was encouraging. Too many turnovers, I think that blew the game open at the end there was the turnovers. But it was a one possession game into the fourth quarter and had a chance potentially to go win it and didn't do enough good things offensively or defensively to try to make that happen. I thought we did a nice job defensively bowing up in the red zone. We gave up some yards I think and all the groups that went in but ended up finding a way to keep them out of the end zone for the most part for most of the game, which was good to see. [We have to] clean up the turnovers – it got sloppy late which was disappointing to see but I think there were some good things and plenty to correct.

(On the conversation after the three-and-out in the first series)

Just get ready to go back and do it again. There wasn't a whole lot to talk about as far as good or bad. We just -- just like the normal flow of the game is you come off the field, go through it, see what the picture looked like and what we could have done and what could have been different and move onto the next series. Pretty run of the mill.

(On overcoming a penalty on their touchdown drive)

Yeah it was great. I mean to overcome a penalty in a drive is hard to do and it was good to see us do it. I thought he made two really nice throws to get us back into manageable spot and then converted to third down – always excellent to

see overcoming those holes, you don't like to get put in them, but they happen occasionally and it was good to see us come out of it.

(On the completions to WR Calvin Ridley following the penalty)

That's exactly what you hope for. I thought – the pass protection I think for most of the game was pretty good. I think Kaleb [Mullings] gave up one on a one-on-one pick up in the second half there. For the most part, I thought the protection – the offensive line part of it was solid, so that was good to see. That play went about as [well] as you could ask for, unless he would've scored it might have been a little better.

(On how he measures success against the Buccaneers' backups)

It's a grain of salt. It was obviously their backups. They have good depth, I mean that's a good football team. Their twos up front were solid, I think we felt that in practice as well. I mean, that was their twos and that was our ones and I think we did what we would expect to do in that particular case.

(On any update with RB Tyjae Spears)

Further evaluation, we'll see. It looks like it's probably an ankle that we'll see what the severity is as we evaluate a little bit further. I'll have news for that probably another day here.

(On how WR Bryce Oliver stepped up)

Bryce continues to make plays. I think anytime he's been given the opportunity, even last year during training camp and the preseason he continues to find ways to make the plays when we need one. I'm proud of what he has done, I'm proud of his journey and what he has shown us and I think he has a chance to really help us throughout the rest of camp and hopefully in the regular season if he continues the trajectory he is on. Pleased with Bryce and happy with what he has done.

(On the performance of LB James Williams Sr.)

That was good to see. I think those two young linebackers, him and Cedric



SELECT TITANS POSTGAME QUOTES



[Gray], they played a good handful of snaps. James set the tone on the opening kickoff, I thought that was a heck of a play. When you saw him he was flying around, him and Ced both were productive – I can't remember exactly how many tackles they had but I think it was six, seven tackles a piece. They were active, flying around – It was good to see.

(On the field conditions)

I was concerned about it at first, but I think as the rain held off, thankfully didn't really see much effect of it as the game went on. Certainly, it looked – it maybe looked worst than it played but I was concerned about it at first. Didn't seem to have any issues with it.

(On the operation with QB Cam Ward)

We had no operational issues, no procedure issues. We got lined up, we were never really down on the clock too far. It was a good, he even checked a play at the line of scrimmage, which was good to see him have that kind of confidence to operate. It was good, I thought the operation was clean, he did what we would hope he would do in his first action and he is going to get more of it to come.

(On reevaluating the quarterback room)

I think anytime that you get the chance to see guys play in a game, you look at it see what was good, what was bad. I think Brandon [Allen] had some good plays, I think there was a play or two – that interception was unfortunate, I mean it's a tipped ball and a guy makes a one-handed catch, that's unfortunate, I hate to see it. I think we have to play better for sure at that spot. I think over the totality of those reps at the end of the second half of the game when Cam [Ward] came out – keep looking at it, keep trying to get better.

QUARTERBACK CAMERON WARD**(On the Titans generating a scoring drive on their second possession)**

It felt good, just for us to get more than three plays under our belt, for us to get a rhythm as an offense. It's a lot of guys' first time playing together but it felt good to come up with points.

(On how the sequencing of receiving play calls and leading the huddle felt)

It felt good operation-wise. We really didn't have any [missed assignments]. I think the biggest thing was just us being able to play in a real game atmosphere together, getting the vibe of each other and then playing together like we did.

(On the speed of the game being what he expected)

It was. It's not really too different from college. It's just more being, I would say, alerted on third downs...Just the 'cans' you can get to in Coach Callahan's offense and then just getting the ball out when it needs to be out.

(On the deep completion to WR Calvin Ridley)

Offensive line, I think that was a big reason why we were able to move the ball our second drive. Those guys – they came up front and they had the mindset to go get it. They gave me enough time to put the ball in Rid's hands and let him make a play and they were the reason why we finished off that drive with points.

(On if he could have made a play on the third down on the first series)

On the third down one, the timing wasn't there from a standpoint of what it's always been, but in a game that's when you just have to be reactive. I got out of the pocket too early. I could've painted the ball to Calvin Ridley and [Tyler] Lockett once I looked at the film. But that's just stuff I have to get better at, just being able to play post-snap, as well.

(On if he wanted to play another drive)

I wanted to go for a third, especially after we got away with some points but Coach Callahan has got a plan for us. I'm going to stick to his plan and I know he's going to put us in the best situation.

(On getting to the game six hours before kickoff)

It passes by quickly. Especially when you keep your mind busy. At Miami, we used to be at the game early, so it really doesn't change anything for me process-wise. I am just playing at a higher level.

(On how he passes the time before the game)

Sit back, relax, reminisce, watch film, watch a movie, just getting my mind in the right headspace that I need to be in.

(On the movie he watched before the game)

It just came out, I'll look it up. It was a John Cena movie. I didn't finish it.

(On if he always shows up six hours early to games)

It just depends on the game. At Miami when we had night games, we'd show up a little bit earlier. We have a lot of noon games this year so it'll be normal time, like four hours before the game.

(On the movie he watched before the game)

The movie was called Freelance. I didn't finish it yet so I'll let you all know how it goes.

(On the grass at Raymond James Stadium)

The field conditions – you can tell they just put the new grass out there. It felt good. I played here a year ago versus USF and I love playing on grass so it didn't really matter to me.



SELECT TITANS POSTGAME QUOTES

(On where he wants to improve most)

I just think my biggest one is that I have to maximize my drives. I had a three-and-out in the first quarter and that's all we did. So, just maximizing my drives and just try to continuously move the chains to give the defense a break.

(On what Head Coach Brian Callahan communicated after the first drive)

Didn't really say [anything]. He's just cool. He said I have another series, go back out there and try to score some points.

(On what his normal procedure is when coming off the field to end a drive)

I for sure look at the tablet first – it's different because in college, you can actually watch the play. Here, it's all pictures – you can't really watch the play. But, that's really all I do - I look at the tablet. Once I know what I need to get better at after that drive with what the defense is doing, if they stopped us or not, I just watch our defense go and get a stop for us.

(On what the next steps are in his development are for the next preseason game)

Just playing above the sticks – not getting behind the sticks. Also, just getting the ball out fast – letting my playmakers make plays for us. I think that's what we were able to do on the second drive. Also, just playing at a faster pace – getting in and out of the huddle. [Head] Coach [Brian] Callahan gets me the play call pretty fast, so I'm just trying to play faster.

WIDE RECEIVER CHIMERE DIKE

(On what to improve after the first preseason game)

It's just little details. There are always one or two plays that you kind of wish you had back, but at the same time I think that I did some good things out there and there's a lot to learn from but a lot to grow on as well.

(On deep incompleteness with 14:10 left in 3rd quarter)

I felt myself pop – pop open. I know Brandon Allen had some pressure in his face and I totally understand how he wasn't able to quite get it there, but that's something that we'll be get to connect on and clean up.

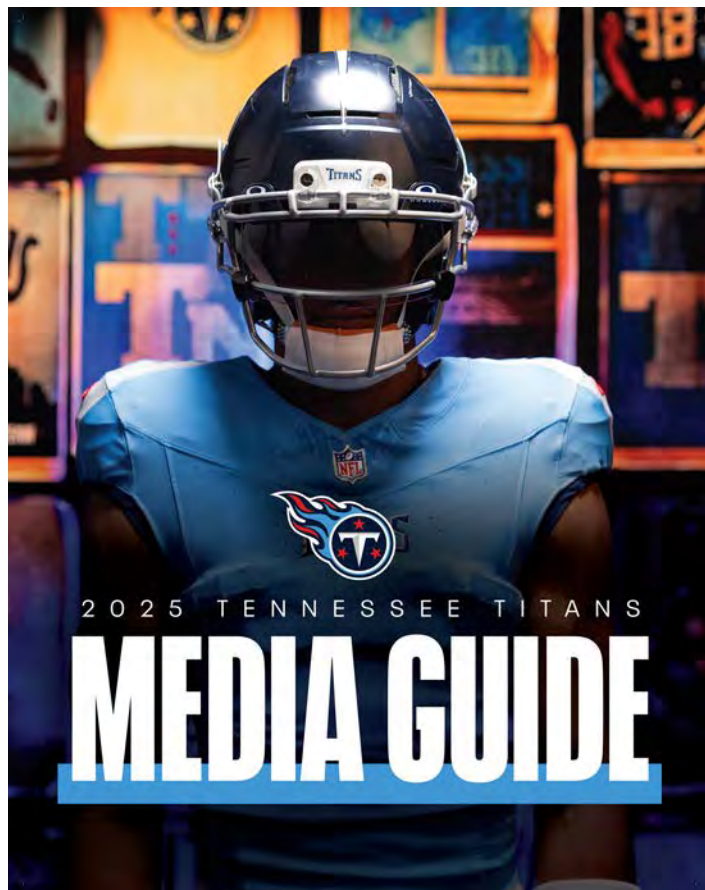
WIDE RECEIVER BRYCE OLIVER

(On the opportunity to play today and get reps)

It's always a blessing. I want to thank God for this opportunity, first of all – first and foremost. It's good always to get some reps – on offense, on special teams and whatever new opportunity, you just have to make the best of it. I don't know what everybody else did, I'm just focused on myself but obviously I'm pretty sure there's stuff to fix and we're going to go watch the film tomorrow, or whenever we watch film, we're going to correct it.

(On 11-yard reception on third down with 12:07 left in the 3rd quarter)

It's always iterating, when the ball is thrown to me, just make a play. I take that sense of pride. When the ball is thrown my way, I have to catch it.



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PLAYERS NOT IN THE MEDIA GUIDE

42 - DB JOSHUA BLEDSOE

5-11, 207, 3rd NFL Season, Missouri

- Signed as a free agent on August 5, 2025.
- Arrived in Tennessee with six games of NFL experience and most recently spent the 2025 offseason with the Pittsburgh Steelers.
- Drafted by the New England Patriots in the fourth round (188th overall) of the 2021 NFL Draft.
- Played four seasons at Missouri (2017-20), where he recorded 121 tackles, one interception, 18 passes defended, two forced fumbles and three fumble recoveries.
- Native of Houston, Texas.

73 - DT JOSIAH BRONSON

6-3, 295, 2nd NFL Season, Washington

- Signed as a free agent on August 3, 2025
- Has played in eight games as a reserve and most recently spent time with the UFL's Memphis Showboats.
- He has also spent time with the Indianapolis Colts, New England Patriots, Miami Dolphins, Dallas Cowboys, Cleveland Browns and New Orleans Saints, appearing in 20 games and recording 40 total tackles, five stops for loss, 1.5 sacks, five pass breakups and an interception.
- Played three seasons at Washington (2017-20) and two seasons at Temple (2015-16).
- Native of Covington, Wash.

90 - DE JOE GAZIANO

6-4, 280, 4th NFL Season, Northwestern

- Signed as a free agent on August 7, 2025.
- Arrived in Tennessee with 26 games of NFL experience, including one start, and most recently spent time with the Jacksonville Jaguars.



- He has also spent time with the Atlanta Falcons and Los Angeles Chargers, recording 27 tackles, one sack, two stops for loss and one pass defended during his career.
- Played five seasons at Northwestern (2015-19), where he recorded 30 sacks over 51 games to become the school's all-time sack leader.
- Native of Scituate, Mass.

68 - G ARLINGTON HAMBRIGHT **6-5, 300, 4th NFL Season, Colorado**

- Re-signed as a free agent on August 3, 2025.
- Has played in 16 games with one start at left guard and spent last season with the Titans.
- In 2024, he saw action as a reserve in five games in his first season with the Titans. He also spent six games on the Houston Texans' practice squad before being released on Oct. 22.
- He has also spent time with the New England Patriots, Indianapolis Colts and Chicago Bears.
- Originally drafted by the Chicago Bears in the seventh round (226th overall) of the 2020 NFL Draft.
- Played one season at Colorado (2019) and two seasons at Oklahoma State (2017-18). Also attended Garden City Community College.
- Native of Ypsilanti, Mich.

15 - QB TREVOR SIEMIAN **6-3, 220, 9th Season, Northwestern**

- Trevor Siemian was re-signed by the Titans on Aug. 11, 2025 after initially signing to the Titans practice squad on Oct. 9, 2024.
- He previously spent a season on the team's practice squad in 2020.
- Through the 2024 campaign, he appeared in 40 total NFL games with 33 starts for four different franchises—Denver, New York Jets, New Orleans and Chicago—recording 7,751 yards and 45 touchdowns passing.

- Siemian was initially selected in the seventh round (250th overall) of the 2015 NFL Draft by the Broncos. His best statistical season came in 2016 when he started 14 games and threw for 3,401 yards and 18 touchdowns and finished with an 84.6 passer rating.
- In 2023, he started three games with the Jets, throwing for 724 yards and two touchdowns in five total games played. He started one game for the Bears in 2022.
- Siemian played in 44 games in four seasons at Northwestern (2011-14), totaling 5,931 passing yards, 27 passing touchdowns and six rushing touchdowns.
- He is a native of Orlando, Florida.

53 - OLB JIHAD WARD **6-5, 285, 10th NFL Season, Illinois**

- Signed as a free agent on July 24, 2025.
- Has played in 119 games with 37 starts and spent the 2024 season with the Minnesota Vikings.
- In 2024, he played in all 17 games with two starts at outside linebacker. Recorded 10 tackles, a stop for loss, and one sack.
- He has also played for the N.Y. Giants, Jacksonville Jaguars, Indianapolis Colts, and Dallas Cowboys.
- Drafted by the Oakland Raiders in the second round (44th overall) of the 2016 NFL Draft. He spent the first two seasons of his career with the club.
- Played two seasons at Illinois (2014-15) after transferring from Globe Institute of Technology (New York, N.Y.).
- Recorded 104 tackles, 4.5 sacks, three passes defended, three forced fumbles and five fumble recoveries.
- Two-time All-Big Ten Honorable Mention and 2014 Illinois Defensive Newcomer of the Year.
- Native of Philadelphia, Pa.

2025 TITANS SCHEDULE NOTES

SEASON NOTES

- **PLAYOFF OPPONENTS:** The Titans have six total games against five playoff teams from last season. They have home games against Kansas City, Houston, Los Angeles Chargers and Los Angeles Rams and road contests at Houston and Denver. Four of those six games are against 2024 division winners: Houston twice (AFC South), Kansas City (AFC West) and the Los Angeles Rams (NFC West). The six games against reigning playoff clubs matches the total from last year. Prior to the 2024 season, the last time the Titans had six or fewer games against reigning playoff clubs was the 2020 campaign when they had five such games.
- **TV BREAKDOWN:** Excluding their Week 18 matchup with the Jaguars, which has yet to be assigned a broadcasting network, the Titans are currently scheduled for 10 games on CBS and six games on FOX. Due to the NFL's flex scheduling, some contests could be moved to a different network from the one appearing on the initial schedule.
- **TOP DRAFT PICKS:** The Titans selected Cameron Ward with this year's first overall pick. The team will face four of the next five selected players from the draft in Travis Hunter (second overall – Jacksonville), Will Campbell (fourth overall - New England Patriots), Mason Graham (fifth overall – Cleveland) and Ashton Jeanty (sixth overall - Las Vegas).
- **HEAD COACHING EXPERIENCE:** There are seven NFL head coaches who were hired by their teams this offseason, and the Titans will face four of them: New Orleans' Kellen Moore, Jacksonville's Liam Coen, Las Vegas' Pete Carroll and New England's Mike Vrabel. The Titans will also face off against two of the top five longest tenured coaches: Kansas City's Andy Reid (third-longest tenure – 13 years) and the Los Angeles Rams' Sean McVay (fifth-longest tenure – nine years).
- **THREE GAMES BASED UPON 2024 FINISH:** Every NFL team has two intraconference games and one interconference matchup based on the previous year's standings. As a result of the Titans' fourth-place AFC South finish in 2024, they host the AFC East's fourth-place New England Patriots and the NFC South's fourth-place New Orleans Saints, and they visit the AFC North's fourth-place Cleveland Browns. Overall, the Titans' strength of schedule is .450 (130-159) based upon their opponents' combined 2024 record, the 29th most difficult schedule out of 32 NFL teams.

- **TIME (ZONE) TRAVEL:** The Titans will play in every continental United States time zone at least twice during the 2025 regular season. They will stay in the Central time zone for 10 matchups, including every home contest as well as at Houston. The Titans have three trips to the Eastern time zone (at Cleveland, at Jacksonville and at Indianapolis). The farthest they will travel is Santa Clara, Calif., to face the 49ers (Pacific time zone). Tennessee will visit Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas for the first time to face the Raiders on the franchise's first trip to the state of Nevada. Other road trips include Glendale, Ariz., to meet the Cardinals and Denver, Colo., to face the Broncos (both in the Mountain time zone). This is the first time since 2019 in which the team will play in every continental U.S. time zone.
- **ORIGINAL AFL TEAMS:** This season, the Titans will face off against five of the other seven original AFL teams: Kansas City Chiefs (formerly Dallas Texans), New England Patriots (Boston Patriots), Los Angeles Chargers, Las Vegas Raiders (Oakland Raiders) and Denver Broncos.

WEEK-BY-WEEK NOTES

- **WEEK 1 at DENVER BRONCOS:** The Titans kick off the 2025 season at Denver, which marks the fourth time in franchise history the team has opened a season against the Broncos, including most recently a 16-14 victory on opening weekend of the 2020 season. The Titans own a 24-16-1 record against the Broncos dating back to 1960. Current Titans linebacker and free agent signing Cody Barton spent last season with the Broncos. Head coach Brian Callahan began his NFL coaching career in 2010 with Denver, where he spent six seasons. His tenure with the Broncos was highlighted by the team's victory in Super Bowl 50.
- **WEEK 2 vs. LOS ANGELES RAMS:** The Titans own a 6-7 regular season record against the Rams in the all-time series. In 2025, the Titans will host Los Angeles for the first time since Christmas Eve in 2017, when the visiting Rams pulled out a 27-23 victory. The Titans hold a 2-1 advantage in the series when played at Nissan Stadium. The last time the two teams met was on Sunday Night Football in 2021, when the Titans won 28-16. The only postseason meeting between the teams was a memorable one in Super Bowl XXXIV, with the Titans falling to the then-St. Louis Rams 23-16.



2025 TITANS SCHEDULE NOTES

- **WEEK 3 (H) & WEEK 8 (A) vs. INDIANAPOLIS COLTS:** The Titans look to end the Colts' four-game winning streak in the rivalry. Prior to the Colts' streak, the Titans won five consecutive matchups in the series from 2020-22. Colts third-year head coach Shane Steichen served as the offensive coordinator of the Philadelphia Eagles at the same time that Titans defensive coordinator Dennard Wilson was on the Eagles staff as defensive backs coach (2021) and defensive backs coach/defensive passing game coordinator (2022), culminating with Philadelphia's appearance in Super Bowl LVII.
- **WEEK 4 (A) & WEEK 11 (H) vs. HOUSTON TEXANS:** The reigning AFC South champion Texans have won the division the last two years. The two teams have split the season series in six of the last eight years, including last year when the Titans captured a 32-27 victory at Houston in November before falling at home in the season finale, 23-14. The Titans have a slight advantage in the series, leading 24-22 in 46 matchups since 2002. The Texans offense will feature first-time offensive coordinator Nick Caley calling plays for third-year quarterback CJ Stroud.
- **WEEK 5 at ARIZONA CARDINALS:** The Cardinals and Titans meet for the first time since 2021 and for the 12th time in history. Arizona holds an 8-4 lead over the Titans in the series. With only 12 games between the two franchises, the Cardinals rank as the second-least frequent opponent in Titans/Oilers history (Carolina Panthers, seven total meetings). This will be the Titans' first visit to Phoenix since the 2017 season and only the second visit to State Farm Stadium, which originally opened in 2006. The Titans look to snap a three-game losing streak against the Cardinals.
- **WEEK 6 at LAS VEGAS RAIDERS:** In a clash between two of the original members of the American Football League, the Titans trek to Nevada for the first time in franchise history when they take on the Las Vegas Raiders at Allegiant Stadium. The last time Tennessee traveled to face the Raiders was 2019, the franchise's final season in Oakland before it relocated to Las Vegas in 2020. Tennessee put up 21 unanswered points in the second half to defeat the Raiders 42-21. The Raiders hold a 30-22 advantage in the all-time series, including wins in all four postseason meetings. The Titans have won the last two meetings, most recently a 24-22 win in September of 2022 at Nissan Stadium in Nashville.
- **WEEK 7 vs. NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS:** The Titans will host New England for the first time since Mike Vrabel became New England's head coach after spending six seasons (2018-23) at the Titans helm. The Titans hosted the Patriots last season and won 20-17. Outside linebacker Harold Landry III signed with the Patriots during the 2025 offseason after spending his first seven NFL seasons with the Titans and rising to eighth in franchise history in career sacks (50.5). In addition to Vrabel, the Patriots staff includes several other former Titans coaches, including current Patriots defensive coordinator Terrell Williams.
- **WEEK 9 vs. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS:** The Titans and Chargers meet for the fourth consecutive season. Most recently, the Chargers captured a 27-17 victory when the Titans traveled to SoFi Stadium in 2024. The last time the Titans hosted the Chargers, Tennessee won 27-24 in overtime on Sept. 17, 2023. The Titans have won the last three matchups at Nissan Stadium dating back to 2013. The rivalry dates back to the inaugural 1960 AFL season, with the Chargers owning a 30-19-1 lead in the series. The two franchises met in the first two AFL Championship games (1960-61), with the Houston Oilers capturing the title on both occasions.
- **WEEK 10 (BYE):** The Week 10 bye comes five weeks later than the Week 5 bye the Titans had in 2024. Week 10 marks the latest bye the Titans have had since the 2021 season, when their bye was Week 13.
- **WEEK 12 vs. SEATTLE SEAHAWKS:** Two second-year head coaches meet for the first time in the regular season when Seattle's Mike Macdonald and Tennessee's Brian Callahan lead their teams. The clubs held joint practices and played a preseason game in Nashville during the 2024 preseason. Seattle pulled out a 20-17 victory during their last visit to Nissan Stadium on Christmas Eve in 2023. The only postseason

matchup between the franchises came in the 1988 Wild Card round when the Oilers defeated the Seahawks 23-20 in overtime. This year's game could feature two newly-acquired quarterbacks with Tennessee's Cameron Ward, taken with the first overall draft pick in 2025, and Seattle's Sam Darnold, the 2025 unrestricted free agent addition for the Seahawks and former number three overall selection in 2018.

- **WEEK 13 (H) & WEEK 18 (A) vs. JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS:** The annual Titans-Jaguars series heads into its 31st season since the Jaguars' inaugural 1995 campaign. This year, the contest could feature the top two draft picks of the 2025 class: Titans quarterback Cameron Ward and wide receiver/cornerback Travis Hunter, who the Jaguars drafted with the second-overall pick after trading up. The Titans, who lead the all-time series 35-26 (including postseason), look to regain the momentum in the series after being swept by the Jaguars in 2024.
- **WEEK 14 at CLEVELAND BROWNS:** The Titans travel to Cleveland to face the Browns in the 70th meeting between the teams, including the postseason. The Browns hold a 37-32 lead in the all-time series, winning the most recent matchup 27-3 when Tennessee last visited Huntington Bank Field in September 2023. The only playoff game between the two teams came in the Wild Card round of the 1988 postseason, with the Oilers pulling out a 24-23 victory on the road in Cleveland.
- **WEEK 15 at SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS:** The Titans travel to Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, Calif., for the second time in the venue's history and the first time since 2017. The teams last met in 2021 for a 20-17 Titans win on a Thursday night at Nissan Stadium in Nashville. The 49ers hold a 9-6 lead in the all-time series. Quarterback Brock Purdy enters his fourth NFL season with the 49ers, who are also led by the 2023 AP Offensive Player of the Year, running back Christian McCaffrey.
- **WEEK 16 vs. KANSAS CITY CHIEFS:** The Titans host the Kansas City Chiefs for the first time since 2021, when the Titans won by a final score of 27-3. The series between two original AFL rivals dates back to 1960, with the Chiefs holding a 28-24 edge in the series. Titans first-year general manager Mike Borgonzi spent the past 16 years with the Chiefs organization, most recently serving as Kansas City's assistant general manager.
- **WEEK 17 vs. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS:** The Titans will host the Saints and first-year head coach Kellen Moore when New Orleans travels to Nashville for the first time since 2021. The last two meetings between the two teams have been decided by a total of three points, with the Saints winning 16-15 in the 2023 season opener at the Caesars Superdome and the Titans winning 23-21 in November 2021 at Nissan Stadium. The Titans hold a 9-7-1 record in the all-time series.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN 2025

WHAT TO LOOK FOR – TEAM

- The Titans franchise (496 all-time wins) needs four wins to reach 500 all-time wins, including the regular season and postseason.

LS MORGAN COX

- Enters 2025 ranked sixth in the NFL in career games played among active players (233 entering 2025).
- By appearing in all 17 contests in 2025, he will reach 250 career games. Prior to 2025, 56 players have reached the mark during the Super Bowl era (1966–present).

P JOHNNY HEKKER

- Needs 37 punts to reach 1,000 for his career (963 entering 2025). He would join 26 other players who reached the mark prior to 2025.
- Can record his 11th career season with a net punting average of at least 42.0 yards. His 10 such seasons entering 2025 are more than any other NFL player.

S AMANI HOOKER

- Needs three interceptions (12 entering 2025) to become the seventh player in the franchise's "Titans era" (1999–present) to reach 15 career interceptions.

OLB ARDEN KEY

- Can record his third consecutive season with at least six sacks since joining the team in 2023.

WR TYLER LOCKETT

- Enters 2025 as one of five NFL players with at least 500 receiving yards in each of the past 10 seasons, along with **DeAndre Hopkins**, **Amari Cooper**, **Mike Evans** and **Travis Kelce**.
- Needs 39 receptions (661 entering 2025) to reach 700 for his career.
- Needs 406 receiving yards (8,594 entering 2025) to reach 9,000 for his career.

TE CHIG OKONKWO

- Can join **Frank Wycheck** (six consecutive seasons) and **Delanie Walker** (five) as the only tight ends in franchise history to record at least 50 receptions in three consecutive seasons.
- Can join **Frank Wycheck** (seven consecutive seasons) and **Delanie Walker** (five) as the only tight ends in franchise history to record at least 450 receiving yards in four consecutive seasons.
- Can become the franchise's fourth player to begin his NFL career with four consecutive seasons in which he posted at least 30 receptions and 400 receiving yards. He would join **Ernest Givins** (nine straight seasons), **Charlie Hennigan** (six) and **Kendall Wright** (four). Okonkwo already became the first franchise tight end to do so in the first three seasons of his career.

RB TONY POLLARD

- Needs 300 rushing yards to reach 5,000 for his career (4,700 rushing yards entering 2025).
- Can notch his fourth consecutive season with at least 1,000 rushing yards.
- Looks to extend his streak to five consecutive seasons with at least 1,000 scrimmage yards.
- Joins **Derrick Henry** as the NFL's only players entering 2025 holding an active streak of three consecutive seasons with at least 1,300 scrimmage yards.

WR CALVIN RIDLEY

- Needs 625 receiving yards to reach 6,000 for his career (5,375 entering 2025).
- Needs 12 receptions to reach 400 for his career (388 entering 2025).
- Can record his third consecutive 1,000-yard receiving season and the fourth such total season of his career.

DT JEFFERY SIMMONS

- Can record his fifth consecutive season with at least five sacks. He would join **Ray Childress** (nine consecutive seasons), **Jurrell Casey** (seven), **William Fuller** (six) and **Sean Jones** (six) as the only Titans/

Oilers players to do so since individual sacks became an official statistic in 1982.

- Needs 8.5 sacks (31.5 entering 2025) to become the 12th player in franchise history to reach 40 career sacks.

CB L'JARIUS SNEED

- Can record his fifth career season with at least two interceptions.

G KEVIN ZEITLER

- Needs two appearances to reach 200 career games (198 games entering 2025) and three starts to reach 200 career starts (197 entering 2025).
- Can record his 11th consecutive season with at least 15 starts.

NEW FACES IN 2025

The following lists include front office members, coaches and players who joined the Titans after the 2024 season ended.

Personnel Executives

Mike Borgonzi	General Manager
Dave Ziegler	Assistant General Manager
Reggie McKenzie	Vice President/Football Advisor
Dan Saganey	Vice President, Player Personnel

Coaches

John Fassel	Special Teams Coordinator
Tony Oden	Defensive Passing Game Coordinator/Cornerbacks
Travis Smith	Defensive Run Game Coordinator
Dylan Autenrieth	Defensive Quality Control
Mike McCoy	Senior Offensive Assistant
Rayna Stewart	Special Teams Assistant

Veteran Players – One or More Years of Prior Experience

Brandon Allen	QB	Tyler Lockett	WR
Cody Barton	LB	Jordan Mims	RB
Joshuah Bledsoe	S	Dan Moore Jr.	T
Josiah Bronson	DT	Sam Mustipher	OL
Amari Burney	LB	Anfernee Orji	LB
Joe Graziano	DE	Amani Oruwariye	CB
Blake Hance	OL	James Proche II	WR
Johnny Hekker	P	Joey Slye	K
Timmy Horne	DT	Olisaemeka Udoh	OL
Curtis Jacobs	LB	Jihad Ward	OLB
Brenden Jaimes	OL	Carlos Watkins	DL
Jermar Jefferson	RB	Xavier Woods	S
Van Jefferson	WR	Kevin Zeitler	G
Dre'Mont Jones	OLB		

Draft Picks (Round)

Cameron Ward (1)	QB	Elic Ayomanor (4)	WR
Oluwafemi Oladejo (2)	OLB	Jackson Slater (5)	G
Kevin Winston Jr. (3)	S	Marcus Harris (6)	CB
Chimere Dike (4)	WR	Kalel Mullings (6)	RB
Gunnar Helm (4)	TE		

Undrafted Rookies (R) and First-Year Players (1)

Philip Blidi (R)	DT	Matt Landers (1)	WR
Brandon Crenshaw-Dickson (R)	T	Clarence Lewis (R)	CB
Drake Dabney (R)	TE	Isaiah Raikes (R)	NT
Desmond Evans (R)	OLB	Xavier Restrepo (R)	WR
David Gbenda (R)	LB	Davion Ross (R)	CB
Jermari Harris (R)	CB	TJ Sheffield (R)	WR
Cam Horsley (R)	DT		
Jalen Kimber (R)	CB		

As of Aug. 11, 2025



GENERAL MANAGER MIKE BORGONZI

[Mike Borgonzi, Chad Brinker open 2025 training camp with press conference](#)

[Chad Brinker and Mike Borgonzi recap the 2025 NFL Draft](#)

[Jim Wyatt: New Titans GM Mike Borgonzi Shares His Vision to Build a Winner](#)

[The OTP: New Titans GM Mike Borgonzi](#)

[Video: Mike Borgonzi's Introductory Press Conference](#)



Mike Borgonzi was named the 15th general manager in franchise history on Jan. 17, 2025.

Borgonzi arrived in Tennessee with 16 years of experience with the Kansas City Chiefs. For the last four seasons, he served as Kansas City's assistant general manager.

"Mike's experience speaks for itself: he has been part of the core team that delivered five AFC championships and three Super Bowls over the past six seasons," said Titans Controlling Owner **Amy Adams Strunk**. "It's the type of standard I want to build here in Tennessee. I know we have a lot of work ahead of us, and I'm excited for Mike to get started."

"During Mike's 16 years in the league, he has been a key part of transforming the Chiefs from a two-win team to a three-time Super Bowl champion," said Titans President of Football Operations **Chad Brinker**. "During our meetings, he articulated a clear plan to build a championship standard in Nashville through consistency, discipline, and hard work. I've admired him for many years and I'm thrilled to add him to the team as our general manager."

In Borgonzi's first offseason in Tennessee, the Titans acquired several veteran free agents. Among the most notable signings were tackle **Dan Moore Jr.** (previously with Pittsburgh); guard **Kevin Zeitler** (Detroit); linebacker **Cody Barton** (Denver); outside linebacker **Dre'Mont Jones** (Seattle); wide receivers **Van Jefferson** (Pittsburgh) and **Tyler Lockett** (Seattle); safety **Xavier Woods** (Carolina); punter **Johnny Hekker** (Carolina); and kicker **Joey Slye** (New England).

In April, Borgonzi led the process that concluded with the selection of Miami (Fla.) quarterback **Cameron Ward** with the first overall pick in the 2025 NFL Draft. The team's nine total draft choices also included UCLA outside linebacker **Oluwafemi Oladejo** (second round), Penn State safety **Kevin Winston Jr.** (third round), Florida wide receiver **Chimere Dike** (fourth round), Texas tight end **Gunnar Helm** (fourth round), Stanford wide receiver **Elic Ayomanor** (fourth round), Sacramento State offensive lineman **Jackson Slater** (fifth round), California cornerback **Marcus Harris** (sixth round) and Michigan running back **Kalel Mullings** (sixth round).

During Borgonzi's time in Kansas City, he contributed to 12 playoff seasons (2010, 2013, 2015-24) and 10 AFC West titles (2010, 2016-24). Borgonzi helped construct a roster that won the AFC five times (2019-20, 2022-24) and captured three Super Bowl championships (2019, 2022-23) over a six-season span.

From 2017 to 2024, Borgonzi worked under Chiefs general manager **Brett Veach**. As the assistant general manager from 2021 through 2024, he supervised and directed the college and professional scouting operations while closely supporting and advising Veach with the club's roster management and player acquisition via the NFL Draft, free agency, waiver claims and trades. During his four seasons as assistant general manager, the Chiefs built a league-best 52-16 regular-season record (.765). In the same four-year span, 10 different Kansas City players earned a combined 23 Pro Bowl selections: tackle **Orlando Brown Jr.** (2021-22), wide receiver **Tyreek Hill** (2021), center **Creed Humphrey** (2022-24), defensive tackle **Chris Jones** (2021-24), tight end **Travis Kelce** (2021-24), quarterback **Patrick Mahomes** (2021-23), safety **Tyrann Mathieu** (2021), guard **Trey Smith** (2024), guard **Joe Thuney** (2022-24) and punter **Tommy Townsend** (2022).

The Chiefs entered the 2024 postseason after capturing their ninth consecutive AFC West crown. They tied the Detroit Lions for the NFL's best record at 15-2, setting a franchise record for wins in a regular season and securing the AFC's top seed. Twenty original Chiefs draft picks started at least six games for the team during the 2024 regular season. Kansas City had five players voted to the Pro Bowl, marking the seventh consecutive year in which it had at least five players earn the honor.

Prior to his promotion to assistant general manager, Borgonzi served as director of football operations (2018-20), director of player personnel (2017), co-director of player personnel (2015-16), assistant director of pro scouting (2013-14), pro personnel scout (2011-12) and manager of football operations (2010). He joined the Chiefs in 2009 as the club's college scouting administrator.

Before landing in the NFL with the Chiefs, Borgonzi spent the 2007 and 2008 seasons at Boston College, where he was the assistant recruiting coordinator. He also coached tight ends at Amherst College in 2002 before working in the financial sector in Boston for several years.

A native of Everett, Mass., Borgonzi graduated from Brown University, where he was a four-year starter at fullback and was a three-time All-Ivy League selection.

He and his wife, Jill, have a son, Joseph, and a daughter, Nina. His brother, Dave, has served as the linebackers coach for the Indianapolis Colts and Chicago Bears and currently serves as the linebackers coach for the Dallas Cowboys.

MIKE BORGONZI'S FOOTBALL BACKGROUND:

2025:	Tennessee Titans - General Manager
2021-24:	Kansas City Chiefs - Assistant General Manager
2018-20:	Kansas City Chiefs - Director of Football Operations
2017:	Kansas City Chiefs - Director of Player Personnel
2015-16:	Kansas City Chiefs - Co-Director of Player Personnel
2013-14:	Kansas City Chiefs - Assistant Director of Pro Scouting
2011-12:	Kansas City Chiefs - Pro Personnel Scout
2010:	Kansas City Chiefs - Manager of Football Operations
2009:	Kansas City Chiefs - College Scouting Administrator
2007-08:	Boston College - Assistant Recruiting Coordinator
2002:	Amherst College - Tight Ends Coach
1998-01:	Brown University - Fullback

2025 TITANS DRAFT CLASS

Rd.	Pick	Player	Position	College
1	1	Cameron Ward	QB	Miami (Fla.)
2	52	Oluwafemi Oladejo	OLB	UCLA
3	82	Kevin Winston Jr.	S	Penn State
4	103	Chimere Dike	WR	Florida
4	120	Gunnar Helm	TE	Texas
4	136	Elic Ayomanor	WR	Stanford
5	167	Jackson Slater	G	Sacramento State
6	183	Marcus Harris	CB	California
6	188	Kalel Mullings	RB	Michigan



The 2025 Titans draft class: (top row, left to right) TE Gunnar Helm, OL Jackson Slater, WR Elic Ayomanor, S Kevin Winston Jr., RB Kalel Mullings, (bottom row, left to right) QB Cameron Ward, CB Marcus Harris, WR Chimere Dike, OLB Oluwafemi Oladejo



FRANCHISE GENERAL MANAGER HISTORY

Mike Borgonzi became the 15th general manager in franchise history when he was hired on Jan. 17, 2025. In the "Titans era," which began in 1999, he is the team's sixth general manager.

Franchise general managers (records include postseason):

General Manager	Seasons	W	L	T	Pct
Mike Borgonzi	2025	0	0	0	-
Ran Carthon	2023–2024	9	25	0	.265
Jon Robinson	2016–2022	69	47	0	.595
Ruston Webster	2012–2015	18	46	0	.281
Mike Reinfeldt	2007–2011	46	36	0	.561
Floyd Reese	1994–2006	111	106	0	.512
Mike Holovak	1989–1993	52	34	0	.605
Ladd Herzeg	1981–1988	44	80	0	.355
O.A. "Bum" Phillips	1975–1980	59	38	0	.608
Sid Gillman	1973–1974	8	20	0	.286
John Breen	1971–1972	5	22	1	.196
Don Klosterman	1966–1969	25	30	3	.457
Carroll Martin	1964–1965	8	20	0	.286
Pop Ivy	1963	6	8	0	.429
Don Suman	1961–1962	22	7	1	.750

Note: No general manager title was held in 1960 or 1970.



RECENT TITANS FREE AGENCY

2025

Free Agents Signed	Former Team
QB Brandon Allen	San Francisco
LB Cody Barton	Denver
QB Tim Boyle	N.Y. Giants
OLB Lorenzo Carter	Atlanta
RB Tyrion Davis-Price	Philadelphia
OL Blake Hance	Jacksonville
P Johnny Hekker	Carolina
OL Brenden Jaimes	L.A. Chargers
WR Van Jefferson	Pittsburgh
OLB Dre'Mont Jones	Seattle
WR Tyler Lockett	Seattle
T Dan Moore Jr.	Pittsburgh
OL Sam Mustipher	L.A. Chargers
CB Amani Oluwariye	Dallas
WR James Proche II	Cleveland
K Joey Slye	New England
OL Oluisaemeka Udoh	New Orleans
DL Carlos Watkins	Dallas
S Xavier Woods	Carolina
G Kevin Zeitler	Detroit

Free Agents Lost	New Team
LB Jerome Baker	Cleveland
LB Jack Gibbens	New England
LB Luke Gifford	San Francisco
OL Dillon Radunz	New Orleans
QB Mason Rudolph	Pittsburgh
P Ryan Stonehouse	Miami
WR Nick Westbrook-Ikhine	Miami

2024

Free Agents Signed	Former Team
S Jamal Adams	Seattle
CB Chidobe Awuzie	Cincinnati
WR Tyler Boyd	Cincinnati
OL Saahdiq Charles	Washington
T Geron Christian Sr.	Cleveland
C Lloyd Cushenberry III	Denver
S Quandre Diggs	Seattle
DL Sebastian Joseph-Day	San Francisco
LB Kenneth Murray Jr.	L.A. Chargers
RB Tony Pollard	Dallas
WR Calvin Ridley	Jacksonville
QB Mason Rudolph	Pittsburgh
TE Nick Vannett	L.A. Chargers

Free Agents Lost	New Team
LB Azeez Al-Shaair	Houston
DL Denico Autry	Houston
C Aaron Brewer	Miami
S Terrell Edmunds	Jacksonville
CB Kristian Fulton	L.A. Chargers
OLB Trevis Gipson	Jacksonville
RB Derrick Henry	Baltimore
T Chris Hubbard	San Francisco
WR Chris Moore	Arizona
CB Sean Murphy-Bunting	Arizona
OL Calvin Throckmorton	Denver
S K'Von Wallace	Seattle

2023

Free Agents Signed	Former Team
LB Azeez Al-Shaair	San Francisco
OL Daniel Brunskill	San Francisco
OL Andre Dillard	Philadelphia
LB Luke Gifford	Dallas
WR DeAndre Hopkins	Arizona
DT Jaleel Johnson	Atlanta
OLB Arden Key	Jacksonville
WR Chris Moore	Houston
CB Sean Murphy-Bunting	Tampa Bay
LB Ben Niemann	Arizona
TE Trevon Fultco	Chicago

Free Agents Lost	New Team
OLB Tarell Basham	Cincinnati
T Le'Raven Clark	Pittsburgh
LB Dylan Cole	Chicago
WR Chris Conley	San Francisco
T Dennis Daley	Arizona
G Nate Davis	Chicago
QB Joshua Dobbs	Cleveland
DE Mario Edwards Jr.	Seattle
TE Austin Hooper	Las Vegas
DB Lonnie Johnson Jr.	New Orleans
LB David Long Jr.	Miami
DT Kevin Strong	Arizona
DE DeMarcus Walker	Chicago

2022

Free Agents Signed	Former Team
RB Trenton Cannon	San Francisco
TE Austin Hooper	Cleveland
OL Jamarco Jones	Seattle
LB Justin Lawler	L.A. Rams
WR Josh Malone	Green Bay
DB A.J. Moore	Houston
DL DeMarcus Walker	Houston

Free Agents Lost	New Team
WR Cameron Batson	Atlanta
FB Khari Blasingame	Chicago
LB Jayon Brown	Las Vegas
S Dane Cruikshank	Chicago
LB Rashaan Evans	Atlanta
TE Anthony Firkser	Atlanta
RB D'Onta Foreman	Carolina
WR Marcus Johnson	San Francisco
RB Jeremy McNichols	Atlanta
DT Kyle Peko	Las Vegas
OL David Quessenberry	Buffalo

2021

Free Agents Signed	Former Team
OLB Ola Adeniyi	Pittsburgh
DL Denico Autry	Indianapolis
LB B.J. Bello	L.A. Chargers
WR Fred Brown	Denver
DT Trevon Coley	N.Y. Jets
LS Morgan Cox	Baltimore
T Christian DiLauro	Pittsburgh
OLB Bud Dupree	Pittsburgh
S Matthias Farley	N.Y. Jets
DT Woodrow Hamilton IV	Carolina
DT Bruce Hector	Carolina
RB Brian Hill	Atlanta
CB Jackrabbit Jenkins	New Orleans
CB Kevin Johnson	Cleveland
DT Abry Jones	Jacksonville
CB Chris Jones	Minnesota
T Kendall Lamm	Cleveland
WR Kalija Lipscomb	Green Bay
CB Greg Mabin	Jacksonville
LB Justin March-Lillard	Dallas
CB Kevin Peterson	Arizona
WR Josh Reynolds	L.A. Rams

Free Agents Lost	New Team
OLB Jadeveon Clowney	Cleveland
WR Corey Davis	N.Y. Jets
DE Matt Dickerson	Las Vegas
G/C Jamil Douglas	Buffalo
DT DaQuan Jones	Carolina
DB Joshua Kalu	N.Y. Giants
CB Desmond King	Houston
CB Chris Milton	N.Y. Giants
TE MyCole Pruitt	San Francisco
WR Kalif Raymond	Detroit
TE Jonnu Smith	New England
CB Tye Smith	Minnesota

RECENT TITANS TRADE HISTORY

2025 TRADES

Trade Date/Teams	Compensation	Overall	Player Selected	Note
1. March 13, 2025				
Tennessee Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 6, 2025	#188	RB Kael Mullings
Dallas Receives:	Player:	LB Kenneth Murray Jr.		
	Draft Choice:	Round 7, 2025	#239	RB Phil Mafah
				Pick originally from Green Bay
2. April 25, 2025 (Draft Day Trade)				
Tennessee Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 2, 2025	#52	OLB Oluwafemi Oladejo
	Draft Choice:	Round 3, 2025	#82	S Kevin Winston Jr.
Seattle Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 2, 2025	#35	S Nick Emmanwori
				Pick originally from Pittsburgh
3. April 26, 2025 (Draft Day Trade)				
Tennessee Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 4, 2025	#136	WR Elic Ayomanor
	Draft Choice:	Round 6, 2025	#183	CB Marcus Harris
Baltimore Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 5, 2025	#141	T Carson Vinson
	Draft Choice:	Round 6, 2025	#178	CB Bilhal Kone
				Baltimore compensatory selection Pick originally from Carolina

2024 TRADES

Trade Date/Teams	Compensation	Overall	Player Selected	Note
1. March 29, 2024				
Tennessee Receives:	Player:	CB L'Jarius Sneed		
	Draft Choice:	Round 7, 2024	#252	OLB Jaylen Harrell
Kansas City Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 7, 2024	#221	(T Travis Clayton)
	Draft Choice:	Round 3, 2025	#66	DE Ashton Gillotte
				Pick originally from Carolina; traded to Buffalo
2. April 12, 2024				
Tennessee Receives:	Player:	T Leroy Watson		
Cleveland Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 7, 2024	#227	CB Myles Harden
3. Aug. 27, 2024				
Tennessee Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 7, 2025	#239	(RB Phil Mafah)
Green Bay Receives:	Player:	QB Malik Willis		Pick later traded to Dallas
4. Aug. 28, 2024				
Tennessee Receives:	Player:	LB Ernest Jones IV		
	Draft Choice:	Round 6, 2026		Conditional
L.A. Rams Receive:	Draft Choice:	Round 5, 2026		
5. Aug. 29, 2024				
Tennessee Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 7, 2026		
L.A. Chargers Receive:	Player:	DB Elijah Molden		
6. Oct. 24, 2024				
Tennessee Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 5, 2025	#167	G Jackson Slater
Kansas City Receives:	Player:	WR DeAndre Hopkins		
7. Oct. 24, 2024				
Tennessee Receives:	Player:	LB Jerome Baker		
	Draft Choice:	Round 4, 2025	#120	TE Gunnar Helm
Seattle Receives:	Player:	LB Ernest Jones IV		

2023 TRADES

Trade Date/Teams	Compensation	Overall	Player Selected	Note
1. April 28, 2023 (Draft Day Trade)				
Tennessee Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 2, 2023	#33	QB Will Levis
	Draft Choice:	Round 3, 2023	#81	RB Tyjae Spears
Arizona Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 2, 2023	#41	OLB B.J. Ojulari
	Draft Choice:	Round 3, 2023	#72	DB Garrett Williams
	Draft Choice:	Round 3, 2024	#71	G Isaiah Adams
				Pick originally from Houston Pick originally from Detroit
2. Aug. 29, 2023				
Tennessee Receives:	Player:	K Nick Folk		
New England Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 7, 2025	#217	(DT Jay Toia)
				Pick later traded to Dallas
3. Oct. 23, 2023				
Tennessee Receives:	Player:	S Terrell Edmunds		



RECENT TITANS TRADE HISTORY

Philadelphia Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 5, 2024	#146	CB Jarvis Brownlee Jr.	Pick originally from Minnesota
	Draft Choice:	Round 6, 2024	#182	WR Jha'Quan Jackson	Tennessee's original pick reacquired
	Player:	S Kevin Byard			

2022 TRADES

Trade Date/Teams	Compensation	Overall	Player Selected	Note

1. March 23, 2022

Tennessee Receives:	Player:	WR Robert Woods		
L.A. Rams Receive:	Draft Choice:	Round 6, 2023	#189	OLB Ochaun Mathis

2. April 28, 2022 (Draft Day Trade)

Tennessee Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 1, 2022	#18	WR Treylon Burks	Pick originally from New Orleans
	Draft Choice:	Round 3, 2022	#101	(TE Jeremy Ruckert)	Pick originally a New Orleans compensatory selection; traded to NY Jets
Philadelphia Receives:	Player:	WR A.J. Brown			

3. April 28, 2022 (Draft Day Trade)

Tennessee Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 2, 2022	#35	CB Roger McCreary	
	Draft Choice:	Round 3, 2022	#69	OL Nicholas Petit-Frere	
	Draft Choice:	Round 5, 2022	#163	WR Kyle Philips	Pick originally from Pittsburgh
	Draft Choice:	Round 1, 2022	#26	OLB Jermaine Johnson	
N.Y. Jets Receive:	Draft Choice:	Round 3, 2022	#101	TE Jeremy Ruckert	Pick originally a New Orleans compensatory selection

4. April 29, 2022 (Draft Day Trade)

Tennessee Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 3, 2022	#86	QB Malik Willis	
Las Vegas Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 3, 2022	#90	G Dylan Parham	
	Draft Choice:	Round 5, 2022	#169	(RB Ty Chandler)	Pick traded to Minnesota

5. Aug. 17, 2022

Tennessee Receives:	Player:	S Tyree Gillespie			
Las Vegas Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 7, 2024			Trade conditions not met

6. Aug. 24, 2022

Tennessee Receives:	Player:	DB Ugo Amadi			
Philadelphia Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 7, 2024	#242	LB James Williams	
	Draft Choice:	Round 6, 2024	#182	(WR Jha'Quan Jackson)	Pick reacquired by Tennessee on Oct. 23, 2023

7. Aug. 29, 2022

Tennessee Receives:	Player:	OL Dennis Daley			
Carolina Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 7, 2024	#221	(T Travis Clayton)	Pick traded to Buffalo through Kansas City
	Draft Choice:	Round 5, 2024	#142	(WR Anthony Gould)	Pick traded to Indianapolis

2021 TRADES

Trade Date/Teams	Compensation	Overall	Player Selected	Note

1. March 17, 2021

Tennessee Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 7, 2021	#232	(DT Phil Hoskins)	Pick originally from Atlanta; traded to Carolina
Miami Receives:	Player:	T Isaiah Wilson			
	Draft Choice:	Round 7, 2022	#247	QB Skylar Thompson	

2. April 30, 2021 (Draft Day Trade)

Tennessee Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 3, 2021	#92	ILB Monty Rice	
	Draft Choice:	Round 4, 2021	#135	OLB Rashad Weaver	
Green Bay Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 3, 2021	#85	WR Amari Rodgers	

3. May 1, 2021 (Draft Day Trade)

Tennessee Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 4, 2021	#109	WR Dez Fitzpatrick	Pick originally from Houston
Carolina Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 4, 2021	#126	RB Chuba Hubbard	
	Draft Choice:	Round 5, 2021	#166	DB Keith Taylor	
	Draft Choice:	Round 7, 2021	#232	DT Phil Hoskins	Pick originally from Atlanta through Miami

4. June 6, 2021

Tennessee Receives:	Player:	WR Julio Jones			
	Draft Choice:	Round 6, 2023	#186	OL Jaelyn Duncan	
Atlanta Receives:	Draft Choice:	Round 2, 2022	#58	LB Troy Andersen	
	Draft Choice:	Round 4, 2023	#110	(DT Adetomiwa Adebawore)	Pick traded to Indianapolis



HEAD COACH BRIAN CALLAHAN

[The Titans of Tennessee: Timing & Trust](#)

[The OTP: Brian Callahan planning for 2025 training camp](#)

[Brian Callahan speaks at the 2025 Owners Meetings](#)

[Jim Wyatt: Callahan Follows in His Father's Footsteps](#)

[Jim Wyatt: Callahan Feels Like He Found the Perfect Fit With Titans](#)



Brian Callahan was named head coach of the Titans on Jan. 24, 2024, becoming the 20th head coach in franchise history.

During his first season as head coach, Callahan guided a team that underwent significant personnel changes. In Week 1, 11 players started for the team who were added during the offseason—five players on offense and six on defense. Two of those players on offense, running back **Tony Pollard** (1,079 rushing yards) and wide receiver **Calvin Ridley** (1,017 receiving yards), went on to produce 1,000-yard seasons rushing and receiving, respectively.

All seven members of the Titans' 2024 draft class saw action in at least seven games as rookies. First-rounder **JC Latham** was the NFL's only rookie in 2024 to start 17 games at left tackle, while second-rounder **T'Vondre Sweat** appeared in every game and led all rookie defensive linemen in defensive snaps (667). Fifth-round cornerback **Jarvis Brownlee Jr.** was one of five NFL rookie defensive backs to start at least 14 games in 2024.

Defensively, the Titans finished Callahan's first season ranked second overall (311.2 opponent yards per game) and second in passing defense (177.3) despite a unit that suffered significant injuries. The starting secondary of safety **Quandre Diggs** (eight games played), safety **Amani Hooker** (14 games played), cornerback **L'Jarius Sneed** (five games played) and cornerback **Chidobe Awuzie** (eight games played) missed a combined total of 33 games.

Callahan, who at age 40 became the second-youngest head coach in Titans/Oilers history behind **Jeff Fisher** (36), arrived in Tennessee with 18 years of coaching experience and 14 years of NFL coaching experience, including the previous five seasons as the offensive coordinator for the Cincinnati Bengals.

During his time in Cincinnati, Callahan served under head coach **Zac Taylor** and was part of two AFC North titles, two AFC Championship appearances and a Super Bowl berth. He also helped guide quarterback **Joe Burrow** from the No. 1 overall draft pick in 2020 to multiple single-season franchise records by his second year and Pro Bowl honors within three years.

BRIAN CALLAHAN AT A GLANCE

- Year as Titans head coach: 2
- Year as NFL head coach: 2
- Overall year as NFL coach: 16

Years	Team	Position
2024-25	Tennessee Titans	Head Coach
2019-23	Cincinnati Bengals	Offensive Coordinator
2018	Oakland Raiders	Quarterbacks Coach
2016-17	Detroit Lions	Quarterbacks Coach
2015	Denver Broncos	Offensive Assistant/ Quarterbacks Coach
2013-14	Denver Broncos	Offensive Assistant
2011-12	Denver Broncos	Offensive Quality Control
2010	Denver Broncos	Coaching Assistant
2008-09	Junipero Serra HS	Offensive Coordinator/ Quarterbacks Coach
2006-07	UCLA	Graduate Assistant
2002-05	UCLA	Quarterback

Over Callahan's final three seasons in Cincinnati (2021-23), the Bengals offense ranked in the NFL's top 10 in several categories: sixth in scoring (24.9), seventh in passing (250.8 yards per game), seventh in red-zone efficiency (61.5 percent), 10th in third-down percentage (41.0) and sixth in time of possession (31:00).

From the time Burrow entered the NFL in 2020 through the 2023 campaign, he recorded the league's seventh-best passer rating (98.6) and tied for the third-best completion percentage (68.0). His 270.8 passing yards per game in that period ranked fifth.

Additionally, Cincinnati's offense under Callahan featured a trio of 1,000-yard wide receivers in **Ja'Marr Chase** (2021-23), **Tee Higgins** (2021-22) and **Tyler Boyd** (2019). Chase quickly emerged as one of the NFL's top wide receivers after being drafted in the first round in 2021. He earned three consecutive Pro Bowl nods and became the eighth player in NFL history to reach 1,000 receiving yards in each of his first three career seasons, including 1,216 yards on a career-high 100 receptions in 2023. Boyd's statistical highlights included 1,046 receiving yards in 2019, while Higgins contributed 1,091 yards in 2021 and 1,029 yards in 2022.

Bengals running back **Joe Mixon** exceeded 1,000 scrimmage yards four times in five seasons with Callahan as his offensive coordinator. From 2019 through 2023, he joined **Christian McCaffrey** and **Aaron Jones** as the NFL's only players with at least 4,500 rushing yards (4,618) and 1,500 receiving yards (1,556). Mixon was named to the Pro Bowl in 2021.

In 2023, Burrow was limited to 10 total games due to multiple injuries. Backup **Jake Browning** stepped into the lineup, and in the first action of his career, he registered a season passer rating of 98.4—qualifying as the seventh-best number in the NFL.

In 2022, the Bengals ranked seventh in the NFL in points per game (26.1), eighth in total offense (360.5 yards per game) and fifth in passing offense (265.0). Burrow earned his first career Pro Bowl selection while setting single-season franchise records for completions (414) and touchdown passes (35). The third-year signal caller also placed fifth in the NFL with 4,475 passing yards. The team's new-look offensive line came together during the season and did not allow more than two sacks in any of the final eight games of the regular season.

En route to an appearance in Super Bowl LVI, the 2021 Bengals ranked seventh in passing offense (259.0 yards per game) and tied for seventh in points per game (27.1). Burrow, after returning from a knee injury suffered in 2020, led the NFL in completion percentage (70.4) and established single-season Bengals records for passing yards (4,611) and passer rating (108.3). Chase was named the AP Offensive Rookie of the Year after posting a team-record 1,455 receiving yards, while Mixon placed third in the NFL in rushing yards (1,205).

In 2020, Callahan helped develop Burrow as a rookie despite facing the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, including the cancellation of all in-person NFL offseason programs. Before a knee injury ended his rookie campaign in Week 11, Burrow's 264 completions were the most ever by an NFL quarterback through his first 10 career games, while his 2,688 passing yards were fifth.

Callahan joined the Bengals after spending 2018 as the quarterbacks coach for the Oakland Raiders. Under his tutelage, Raiders quarterback **Derek Carr** passed for a then-career-high 4,049 yards and led the AFC with a 68.9 completion percentage.

From 2016 to 2017, Callahan was the quarterbacks coach for the Detroit Lions. Working with **Matthew Stafford**, he helped the veteran



finish third in passing yards (4,446) and fourth in passing touchdowns (29) in 2017, while posting a then-career-best 99.3 passer rating. In 2016, Stafford's eight game-winning drives were the most by a quarterback in a season since the 1970 AFL-NFL merger.

Callahan broke into the NFL with the Denver Broncos in 2010 and served in multiple roles for the franchise through 2015. He began as a coaching assistant (2010) before transitioning to offensive quality control coach (2011-12), offensive assistant coach (2013-14) and finally offensive assistant/quarterbacks coach (2015). In 2013, Broncos quarterback **Peyton Manning** won the Associated Press NFL MVP award after completing a league-record 55 touchdown passes. Callahan's tenure in Denver was capped by the team's victory in Super Bowl 50 following the 2015 campaign. Before reaching the NFL, Callahan spent time at his alma mater, UCLA, as a graduate assistant in 2006 and 2007. He then spent two years (2008-09) as the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach for Junipero Serra High School in San Mateo, Calif.

As a former walk-on quarterback at UCLA, he appeared in 13 games as a holder on PATs. He earned a bachelor's degree in sociology in 2006 and added a master's in education in 2008.

Born in Champaign, Ill., Callahan attended De La Salle High School in Concord, Calif., where he was a part of the school's national-record 151-game winning streak and a No. 1 national ranking.

He and his wife, Allyson, have a son, Ronan, and a daughter, Norah. He is the son of longtime NFL coach **Bill Callahan**, the current Titans offensive line coach.

YOUNGEST COACHES, FRANCHISE HISTORY

Brian Callahan began his tenure as the 20th head coach in Titans/Oilers history on at Chicago on Sept. 8, 2024.

Callahan was 40 years and 90 days old upon his first regular season contest on the Titans sideline. Born June 10, 1984, in Champaign, Ill., he was the seventh-youngest of the 32 head coaches in the NFL in 2024. The only younger head coaches than Callahan were Seattle's **Mike Macdonald** (37), New England's **Jerod Mayo** (38), the Los Angeles Rams' **Sean McVay** (38), Minnesota's **Kevin O'Connell** (39), Indianapolis' **Shane Steichen** (39) and Houston's **DeMeco Ryans** (40).

Callahan became the organization's third head coach to take over the team at age 40 or younger. **Jeff Fisher** grabbed the reins during the 1994 season at age 36 years and 269 days. He served 17 seasons in the role and was inducted into the franchise's Ring of Honor in 2021. **Lou Rymkus**, the first head coach in Oilers history, began his tenure in 1960 at 40 years and 310 days. He helped the team win the first American Football League championship.

Youngest Titans/Oilers head coaches, ranked by age in first game:

Head Coach	First Game	Birthdate	Age (Years-Days)
1. Jeff Fisher	11/21/1994	2/25/1958	36 years, 269 days
2. Brian Callahan	9/8/2024	6/10/1984	40 years, 90 days
3. Lou Rymkus	9/11/1960	11/6/1919	40 years, 310 days
4. Wally Lemm	10/22/1961	10/23/1919	41 years, 364 days
5. Hugh Taylor	9/12/1965	7/6/1923	42 years, 68 days
6. Mike Vrabel	9/9/2018	8/14/1975	43 years, 26 days
7. Hugh Campbell	9/2/1984	5/21/1941	43 years, 104 days
8. Ed Hughes	9/19/1971	10/23/1927	43 years, 331 days
9. Jerry Glanville	12/15/1985	10/14/1941	44 years, 62 days
10. Pop Ivy	9/9/1962	1/25/1916	46 years, 227 days



2025 TITANS COACHING STAFF

Brian Callahan	Head Coach
John Fassel	Special Teams Coordinator
Nick Holz	Offensive Coordinator
Dennard Wilson	Defensive Coordinator
Ben Bloom	Outside Linebackers
Frank Bush	Linebackers
Bill Callahan	Offensive Line
Bo Hardegree	Quarterbacks
Steve Jackson	Secondary/Safeties
Randy Jordan	Running Backs
Tony Oden	Defensive Passing Game Coordinator/ Cornerbacks
Tracy Rocker	Defensive Line
Travis Smith	Defensive Run Game Coordinator
Luke Stocker	Tight Ends
Tyke Tolbert	Wide Receivers
Dylan Autenrieth	Defensive Quality Control
Trevor Browder	Offensive Assistant
Kylan Butler	Offensive Assistant
Steve Donatelli	Defensive Assistant
Scott Fuchs	Assistant Offensive Line
Matt Jones	Offensive Assistant
Tom Jones	Assistant to the Head Coach
Lori Locust	Defensive Assistant
Payton McCollum	Assistant Quarterbacks
Mike McCoy	Senior Offensive Assistant
Kevin Perez	Coaches Assistant
Rayna Stewart	Special Teams Assistant
Zac Woodfin	Director of Sports Performance
Brian Bell	Assistant Director of Sports Performance
Mark Lovat	Assistant, Strength and Conditioning
John Shaw	Assistant, Sports Performance - Speed Training
Grant Thorne	Assistant, Strength and Conditioning

TITANS/OILERS HEAD COACH HISTORY

Head Coach	Years	Won	Lost	Tied	Pct.
Brian Callahan	2024-25	3	14	0	.176
Mike Vrabel	2018-23	56	48	0	.538
Mike Mularkey	2015-17	21	22	0	.488
Ken Whisenhunt	2014-15	3	20	0	.130
Mike Munchak	2011-13	22	26	0	.458
Jeff Fisher	1994-2010	147	126	0	.538
Jack Pardee	1990-94	44	35	0	.556
Jerry Glanville	1985-89	35	35	0	.500
Hugh Campbell	1984-85	8	22	0	.266
Chuck Studley	1983	2	8	0	.200
Ed Biles	1981-83	8	23	0	.258
O.A. "Bum" Phillips	1975-80	59	38	0	.608
Sid Gillman	1973-74	8	15	0	.347
Bill Peterson	1972-73	1	18	0	.052
Ed Hughes	1971	4	9	1	.321
Wally Lemm	1961, 1966-70	38	40	4	.487
Hugh "Bones" Taylor	1965	4	10	0	.285
Sammy Baugh	1964	4	10	0	.285
Frank "Pop" Ivy	1962-63	17	12	0	.586
Lou Rymkus	1960-61	12	7	1	.625

Records include postseason



TITANS 2025 ASSISTANT COACHES

JOHN FASSEL

SPECIAL TEAMS COORDINATOR

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- Fassel joined the Titans in 2025 after spending the previous five seasons with the Dallas Cowboys.
- After Fassel's arrival in Dallas in 2020, the Cowboys improved from the league's bottom-ranked kick return and punt coverage units to top five marks in both categories during his tenure.
- Under Fassel's direction in 2024, second-year kicker Brandon Aubrey connected on a franchise-record 40 field goals, tying for the third-highest total in NFL history. The Cowboys also ranked second in the league with 1,091 kickoff return yards, led the NFL with an NFL-record 32.1 kickoff return average, and were the only team to return multiple kickoffs for touchdowns. Aubrey and second year returner KaVontae Turpin received AP All-Pro honors.
- In 2023, Cowboys punter Bryan Anger led the NFC with a 51.4 gross average.
- Before his time in Dallas, Fassel served as special teams coordinator for the Los Angeles Rams for eight seasons from 2012-19. During those eight seasons, the Rams led the NFL in net yards per punt (43.3) and ranked second in gross yards per punt (46.9). Fassel helped Los Angeles to a Super Bowl berth during the 2018 season. In 2013, Fassel oversaw a punt team that set the single-season NFL record for net punting average (46.0), led by punter Johnny Hekker.
- Fassel joined the Rams after three seasons (2009-11) with the Oakland Raiders as special teams coordinator. He began his NFL coaching career as an assistant special teams coach with the Baltimore Ravens.
- Prior to his NFL career, Fassel was the head coach and assistant athletic director at New Mexico Highlands University. His coaching career also included stops at Idaho State (2001) and with the Amsterdam Admirals of NFL Europe (2000) and Bucknell University (1999, 2002).
- The Anaheim, Calif., native played wide receiver at Weber State. He signed as an undrafted free agent with the Colts following his college playing career.
- Fassel is the son of the late NFL coach Jim Fassel.



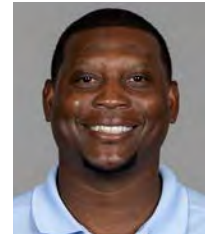
- At the University of Colorado, Holz was a three-year letter winner (2004-06) as a wide receiver and holder.

DENNARD WILSON

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

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- Wilson arrived in Tennessee in 2024 with 12 years of NFL coaching experience, including nine seasons leading defensive back units.
- In 2024, Wilson's first season as an NFL defensive coordinator, the Titans ranked second overall in total defense (311.2 opponent yards per game) and second in passing defense (177.3). The unit tied for the fifth-fewest first downs allowed per game (18.5) and tied for the fifth-fewest opponent yards allowed per play (5.2).
- Prior to joining the Titans, Wilson spent the 2023 campaign as the defensive backs coach with the Baltimore Ravens, working with head coach John Harbaugh and defensive coordinator Mike Macdonald. The defense ranked first in points allowed (16.5 per game), sixth overall (301.4 yards allowed per game), sixth in pass defense (191.9 yards per game), first in sacks (60) and third in interceptions (18). Second-year safety Kyle Hamilton earned All-Pro and Pro Bowl honors.
- Before he joined the Ravens, Wilson spent two seasons with the Philadelphia Eagles, where he served as defensive passing game coordinator/defensive backs (2022) and a defensive backs coach (2021). In 2022, the Eagles ranked first in the NFL in pass defense (179.8 yards per game) en route to an appearance in Super Bowl LVII.
- Wilson spent four total seasons (2017-20) with the New York Jets—initially as defensive backs coach (2017-18) and then passing game coordinator/defensive backs (2019-20). While there he oversaw the development of safeties Jamal Adams and Marcus Maye.
- Wilson's initial NFL coaching job was with the St. Louis/Los Angeles Rams under head coach Jeff Fisher. He began his tenure with the Rams as a defensive quality control coach (2012-14) and then spent two years as the defensive backs coach (2015-16).
- From 2008 to 2011, he was employed by the Chicago Bears as a pro scout.
- The Upper Marlboro, Md., native was a three-year starter and team captain as a corner and safety at the University of Maryland. He entered the NFL in 2004 as a rookie free agent with Washington.



NICK HOLZ

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

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- Holz (pronounced "HOLTS") arrived in Tennessee in 2024 with 11 years of NFL coaching experience and 16 total years of coaching experience.
- In 2024, Holz helped direct a Titans offense that featured running back Tony Pollard (1,079 rushing yards) and wide receiver Calvin Ridley (1,017 receiving yards), who produced 1,000-yard seasons rushing and receiving, respectively.
- He joined the Titans after spending the 2023 campaign as the passing game coordinator for the Jacksonville Jaguars. Working in an offense that featured quarterback Trevor Lawrence, he helped the unit rank ninth in passing (242.7 yards per game) and 13th in points scored (22.2 points per game). Calvin Ridley posted 1,016 receiving yards and eight touchdowns, while Evan Engram led all NFL tight ends with 114 receptions for 963 yards.
- Before his stint in Jacksonville, Holz was the offensive coordinator for UNLV in 2022, which followed 10 campaigns with the Oakland/Las Vegas Raiders (2012-21). With the Raiders, he served in a variety of roles on offense, mostly focused on wide receivers. He served on the staff of three different Raiders head coaches and worked with a notable list of offensive minds, including Greg Knapp, Greg Olson, Bill Musgrave and Jon Gruden.
- Prior to joining the Raiders, Holz was an assistant at Stanford under head coach Jim Harbaugh (2008-10) and David Shaw (2011). As an assistant quarterbacks coach, he helped Andrew Luck earn first-team All-American honors and finish as the runner-up in Heisman Trophy voting two times.
- Holz began his collegiate coaching career in 2007 at Nebraska, where he served as offensive quality control coach and video intern for the Cornhuskers under head coach Bill Callahan.



BEN BLOOM

OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS

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- Bloom arrived in Tennessee in 2024 with 15 years of experience coaching in the NFL. He was hired after spending the previous four campaigns with the Cleveland Browns.
- In 2024, Bloom helped outside linebackers Harold Landry III (9.0 sacks) and Arden Key (6.5) rank first and second in sacks on the team, respectively, and combine for 15.5 sacks. Key's total tied a career high. Landry was one of three NFL players in 2024 that recorded at least 70 tackles and 15 tackles for loss (Andrew Van Ginkel and Brian Burns).
- During his most recent stint with the Browns, Bloom served as senior defensive assistant in 2020, run game coordinator in 2021 and 2022, and defensive line coach in 2023. He broke into the NFL with the Browns from 2009 to 2010 and then worked nine seasons on the Dallas Cowboys staff (2011-19) before heading back to Cleveland.
- In 2023, Bloom worked with Browns defensive end Myles Garrett, who was named the AP Defensive Player of the Year after leading the Browns and tying for seventh in the NFL with 14 sacks. As a unit, the Browns led the NFL in total defense (270.2 opponent yards per game), passing defense (164.7) and third-down defense (29.1 percent).
- Bloom was the linebackers coach for the Cowboys in his final two seasons with the organization (2018-19) and was instrumental in Leighton Vander Esch and Jaylon Smith earning Pro Bowl honors.
- Prior to entering the NFL, Bloom spent four years in the college coaching ranks, lastly as the assistant defensive line coach at Harvard University



TITANS 2025 ASSISTANT COACHES

in 2008. That followed three years (2005-07) as defensive line/graduate assistant at Tufts University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in history in 2005 and master's in education in 2008.

- A native of Wellesley, Mass., Bloom was a three-year letter winner on the Tufts offensive line.

FRANK BUSH LINEBACKERS

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- Bush rejoined the Titans as linebackers coach in 2024, beginning his third coaching stint with the franchise that also drafted him as a player in 1985. Prior to 2024, he spent 39 total NFL seasons as a player (1985-86), scout (1987-91) and coach (1992-present).
- In 2024, Bush helped newcomer Kenneth Murray Jr. lead the defense with 95 total tackles. Bush's group was forced to overcome a significant number of games missed due to injuries to Murray (three games), Jack Gibbens (seven), Otis Reese IV (four) and Chance Campbell (17) while also absorbing the midseason trade of starter Ernest Jones IV.
- From 2021 to 2023, Bush coached the Atlanta Falcons linebackers. In his final season there, his platoon was part of an overall unit that ranked eighth in passing defense (202.9 opponent yards per game), third in third-down efficiency (33.8 percent) and fourth in red-zone efficiency (45.3 touchdown percent).
- Prior to joining Atlanta's staff, Bush spent two seasons (2019-20) with the New York Jets as assistant head coach defense/linebackers coach and was promoted to defensive coordinator for the final four games of the 2020 season.
- Prior to joining the Jets, Bush served two seasons with the Dolphins as the team's assistant head coach/linebackers coach (2017-18).
- Returning to the Oilers/Titans organization in 2011, Bush spent two seasons in Tennessee (2011-12) and helped a trio of young linebackers—Akeem Ayers, Colin McCarthy and Zach Brown—earn starting roles.
- Bush also coached for the St. Louis/Los Angeles Rams (2013-16), Arizona Cardinals (2004-06) and Denver Broncos (1995-03). In his time with Denver, Bush earned two Super Bowl rings (XXXII and XXXIII).
- The Athens, Ga., native was a three-year starter at North Carolina State and was selected in the fifth round by the Oilers in the 1985 NFL Draft. A starter at linebacker as a rookie, Bush earned All-Rookie honors before an injury in his second season and subsequent diagnosis of a narrow spinal canal forced an early end to his playing career.
- Following his on-field career with the Oilers, he joined the team as a college scout for five seasons (1987-91) before transitioning to the coaching staff, initially as the team's linebackers coach (1992) and then as the defensive quality control/linebackers coach (1993-94).

BILL CALLAHAN OFFENSIVE LINE

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- Callahan was hired by the Titans as offensive line coach in 2024, arriving with 46 years of coaching experience, including 25 years in the NFL.
- He previously spent a total of six seasons as a head coach with the Oakland Raiders (2002-03) and the University of Nebraska (2004-07), in addition to part of one season as an interim head coach with the Washington Commanders (2019).
- In 2024, Callahan helped develop first-round pick JC Latham, who started all 17 games at left tackle. Second-year left guard Peter Skoronski also started every game, while right guard Dillon Radunz established a career high with 15 starts.
- Prior to joining the Titans, Callahan spent 22 seasons coaching offensive lines and seven years as an offensive coordinator. Those teams went to the playoffs 11 times. He helped his side of the ball finish with the No. 1 ranked rushing offense in 2000 (Raiders) and 2009 (Jets), as well as the top ranked passing offense in 2002 (Raiders). In the process, 14 offensive linemen under his tutelage were selected to a total of 35 Pro Bowls.

- When he joined the Titans, it marked the first time that he and his son, Titans head coach Brian Callahan, were employed by the same organization.
- Before venturing to Tennessee, he spent four years as the offensive line coach for the Cleveland Browns (2020-23). During that span, the Browns qualified for the playoffs twice and ranked third in the NFL with an average of 139.6 rushing yards per game.
- Callahan was on Washington's coaching staff from 2015 to 2019, working mostly with the offensive line and serving as interim head coach for the final 11 games in 2019.
- Callahan spent six seasons with the Oakland Raiders from 1998 to 2003, first as offensive coordinator before becoming the 13th head coach in Raiders history in 2002. The 2002 squad set a franchise record for total offense with an NFL-best 6,237 yards and led the NFL in passing yards (4,689) en route to an appearance in Super Bowl XXXVII. He became the fourth rookie head coach in NFL history to earn a Super Bowl berth.
- His time in the NFL also includes stints with the Dallas Cowboys (2012-14), New York Jets (2008-11) and Philadelphia Eagles (1995-97).
- Callahan served as head coach at the University of Nebraska from 2004 to 2007. He led the Cornhuskers to a Big 12 Conference Championship Game appearance in 2006 and two bowl invitations in his four seasons.
- His collegiate coaching experience also involved stops at Illinois (1980-86), Northern Arizona (1987-88), Southern Illinois (1989) and Wisconsin (1990-94).
- The Chicago, Ill., native started at quarterback for three seasons (1975-77) at Illinois Benedictine (Iisle, Ill.), where he earned honorable-mention All-America honors in 1976 and 1977.

BO HARDEGREE QUARTERBACKS

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- Hardegree was hired by the Titans in 2024 after spending two campaigns (2022-23) with the Las Vegas Raiders.
- In 2024, Hardegree aided the development of second-year quarterback Will Levis, while veteran Mason Rudolph started five games, his highest total in a season since 2019.
- A Jackson, Tenn., native and University of Tennessee product, Hardegree arrived at the Titans with 16 total years of coaching experience and 10 seasons coaching in the NFL.
- Hardegree joined the Raiders as quarterbacks coach in 2022 and was promoted to interim offensive coordinator for the final nine games of 2023. Under Hardegree's tutelage as an offensive coordinator, fourth-round rookie Aidan O'Connell passed for 1,905 yards and 11 touchdowns while posting the third-best passer rating (83.9) among all qualifying 2023 rookies.
- With the Patriots in 2021, Hardegree played a key role in the development of Patriots first-round pick Mac Jones, who led all rookie quarterbacks with 3,801 passing yards and 22 touchdowns.
- Prior to joining the Patriots, Hardegree logged two years with the New York Jets (2019-20) and three seasons as quarterbacks coach of the Miami Dolphins (2016-18).
- After beginning his coaching career at Duke (2008-10), he was on the staff at Louisiana State (2011-13) before his initial NFL stints with the Denver Broncos (2014) and Chicago Bears (2015).
- At the University of Tennessee, Hardegree played quarterback and was a member of SEC Eastern Division championship teams in 2004 and 2007.

TITANS 2025 ASSISTANT COACHES

STEVE JACKSON SECONDARY/SAFETIES

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- Jackson returned to the Titans in 2024 as secondary/safeties coach after previously serving on the staff as assistant secondary coach in 2016 and 2017.
- A former Houston Oilers draft pick, Jackson played nine seasons in the NFL—all with the Oilers/Titans from 1991 to 1999.
- In 2024, Jackson helped the Titans finish second in passing defense (177.3) and seventh in opponent passing yards per attempt (6.80). The unit was forced to overcome significant time missed due to injuries to the starting secondary of safety Quandre Diggs (nine games missed), safety Amani Hooker (three), cornerback L'Jarius Sneed (12) and cornerback Chidobe Awuzie (nine).
- Prior to rejoining the Tennessee coaching staff, Jackson spent two seasons with the Atlanta Falcons (2022-23). He began his tenure in Atlanta as a senior offensive assistant and transitioned to coaching the secondary in 2023. He was part of a staff in 2023 that helped the Falcons place eighth in passing defense (202.9 opponent yards per game), third in third-down efficiency (33.8 percent) and fourth in red-zone efficiency (45.3 touchdown percent). Safety Jessie Bates III was selected to the Pro Bowl and earned second-team AP All-Pro honors.
- Jackson served as the secondary/cornerbacks coach for the Cincinnati Bengals in 2020 and 2021.
- His coaching stops also include time with the Buffalo Bills (2001-03), Washington Commanders (2004-11), Detroit Lions (2013) and New York Jets (2018-19).
- Jackson recorded 14 interceptions and nine sacks in his NFL career. In his final season, he helped the Titans make an appearance in Super Bowl XXXIV.
- The Houston, Texas, native was a four-year starter at Purdue University.



RANDY JORDAN RUNNING BACKS

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- Randy Jordan arrived in Tennessee in 2024 with 21 total years of coaching experience in addition to a nine-year NFL playing career as a running back.
- Under Jordan's direction in 2024, running back Tony Pollard ranked third in the AFC and tied for 12th in the NFL with a career-best 1,079 rushing yards on a career-high 260 carries. Both numbers led the team, as did his five rushing touchdowns. With an additional 238 yards on 41 receptions, he produced a team-high 1,317 scrimmage yards—the second-best total of his career.
- Prior to joining the Titans, Jordan spent 10 seasons (2014-23) as the running backs coach for the Washington Commanders and added the title of senior offensive assistant in 2023.
- The Commanders ranked seventh in the NFL in 2023 with an average of 4.43 rushing yards per attempt. Second-year running back Brian Robinson Jr. surpassed the 1,000-yard scrimmage mark (1,101) for the first time in his career and also led the club with nine total touchdowns.
- Before joining Washington, Jordan spent two years (2012-13) as the running backs coach at his alma mater, the University of North Carolina. Giovani Bernard produced one of the best seasons in UNC history in 2012, averaging 122.8 rushing yards per game to lead the ACC.
- Jordan coached running backs at Texas A&M for four seasons from 2008 to 2011.
- His first collegiate coaching position was at the University of Nebraska, where he served as the running backs coach for the Cornhuskers under head coach Bill Callahan from 2004 to 2007.
- Jordan began his coaching career with the Oakland Raiders as a special teams assistant midway through the 2003 season.
- As a running back in the NFL, Jordan appeared in 122 career games with the Raiders (1993, 1998-02) and Jacksonville Jaguars (1995-97), accumulating 152 rushing attempts for 574 yards and seven touchdowns, as well as 58 receptions for 596 yards and two scores.



- A native of Manson, N.C., Jordan attended the University of North Carolina under head coach Mack Brown from 1989 to 1992.

TONY ODEN DEFENSIVE PASSING GAME COORDINATOR/ CORNERBACKS

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- Oden arrived at the Titans in 2025 with nearly 30 seasons of coaching experience, specializing in NFL secondaries since 2006. He came to Tennessee after spending the previous four seasons (2021-24) with the New York Jets as the senior defensive assistant/cornerbacks coach.
- In 2024, Oden helped the Jets rank third in the NFL in total yards allowed (5,334) and fourth in passing yards allowed (2,961).
- In each season from 2022 to 2024, the Jets defense ranked in the top five league-wide in yards allowed, and Oden helped cornerback Sauce Gardner to consecutive first-team All-Pro selection in his first two seasons (2022-23).
- Prior to his time with the Jets, Oden served one season (2020) as secondary/cornerbacks coach with the San Francisco 49ers.
- His NFL coaching career began as a defensive assistant with the Texans in 2004 before rising to assistant secondary coach with New Orleans in 2006. He received his first positional coaching post as secondary coach with the Saints in 2011. He also served on the staff with the Jaguars (2012), Buccaneers (2013), Lions (2014-17), Dolphins (2018-19) and 49ers (2020).
- During his time in the NFL, Oden has coached several Pro Bowl defensive backs including Gardner (Jets), cornerbacks Xavier Howard (Dolphins) and Darelle Revis (Buccaneers) and safety Roman Harper (Saints). Oden helped guide the 2009 Saints to the league's fourth-best passing defense and a victory in Super Bowl XLIV.
- He started his coaching career in 1997 as an assistant defensive backs coach at Millersville University before making stops at Boston College (1997), Army (1998-99), East Carolina (2000-02) and Eastern Michigan (2003).
- The Cleveland, Ohio, native played at Baldwin-Wallace College from 1992-95 and was a Division III All-American linebacker in 1994.



TRACY ROCKER DEFENSIVE LINE

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- Rocker returned to the Titans in 2024 with 32 previous years of coaching experience, including six in the NFL and three with the Titans. He coached the Titans defensive line from 2011 to 2013.
- In 2024, defensive tackle Jeffery Simmons was named to the Pro Bowl after tallying five sacks and a career-high 76 tackles. Meanwhile, Rocker helped develop second-round nose tackle T'Vondre Sweat. Sweat appeared in all 17 games with 16 starts and earned All-Rookie honors from Pro Football Focus and Pro Football Writers of America.
- Prior to rejoining the Titans, Rocker spent three seasons as the defensive line coach for the Philadelphia Eagles (2021-23). In that period, the Eagles tied for third in the NFL with 142 total sacks and earned three consecutive postseason berths.
- In 2023, Rocker was part of an Eagles playoff team that ranked 10th in the league in rushing defense (103.4 opponent yards per game), while defensive end Josh Sweat registered his third consecutive season with at least 6.5 sacks. Meanwhile, defensive tackle Fletcher Cox started 15 games and notched five sacks in his 12th NFL season.
- In 2022, Rocker was a member of an Eagles coaching staff that guided the team to an NFC title and an appearance in Super Bowl LVII. The Eagles fielded the league's second-ranked total defense (301.5 yards per game) and registered the third-most sacks (70, tied) in NFL history.
- Prior to joining the Eagles' coaching staff, he served on the staffs at South Carolina (2020), the University of Tennessee (2017-19) and Georgia (2014-16).



TITANS 2025 ASSISTANT COACHES

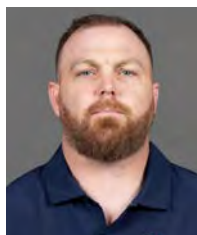
- In 2012, during his first stint with the Titans, the defense produced the 10th-most sacks (39) in the league, while defensive end Derrick Morgan enjoyed a breakout year. The prior campaign, Rocker led a young group that included Karl Klug, who ranked first among rookie defensive tackles with seven sacks, as well as rookie Jurrell Casey.
- Returning to his alma mater, Rocker coached the defensive line at Auburn for two years (2009-10) following stints at Mississippi (2008) Arkansas (2003-07), Cincinnati (2002), Troy State (1997-01) and West Alabama.
- The Atlanta, Ga., native and former Auburn defensive tackle was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2004. A two-time All-American, he was honored with the Lombardi Award (nation's top college football player) and Outland Trophy (nation's top interior lineman) in 1988, becoming the first player in SEC history to earn both accolades.
- He was selected by Washington in the third round (66th overall) of the 1989 NFL Draft and played two seasons before sustaining a knee injury. He concluded his professional career with the Orlando Thunder of the World Football League in 1991.

TRAVIS SMITH

DEFENSIVE RUN GAME COORDINATOR

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- Smith joined the Titans in 2025 as defensive run game coordinator after three seasons with the Chicago Bears as defensive line coach.
- In 2024, Smith's 14th NFL season, he coached a front line that helped Chicago rank in the top 10 in turnover margin at plus-eight.
- In 2023, the Bears finished first in rushing yards allowed per game (86.4) and total rushing yards allowed (1,468). Despite being acquired via trade in Week 9, defensive lineman Montez Sweat led the team in sacks (six) and was selected to the Pro Bowl.
- Prior to his time in Chicago, Smith spent a decade rising up the defensive coaching ranks with the Oakland/Las Vegas Raiders. After starting as a defensive assistant with the team in 2012, he spent four total seasons as a defensive quality control coach (2015-16, 2018-19) and led the outside linebackers in 2017 before assisting with the defensive line from 2020-21.
- While with the Raiders, Smith helped guide outside linebacker Khalil Mack and defensive end Maxx Crosby from rookies in 2014 and 2019, respectively, to All-Pro performers. Smith worked extensively with the linebackers and helped tutor Mack through a four-year Raiders stint that included 68 tackles for loss and Defensive Player of the Year honors in 2016. Crosby was drafted in 2019 and was selected to his first of four straight Pro Bowls in 2021, Smith's final season with the team as assistant defensive line coach.
- Smith spent 2011 as an offensive technical intern at the University of Colorado after a year as tight ends and defensive line assistant coach at Santa Monica (Calif.) Junior College.
- He is a native of Walnut Creek, Calif., and played linebacker and fullback collegiately from 2004 to 2009 at Cal Poly, where he also served as an undergraduate assistant coach.



LUKE STOCKER

TIGHT ENDS

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- Stocker joined the coaching staff in 2023 following 11 years in the NFL as a player.
- He initially joined the Titans staff as an intern during the 2023 offseason and then earned a full-time role as offensive assistant. In 2024, he was promoted to assistant tight ends coach before taking over the room in 2025.
- During the 2024 season, he helped coach a group of tight ends that included Chig Okonkwo, Josh Whyle and Nick Vannett. Okonkwo ranked second on the team and led the Titans tight ends with 52 receptions. His 479 receiving yards ranked third on the team and led the team's tight ends, and he had two touchdown receptions.
- With Stocker working with the Titans tight ends in 2023, Okonkwo finished second on the team in receptions (54) and receiving yards (528),



which were career highs.

- As a player, Stocker was signed by the Titans as a free agent during the 2017 campaign and stayed with the club through 2018, head coach Mike Vrabel's first season in Tennessee. He also returned for training camp in 2021. In 19 games with the Titans (13 starts), he totaled 16 receptions for 177 yards and two touchdowns, while serving in a key role as a blocker in the running game.
- A fourth-round pick by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the 2011 NFL Draft, Stocker spent six-plus seasons with the Buccaneers until joining the Titans. He later appeared in games for the Atlanta Falcons (2019-20) and Minnesota Vikings (2021). In 142 career games, he registered 91 starts and 85 receptions for 705 yards and five touchdowns. He also participated in two playoff games with the Titans in 2017.
- The Berea, Ky., native attended the University of Tennessee (2007-10), where he tied a then-school record with 52 career games played, totaling 85 receptions for 956 yards and eight touchdowns.

TYKE TOLBERT

WIDE RECEIVERS

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- Tolbert joined the Titans in 2024 with 30 prior years of coaching experience, including 21 seasons in the NFL.
- He has coached wide receivers with the Arizona Cardinals (2003), Buffalo Bills (2004-09), Carolina Panthers (2010), Denver Broncos (2011-17), New York Giants (2018-21) and Chicago Bears (2022-23).
- In 2024, Titans wide receiver Calvin Ridley's 15.9-yard receiving average ranked fifth in the NFL among qualifiers. Only Ridley and Philadelphia's A.J. Brown accumulated at least 60 receptions (64) and 1,000 receiving yards (1,017) while averaging at least 15.0 yards per catch. Also, Nick Westbrook-Ikhine established a career high and ranked second on the Titans with 497 receiving yards on 32 catches (15.5 avg.), and his team-best nine touchdown receptions also gave him the best finish of his career and tied for the ninth-highest total in the NFL.
- Prior to his time in Tennessee, Tolbert coached eight different wide receivers to 16 total 1,000-yard seasons: Anquan Boldin (2003), Eric Moulds (2004), Lee Evans (2006, 2008), Demaryius Thomas (2012-16), Eric Decker (2012-13), Emmanuel Sanders (2014-16), Odell Beckham Jr. (2018) and DJ Moore (2023). The grouping of Boldin (2003), Thomas (2012-16) and Sanders (2014, 2016) combined for eight Pro Bowls under Tolbert's direction.
- Tolbert's two years as wide receivers coach in Chicago also included the title of pass game coordinator. Most recently in 2023, he helped Moore tie for second in the NFL in receptions of at least 25 yards (16). Moore, in his first season in Chicago, also ranked sixth in receiving yards (1,364).
- Tolbert's first professional coaching experience was with the NFL's Bill Walsh Minority Internship Program. He first interned with the Lions during training camp in 1997 before interning again in 2001 with the Cardinals.
- Before establishing himself in the NFL, Tolbert began his coaching career as a graduate assistant at Louisiana State (1994) before moving on to Northeast Louisiana (1994, 1995-97), Ohio University (1995), Auburn (1998), Louisiana-Lafayette (1999-01) and Florida (2002).
- The Conroe, Texas, native was a wide receiver and three-year letterman at Louisiana State University (1986-90).

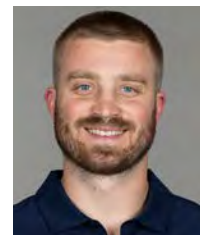


DYLAN AUTENRIETH

DEFENSIVE QUALITY CONTROL

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- Dylan Autenrieth is in his first season with the Titans and his first season in the NFL in 2025.
- Prior to joining the Titans, he spent three seasons at Vanderbilt University, serving most recently as the team's assistant offensive line coach after originally joining the staff as a graduate assistant in 2022.
- In 2024, Autenrieth helped the Commodores to their first winning season and bowl victory in over a decade as the offensive line protected for quarterback Diego Pavia, who set school single-season records for



TITANS 2025 ASSISTANT COACHES

rushing yards by a quarterback (801) and fewest interceptions (four).

- Prior to his time in Vanderbilt, Autenrieth spent one season as a graduate assistant at Colorado State, working primarily with the offensive line and tight ends. While with the Rams, he helped develop Mackey Award finalist and future Pro Bowl tight end Trey McBride. He began his coaching career as an offensive analyst at his alma mater, North Carolina State, in 2020.
- Autenrieth played collegiately at NC State from 2016 to 2019, appearing in 27 games at tight end for the Wolfpack. He is a native of Dallas, Ga.

TREVOR BROWDER

OFFENSIVE ASSISTANT

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- Browder was hired into a full-time role prior to the 2024 regular season. He spent the 2024 offseason with the Titans as a Bill Walsh Diversity Fellow.
- In 2024, Browder worked primarily with the wide receivers and helped guide newly-acquired receiver Calvin Ridley to 1,017 receiving yards in his first campaign with the Titans. Nick Westbrook-Ikhine also recorded a team-high and career-best nine touchdown receptions in 2024.
- Prior to joining the Titans, Browder spent two seasons (2023-24) at University of Alabama Birmingham, starting as an offensive analyst before being promoted to a senior position.
- Browder worked as an offensive assistant as a graduate at Ball State (2021) and while he was a student at Marian University (2020).
- He began his coaching career at the high school level. He was the wide receivers and defensive backs coach at his high school alma mater, Cardinal Ritter in Indianapolis, Ind., in 2019 before transitioning to defensive coordinator and outside linebackers in 2020. His first high school coaching post came with wide receivers at Danville (Ill.) High School (2017-18).
- The Avon, Ind., native played wide receiver at Marian University.



KYLAN BUTLER

OFFENSIVE ASSISTANT

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- Butler initially joined the Titans for the 2021 season as part of the NFL Bill Walsh Diversity Coaching Fellowship and earned a full-time role in 2022. He previously spent seven years coaching at the collegiate level.
- Before arriving in Tennessee, he spent two seasons coaching wide receivers at Morehead State University. He also served as co-special teams coordinator in 2019 and was promoted to associate head coach for 2020-21. After the fall 2020 season was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Butler helped coach the team in its games during the spring of 2021.
- He spent two years at Glenville (W.Va.) State College, first as running backs coach in 2017 and then as offensive coordinator/wide receivers coach in 2018.
- Butler began his coaching career in 2014 at his alma mater, the University of Arizona, and spent three total seasons as an offensive graduate assistant.
- A native of Antioch, Calif., he appeared in 35 career games as a running back and on special teams for the Arizona Wildcats.



STEVE DONATELL

DEFENSIVE ASSISTANT

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- Donatell arrived in Tennessee in 2024 with two prior seasons coaching in the NFL.
- He spent the 2023 campaign with the Miami Dolphins as a defensive assistant. He was part of a Miami Dolphins staff that helped the Dolphins finish the season with a No. 10 overall defensive ranking (318.3 opponent yards per game) and a ranking of seventh against the run (97.1). The Dolphins' 56 sacks amounted to the third-highest mark in the league.
- Donatell began his NFL coaching career as a defensive quality control assistant with the Minnesota Vikings in 2022. The Vikings tied for eighth in the NFL in takeaways (25) and tied for 10th in interceptions (15).
- Prior to Minnesota, Donatell was in the college coaching ranks for four years, most recently as a defensive quality control analyst at Stanford University for three seasons (2019-21) under head coach David Shaw.
- Donatell's first coaching job was in 2018 at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, where he coached outside linebackers.
- A native of Lone Tree, Colo., Donatell began his collegiate playing career at Wake Forest playing linebacker and tight end. In 2016, he was a graduate transfer tight end at Western Kentucky University.
- His father, Ed Donatell, is a longtime defensive coordinator who began coaching in the NFL in 1990. Steve's brother, Tom, is the defensive backs coach for the Washington Commanders.



SCOTT FUCHS

ASSISTANT OFFENSIVE LINE

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- Fuchs (pronunciation rhymes with "books") was hired by Tennessee in 2024 as assistant offensive line coach after spending 30 seasons coaching at the collegiate level.
- During his eight seasons prior to jumping to the NFL level, his teams went to a total of six bowl games: 2016 and 2017 at Wyoming; 2019 and 2020 at Buffalo; and 2022 and 2023 at Kansas.
- Fuchs arrived in Tennessee after serving on the University of Kansas coaching staff from 2021 to 2023. During his time with the Jayhawks, his pupils earned a total of seven All-Big 12 selections.
- In 2023, Kansas finished 8-4 to secure a winning record for the first time since 2008. The Jayhawks garnered a second consecutive bowl berth (Guaranteed Rate Bowl) for only the second time in program history.
- In 2022, Fuchs assisted as the Jayhawks qualified for a bowl game (AutoZone Liberty Bowl) for the first time since 2008 and reached the Associated Press Top 25 for the first time since 2009.
- Prior to joining the Jayhawks staff, Fuchs spent two years (2019-20) at Buffalo. His stops also included time at Wyoming (2014-18), North Dakota State (2009-13, 1994-96), Southern Illinois (2008), Grand Valley State (2007), Nebraska Omaha (2003-06), Minnesota Crookston (2000-02), Wisconsin-Eau Claire (1999) and Valley City State (1997-98).
- A native of Minot, N.D., he was a student athlete at North Dakota State and was named to the 1993 Kodak/American Football Coaches Association first-team All-America squad as a senior offensive guard.



MATT JONES

OFFENSIVE ASSISTANT

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- Jones joined the Titans in 2023 as an offensive line assistant before taking the title of offensive assistant in 2024.
- Prior to arriving at the Titans, he spent four seasons (2019-22) at the University of Tennessee-Martin as the team's run game coordinator and tight end/offensive tackle coach.
- He helped the UT-Martin Skyhawks to back-to-back Ohio Valley Conference titles in 2021 and 2022.



TITANS 2025 ASSISTANT COACHES

- Prior to joining UT-Martin, Jones had stops as an offensive line coach at Texas Southern (2017-18), Jackson State (2016), Tulane (2014-15), Villanova (tight ends, 2013), Avila University (2011-12) and the University of Saint Francis (Illinois) (2009-10).
- A native of Chicago, Ill., Jones attended Eastern Illinois University.

TOM JONES

ASSISTANT TO THE HEAD COACH

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- Jones was hired by Tennessee in 2024 after spending 25 seasons with the Oakland/Las Vegas Raiders.
- During his time with the Raiders, Jones filled multiple roles with a wide range of responsibilities. In his final two seasons with the organization (2022-23), he served as vice president of football operations/assistant to the head coach. He originally joined the Raiders in 1996 as an intern.
- Jones oversaw several areas for the Raiders, including day-to-day football operations, scheduling, the football calendar, CBA compliance, the Bill Walsh Fellowship Program, and communication with players, coaches and other departments. His involvement in coaching through the years included managing the affairs of 10 different head coaches and their respective staffs.
- A Bay Area native, Jones earned a bachelor's degree in political science and criminal justice from Chico State before moving on to the University of San Francisco to obtain a master's degree in sport management.



LORI LOCUST

DEFENSIVE ASSISTANT

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- Locust joined the Titans in 2023 as defensive quality control coach. She worked extensively with the outside linebackers during her first two seasons. In 2025, she was promoted to defensive assistant.
- Locust arrived in Tennessee after four seasons (2019-22) as the assistant defensive line coach for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.
- During her four-year tenure in Tampa Bay, the Buccaneers led the NFL in rushing defense, allowing only 92.3 yards per game. Additionally, the team ranked fifth in sacks (187), third in tackles for loss (348), first in quarterback hits (452) and fifth in takeaways (102). Nose tackle Vita Vea earned his first Pro Bowl selection (2021), while totaling 15 sacks between 2019 and 2022, a total that led all nose tackles. Locust joined fellow Buccaneers assistant Maral Javadifar in becoming the first women on an NFL coaching staff to win a Super Bowl (LV).
- Prior to joining Tampa Bay, Locust served as the assistant defensive line coach for the Birmingham Iron of the Alliance of American Football and served as a coaching intern with the Baltimore Ravens during their 2018 training camp.
- Locust also spent time coaching with the Lehigh Valley Steelhawks (National Arena League), Central Penn Capitals (NAL), the York Capitals (American Indoor Football), the Central Penn Piranha (semi-professional) and her high school alma mater, Susquehanna Township (Harrisburg, Pa.) High School.
- She attended Temple University and also played football (2004-08) for the Central Penn Vipers in the Independent Women's Football League.



PAYTON MCCOLLUM

ASSISTANT QUARTERBACKS

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- McCollum arrived in Tennessee in 2024 with nine previous seasons in coaching and two prior campaigns coaching in the NFL.
- He was hired by Tennessee after one season as a defensive assistant with the Indianapolis Colts. He helped coach a defensive unit in Indianapolis that ranked fifth in the NFL with 51 total sacks and posted the league's 11th-best third-down percentage (37.1).
- In 2022, McCollum served as an offensive analyst with Eastern Michigan. The Eagles finished with a 9-4 record, which was the school's second-best win total in the 131-year history of the program. EMU also won its first bowl game since 1987.
- Prior to EMU, McCollum was the quarterbacks coach at the University of Washington for two seasons (2020-21). In 2020, the Huskies won the PAC-12 North.
- His coaching stops also include time at North Carolina Central University (2019), North Carolina (2018), the Detroit Lions (2016-17) and Campbell University (2015).
- He was a three-year letterman at Catawba College.



MIKE MCCOY

SENIOR OFFENSIVE ASSISTANT

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- McCoy arrived in Tennessee in 2025 as senior offensive assistant, bringing 22 years of NFL experience to the coaching staff.
- Prior to joining the Titans, he had six combined seasons (2009-12, 2017, 2018) as an NFL offensive coordinator in addition to four campaigns (2013-16) as the head coach of the San Diego Chargers.
- From 2022 to 2024, he served as the quarterbacks coach for the Jacksonville Jaguars. While in Jacksonville, he helped quarterback Trevor Lawrence register consecutive 4,000-yard passing seasons in 2022 (4,113) and 2023 (4,016). During those two seasons, Lawrence's 8,129 passing yards ranked fifth in the NFL, and his 46 touchdown passes ranked 10th. In 2024, injuries limited Lawrence to 10 games, during which time he passed for 2,045 yards and 11 touchdowns.
- McCoy began his NFL coaching career in 2000 with the Carolina Panthers, working in a variety of roles on the offensive staff through 2008. He went to Denver in 2009 and spent four seasons as the Broncos offensive coordinator. His tenure in Denver overlapped for three seasons (2010-12) with current Titans head coach Brian Callahan. Later, following his four-year stint in San Diego, he returned to Denver as offensive coordinator (2017) and then took the offensive coordinator post with the Arizona Cardinals for one season (2018).
- The Novato, Calif., native played quarterback at Long Beach State University (1990-91) and the University of Utah (1993-94).
- As a player, he spent time in the NFL with the Broncos, Green Bay Packers, San Francisco 49ers, Philadelphia Eagles and Seattle Seahawks, as well as NFL Europe's Amsterdam Admirals and the CFL's Calgary Stampeders.



KEVIN PEREZ

COACHES ASSISTANT

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- Perez begins his NFL coaching career in 2025 after four seasons as a football operations/equipment assistant with the Jacksonville Jaguars. He also spent the summer of 2020 with the Jaguars as an intern for the team's equipment manager.
- Perez's coaching career started at the high school level as an assistant coach with Episcopal School of Jacksonville's baseball team from 2022-23.
- As a student at Clemson, he served four seasons as a student manager



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with the Tigers' baseball team from 2017-20. While with Clemson, Perez led a team of four managers to ensure the smooth operational and logistical flow of the team.

- Perez graduated from Clemson in 2020 before obtaining a master's degree from the University of Florida in 2024.
- He is a native of Roswell, Ga.

RAYNA STEWART SPECIAL TEAMS ASSISTANT

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- Stewart returned to Tennessee in 2025 after three seasons as the special teams assistant with the Cowboys.
- He worked with Titans special teams coordinator John Fassel while the two were in Dallas. During Stewart's time with the Cowboys, their field goal unit connected on 90 percent of its attempts, the fourth-best mark in the NFL during that stretch. The team also ranked third in the NFL in average kickoff return yardage (27.2) from 2022-24. Kicker Brandon Aubrey and returner KaVontae Turpin were both multiple-time Pro Bowl selections during Stewart's time as assistant.
- Stewart joined Dallas after three years in Green Bay, serving in a similar capacity with their special teams. After initially joining as the special teams quality control coach in 2019, he was promoted to assistant special teams coach in 2021. The team reached the NFC Championship game in 2019 and 2020.
- Stewart spent four seasons (2015-18) at Vanderbilt University, serving as director of player development from 2015-17 and then as special teams quality control coach in 2018.
- He spent years in the Middle Tennessee high school coaching ranks, serving as head coach at Whites Creek High School and an assistant coach at Battle Ground Academy and Centennial High School. He also led the program at Hope Academy in Chicago, Ill.
- His first NFL coaching job came with the Titans in 2009, spending two seasons as a defensive quality control coach. He also spent two years with Northwestern (2007-08) after beginning his coaching career as an intern with the Colts during training camp in 2004.
- Stewart was drafted by the Houston Oilers in the fifth round (143rd overall) of the 1996 NFL Draft and totaled five NFL seasons with the Oilers, Dolphins and Jaguars.
- The Oklahoma City, Okla., native played collegiately at Northern Arizona University, where he was a two-time All-American cornerback.



ZAC WOODFIN DIRECTOR OF SPORTS PERFORMANCE

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- Woodfin was hired by the Titans as director of sports performance in 2024. He arrived in Tennessee with 18 years of experience in the strength and conditioning field.
- Woodfin served two years for the United States Football League and United Football League (2022-23) as the director of player performance and wellness, overseeing the league's athletic performance training staff.
- Prior to his time with the USFL/UFL, Woodfin was the director of athletic performance at the University of Missouri (2020-21), the University of Kansas (2017-19) and the University of Southern Mississippi (2015-16).
- Near the end of his time at Southern Miss, Woodfin was named interim director of athletics while the university conducted a search for its permanent director.
- In 2014, Woodfin served as the head strength and conditioning coach at his alma mater, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where he won FootballScoop's Strength and Conditioning Coach of the Year award.
- From 2011 to 2013, he received his first NFL coaching experience as an assistant strength and conditioning coach with the Green Bay Packers.
- A native of Prattville, Ala., Woodfin played linebacker at UAB and became the football program's all-time leading tackler (372 career tackles). He entered the NFL in 2005 as a rookie free agent with the Packers and also spent time with the New Orleans Saints (2005), Baltimore Ravens



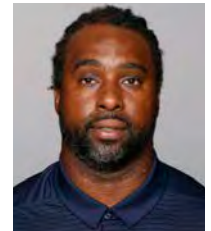
(2005-06) and Houston Texans (2007). He also played in NFL Europe for the Frankfurt Galaxy (2007). Woodfin started at linebacker for the Galaxy and helped lead the team to the 2007 World Bowl.

- In 2006, he got his start in the strength and conditioning field as an intern at UAB and then worked as a volunteer at the University of Alabama (2007) before becoming a performance specialist for three years at Athletes' Performance (2007-10), based in Los Angeles.
- Woodfin graduated from UAB in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in exercise science and a concentration in fitness leadership. He is certified by the NSCA and USAW.

BRIAN BELL ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF SPORTS PERFORMANCE

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- Bell joined the Titans in 2018 after spending three seasons with the Houston Texans as assistant strength and conditioning coach.
- After originally joining the Titans as a strength and conditioning assistant, he was named sports performance coordinator in 2022 and then promoted to his current title of assistant director of sports performance in 2023.
- He was a member of back-to-back AFC South Division Championships in his first two campaigns in Houston.
- Bell was an assistant strength and conditioning coach at Penn State from 2012-13 and the head football strength and conditioning coach at his high school alma mater, DeMatha Catholic, in Hyattsville, Md., from 2011-12.
- Bell was a tight end and fullback at Kent State from 2002-06. In 2007, Bell signed with the Washington Commanders as an undrafted free agent and served on the team's practice squad.



MARK LOVAT ASSISTANT STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING

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- Lovat (pronounced "luh-VOTT") was hired by Tennessee as assistant strength and conditioning coach in 2024 after 25 years with the Green Bay Packers.
- Lovat began with the Packers in 1999 as a strength and conditioning assistant, a title he held for a total of 16 seasons with the team. He was the club's strength and conditioning coordinator from 2010 to 2018.
- During his time with the Packers, he was a part of 17 playoff teams, 12 division titles and one Super Bowl championship (Super Bowl XLV). In 2011, Lovat was named the NFL Strength Coach of the Year by the Professional Football Strength and Conditioning Coaches Society. The same organization honored him with the Super Bowl Achievement Award in 2010.
- He was named the NFL Strength Coach of the Year for his work in 2011 by the Professional Football Strength and Conditioning Coaches Society, an award based on a vote of his peers in the field. In 2010, he was honored by the Professional Football Strength and Conditioning Coaches Society with the Super Bowl Achievement Award.
- A native of Pocatello, Idaho, Lovat earned a Division I baseball scholarship to Butler University in Indianapolis.
- He is the son of longtime NFL offensive line coach Tom Lovat.



TITANS 2025 ASSISTANT COACHES

JOHN SHAW

SPORTS PERFORMANCE - SPEED TRAINING

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- Shaw was hired in 2024 to fill the newly created coaching role of assistant sports performance - speed training.
- Prior to joining the Titans, Shaw spent five years in college coaching. Before a brief stint as the director of speed development at the University of Washington (January 2024 to March 2024), he was the director of speed development for two seasons on the strength and conditioning staff at the University of Arizona (2022-23).
- He was an assistant strength and conditioning coach for a pair of seasons at the University of Missouri (2020-21) and one campaign at the University of Kansas (2019). At Mizzou, he also served as director of sport science and mental conditioning.
- The Mobile, Ala., native began his collegiate playing career as a defensive back at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (2001-04) before transferring to Belhaven University in Jackson, Miss., to finish his career (2005-06). He then took his first steps into coaching at Belhaven as a graduate assistant/cornerbacks coach and assistant strength and conditioning coach. For the next eight years, he coached athletes at the high school level in Alabama and Mississippi, including the final six years as a strength and conditioning coach and defensive backs coach for St. Paul's Episcopal (Mobile, Ala.) High School, where he was part of three AHSAA State Championships.
- Shaw earned his Bachelor of Science degree in exercise science from Belhaven University.



GRANT THORNE

ASSISTANT STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING

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- Grant Thorne was hired by the Titans as assistant strength and conditioning coach in 2024 after spending 11 years with the Green Bay Packers.
- From 2015 through 2023, Thorne was a strength and conditioning assistant with the Packers after spending 2013 and 2014 as a strength and conditioning consultant with the team.
- Prior to working in Green Bay, Thorne served as a sports performance coach at Purdue University (2011-14). He also served as an instructor for clinical students while working toward his master's degree in health and kinesiology sport performance, focusing on sports-science technology and methodology.
- In 2011, Thorne gained his initial collegiate coaching experience at Stanford University, where he served as an assistant performance coach for the Cardinal football and rugby teams.
- Thorne served as a performance and monitoring assistant for the New York Jets in 2010.
- A college running back, wide receiver and kick returner, Thorne played two seasons at Long Beach City College (2004-05) before finishing at Nicholls State University (2006-07).
- He played wide receiver in the Arena Football League before joining the Rugby Union's Sedgley Park Tigers as a winger. In 2009, he participated in the USA Eagles National Rugby Team selection camp at the Olympic training center in Chula Vista, Calif.
- He also served as an assistant performance coach for Everton Football Club of the English Premier League before returning to the United States in 2009 to serve as a performance coach at Velocity Sports Performance in Manhattan Beach, Calif.
- He is a native of Tucson, Ariz.



KEY NUMBERS

2

Seasons remaining at the current Nissan Stadium, including 2025. The New Nissan Stadium is scheduled to open prior to the 2027 NFL season.

3

Career Pro Bowls by **Jeffery Simmons**. The Titans defensive tackle earned the honor in 2024 after previously doing so in 2021 and 2022.

5

Career-high number of interceptions in 2024 by safety **Amani Hooker**. Hooker's total led the team and tied for sixth in the NFL.

7

Seasons with the Titans, including 2025, by Titans defensive tackle **Jeffery Simmons** and safety **Amani Hooker**. The pair of 2019 draft picks share the longest continuous tenure of any players on the team's current roster.

9

Nights the Titans will spend on the road from Aug. 6-15 practicing and playing against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Atlanta Falcons.

51

Number of new players acquired by the Titans in 2025 (as of Aug. 3) via free agency (39), the draft (nine) and waivers (three).

158

Touchdown passes by **Cameron Ward** during his collegiate career, which set an NCAA Division I record.

177.3

Average opponent passing yards allowed in 2024 by the Titans defense, which ranked second in the NFL.

263

Total combined career starts by new Titans guard **Kevin Zeitler** (197) and tackle **Dan Moore Jr.** (66).

311.2

Average opponent yards allowed in 2024 by the Titans defense, which ranked second in the NFL.

1,017

Receiving yards in 2024 by **Calvin Ridley**, who achieved his third career 1,000-yard receiving season and his second consecutive 1,000-yard receiving campaign.

1,032

Offensive snaps played by second-year left guard **Peter Skoronski** and rookie tackle **JC Latham** in 2024. The duo did not miss a snap during the season.

1,317

Scrimmage yards by **Tony Pollard** in 2024, which included a career-high 1,079 rushing yards and 238 receiving yards. It was his fourth consecutive season with at least 1,000 scrimmage yards and third consecutive season with at least 1,300 scrimmage yards.

8,594

Career receiving yards by **Tyler Lockett**, who ranks eighth among all active NFL players.



NISSAN STADIUM

In 2015, the Titans and Nissan North America announced the formation of an exclusive naming-rights partnership that rebranded Nashville's downtown stadium as Nissan Stadium.

NISSAN STADIUM

Eight years later, on Nov. 17, 2023, the Titans and Nissan North America announced a new agreement: a 20-year, exclusive naming-rights partnership that brands the new Titans home venue as 'Nissan Stadium.'

Slated for completion in 2027, the new Nissan Stadium will host Titans home games, Tennessee State University football games, concerts, large-scale events and other community events.

"This partnership is a natural extension of our already longstanding friendship with Nissan," said Burke Nihill, Titans President and CEO. "Our mission at the Titans is to Win, Serve, and Entertain. We pride ourselves on collaborating with organizations who love this city and state as much as we do, and for the past 40 years, Nissan has invested more than \$10.5 billion statewide, serving as a great example of an outstanding corporate steward and community advocate. We look forward to the continued positive impact of this relationship for the Titans organization and the City of Nashville."

"Since 2015 our fans and organization have called our home 'Nissan Stadium,' and we are proud to continue that tradition in the new stadium as we deepen and expand our relationship with them," said Titans Chief Revenue Officer Adam Nuse. "The new stadium will host the world's largest events, as well as serve as a community hub for our local neighbors. We're excited to have a partner like Nissan embark on this journey with us as we look towards the future."

The partnership will feature dedicated areas in the new stadium for brand experiences and displays, innovative technology integration, and involvement in Titans broadcast platforms. Nissan also will support a to-be-determined program in the Titans' ONE Community philanthropic platform, which reaches Nashville's most underrepresented and marginalized communities with a focus on three areas – Opportunity, Neighborhoods and Education.

"Nissan Stadium is a centerpiece of the Nashville skyline and has become a household name in Middle Tennessee. It is important for Nissan to keep our name on the new stadium," said Jérémie Papin, chairperson, Nissan Americas. "As more people come to Nashville both to visit and to live in this wonderful city, Nissan Stadium is true showcase for our brand and for the career opportunities we've offered here for more than four decades. This partnership sends a strong message about the bright future for Nissan, the Titans, Nashville and the State of Tennessee."

Nissan's ever-growing footprint in Tennessee includes vehicle and powertrain manufacturing facilities in Smyrna and Decherd respectively, along with its North American headquarters in Franklin. Nissan is home to more than 11,000 employees across all three locations.

"Nissan has been a strong partner to middle Tennessee for four decades, and I'm thrilled that the Titans have united with a partner that invests in our community and its people," said Nashville Mayor Freddie O'Connell. "The familiarity and trust they've established with the Titans in the last eight years will undoubtedly be a great asset as we plan for the stadium's opening in 2027."



The new Nissan stadium will be built on the east side of the current stadium campus, along Nashville's East Bank. Features of the building include: a circular translucent roof; exterior porches with panoramic views of Nashville; improved sightlines for all spectators through a range of diverse seating experiences; and a 12,000 square foot community space available for use year-round. A waitlist for those interested in purchasing PSLs or suites is now open at [NewNissanStadium.com](https://www.NewNissanStadium.com).

Titans/Oilers all-time regular-season record by home venue:

Stadium	Seasons	W-L-T	Pct.
Jeppesen Stadium	1960-1964	25-11-0	.694
Rice Stadium	1965-1967	11-10-0	.524
Astrodome	1968-1996	113-103-2	.523
Liberty Bowl	1997	6-2-0	.750
Dudley Field (Vanderbilt Stadium)	1998	3-5-0	.375
Nissan Stadium	1999-2024	116-93-0	.555

NISSAN STADIUM RECORD WHEN ...

The Titans at Nissan Stadium (1999-present):

	Games	Record	Pct.
Regular Season	209	116-93	.555
Postseason	6	2-4	.333
Combined	215	118-97	.549

Record When ...	Reg. Season	Playoffs
September	23-19	
October	28-22	
November	27-20	
December	34-30	
January	4-2	2-4
Thursday	5-4	
Friday	0-1	
Saturday	2-2	2-2
Sunday	101-83	0-2
Monday	7-3	
Tuesday	1-0	
Against own division	45-39	0-1
Against AFC	84-71	2-4
Against NFC	32-22	
Overtime games	9-8	1-0
In primetime	14-12	
Temperature 80+	8-8	
Temperature <40	10-12	1-2
Titans score 20 points	96-36	2-0
Titans score 30 points	39-6	1-0
Titans allow <20 points	74-16	1-2
Titans allow <10 points	17-0	
Titans net 300 yards	86-54	1-3
Opponents net <300 yards	55-16	1-2
Titans commit 0 turnovers	39-14	
Titans force 2 turnovers	73-28	



TITANS/OILERS ALL-TIME RECORD

	W	L	T
Regular Season:	479	515	6
Home	274	224	2
Road	205	291	4
As Titans (1999-present)	212	208	0
As Oilers (1960-1998)	267	307	6
Postseason:	17	23	0
Home	6	7	0
Road	11	15	0
Super Bowl (XXXIV)	0	1	0
As Titans (1999-present)	8	10	0
As Oilers (1960-1998)	9	13	0

All-time playoff appearances by the Oilers/Titans: 1960, 1961, 1962, 1967, 1969, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2008, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021

All-time division titles by the Oilers/Titans: 1960, 1961, 1962, 1967, 1991, 1993, 2000, 2002, 2008, 2020, 2021

GAMES & STARTS BY ROOKIE CLASS

The Titans ranked fifth in starts by rookies, sixth in games played by rookies and fifth in total snaps by rookies in 2024. Their rookie class consisted of seven draft picks—all of whom appeared in at least seven contests—and six undrafted players.

First-round pick **JC Latham** started all 17 games. His 1,032 offensive snaps ranked third among rookies behind quarterbacks **Caleb Williams** (Chicago Bears) and **Bo Nix** (Denver Broncos).

Meanwhile, fifth-round cornerback Jarvis Brownlee Jr. was fifth among 2024 rookies with 871 defensive snaps in 17 games. Second-round defensive tackle **T'Vondre Sweat** also appeared in every game, and his 667 defensive snaps led all rookie defensive linemen.

Most total starts by rookies in 2024:

Team	Starts
1. New York Giants	68
2. Los Angeles Rams	65
3. Washington Commanders	64
Las Vegas Raiders	64
5. Tennessee Titans	51
6. Los Angeles Chargers	49
7. Carolina Panthers	45
San Francisco 49ers	45
9. Cincinnati Bengals	44
10. Dallas Cowboys	43

Most total games played by rookies in 2024:

Team	Games
1. Los Angeles Rams	227
2. Cincinnati Bengals	174
3. Las Vegas Raiders	155
4. Washington Commanders	139
5. New Orleans Saints	136
6. Tennessee Titans	131
7. Tampa Bay Buccaneers	128
Buffalo Bills	128
9. New England Patriots	124
10. Arizona Cardinals	120

Most total snaps by rookies in 2024:

Team	Offensive Snaps	Defensive Snaps	Sp. Teams Snaps	Total Snaps
1. Los Angeles Rams	1,511	3,105	1,853	6,469
2. Las Vegas Raiders	2,813	1,238	1,613	5,664
3. New York Giants	2,275	2,201	598	5,074
4. Washington Commanders	2,454	1,627	911	4,992
5. Tennessee Titans	1,184	1,990	1,169	4,343
6. San Francisco 49ers	1,776	1,693	684	4,153
7. Tampa Bay Buccaneers	2,216	1,043	710	3,969
Cincinnati Bengals	1,272	1,313	1,384	3,969
9. Carolina Panthers	1,600	1,497	794	3,891
10. Arizona Cardinals	1,925	1,171	783	3,879

2024 DEFENSIVE RANKINGS

2024 NFL leaders in total defense (yards allowed per game):

Team	Opponent Yards Per Game
1. Philadelphia Eagles	278.4
2. Tennessee Titans	311.2
3. New York Jets	313.8
4. Miami Dolphins	314.4
5. Green Bay Packers	314.5
6. Houston Texans	315.0
7. Denver Broncos	317.1
8. San Francisco 49ers	317.4
9. Kansas City Chiefs	320.6
10. Baltimore Ravens	324.2

2024 NFL leaders in passing defense (passing yards allowed per game):

Team	Opponent Passing Yards Per Game
1. Philadelphia Eagles	174.2
2. Tennessee Titans	177.3
3. Washington Commanders	189.5
4. New York Jets	192.6
5. San Francisco 49ers	192.8
6. Houston Texans	201.0
7. Los Angeles Chargers	206.9
8. New York Giants	210.6
9. Miami Dolphins	210.7
10. New England Patriots	211.5

Fewest opponent first downs allowed per game in 2024:

Team	Opponent 1st Downs Per Game
1. Philadelphia Eagles	17.2
2. Cleveland Browns	17.8
3. Los Angeles Chargers	18.3
4. Houston Texans	18.4
5. Tennessee Titans	18.5
Miami Dolphins	18.5
7. San Francisco 49ers	18.9
8. Las Vegas Raiders	19.0
9. Pittsburgh Steelers	19.1
Minnesota Vikings	19.1



Fewest yards per play allowed by defenses in 2024:

Team	Opp. Yards	Opp. Plays	Opp. Yards Per Play
1. Philadelphia Eagles	4,732	999	4.7
2. Denver Broncos	5,391	1,093	4.9
3. New York Jets	5,334	1,068	5.0
4. Houston Texans	5,355	1,050	5.1
5. Green Bay Packers	5,347	1,036	5.2
Baltimore Ravens	5,511	1,062	5.2
San Francisco 49ers	5,396	1,029	5.2
Tennessee Titans	5,291	1,008	5.2
9. Miami Dolphins	5,345	1,012	5.3
Minnesota Vikings	5,702	1,078	5.3

TOP TITANS DEFENSES SINCE 1999

The Titans concluded the 2024 season ranked second in the NFL in total defense and second in passing defense. They allowed opponents an average of 311.2 total yards per game and 177.3 net passing yards per contest.

Prior to 2024, the last time the Titans finished in the top five in total defense was 2007, when they ranked fifth, and their most recent top-five finish in passing defense was 2000, when they led the league. The 2000 season was also the most recent occasion in which the Titans defense finished in the top five in both total defense and passing defense in the same year.

At 177.3 opponent passing yards allowed per game, the 2024 unit averaged its second-best figure in the franchise's "Titans era," which began in 1999. The 2024 average of 311.2 total yards allowed per game ranked sixth for the defense in the Titans era.

Top passing defenses in the franchise's "Titans era" (1999 to present):

Season	Opponent Net Pass Yards per Game
1. 2000	151.4
2. 2024	177.3
3. 2007	199.2
4. 2008	199.8
5. 2005	201.0
6. 2018	216.9
7. 2002	221.3
8. 2006	225.1
9. 2003	225.4
10. 2013	225.8

Top overall defenses in the franchise's "Titans era" (1999 to present):

Season	Opponent Yards per Game
1. 2000	238.3
2. 2007	291.6
3. 2008	293.6
4. 2003	306.3
5. 2002	310.3
6. 2024	311.2
7. 2005	319.4
8. 1999	327.8
9. 2017	328.0
10. 2021	329.8

LIMITING BIG PLAYS

In 2024, the Titans defense was one of the best in the NFL in limiting opponents' big plays. The Titans allowed their foes a combined 176 plays of 10-plus yards, which included 54 rushes of 10-plus yards and 122 passes of 10 or more yards. Only the Philadelphia Eagles (173) allowed fewer total plays of 10-plus yards.

The Titans' 122 completions of 10-plus yards allowed was the best number in the NFL, while their 54 rushes of 10-plus yards allowed tied for 16th.

The Titans' 176 total plays allowed of 10-plus yards provided the Titans defense its best finish since allowing 166 such plays in 2008.

Fewest opponent plays of 10-plus yards allowed in 2024:

Team	Opponent Plays of 10+ Yards		
	Completions	Rushes	Total
1. Philadelphia Eagles	128	45	173
2. Tennessee Titans	122	54	176
3. San Francisco 49ers	133	45	178
4. Houston Texans	134	56	190
5. Kansas City Chiefs	154	42	196
6. New York Jets	142	55	197
7. Baltimore Ravens	178	25	203
Pittsburgh Steelers	160	43	203
Seattle Seahawks	155	48	203
10. Los Angeles Chargers	149	55	204

INTERCEPTIONS IN SECOND HALF OF 2024

The Titans defense ranked among the league leaders in interceptions during the second half of the 2024 season. From Week 9 through the end of the campaign, the unit totaled 10 interceptions to tie for the fourth-largest total. Only the Indianapolis Colts (12), Minnesota Vikings (12) and Houston Texans (11) had more interceptions during that span.

Most interceptions from Week 9 to Week 18 in 2024:

Team	Interceptions
1. Indianapolis Colts	12
Minnesota Vikings	12
3. Houston Texans	11
4. Tennessee Titans	10
Philadelphia Eagles	10
6. Dallas Cowboys	9
Los Angeles Chargers	9
Cincinnati Bengals	9
9. (five tied)	8





TITANS QUARTERBACKS

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
10	Allen, Brandon	6-2	209	9	Arkansas
8	Levis, Will (IR)	6-4	229	3	Kentucky
15	Siemian, Trevor	6-3	220	9	Northwestern
1	Ward, Cameron	6-2	219	R	Miami (Fla.)

#1 • QB CAMERON WARD

6-2, 219, Rookie, Miami (Fla.)

[Click for complete bio](#)

Quarterback **Cameron Ward** was selected by the Titans with the first overall pick in the 2025 NFL Draft. He became the first No. 1 overall pick for the franchise since running back **Earl Campbell** in 1978.

In five college seasons, Ward played for three different schools: Incarnate Word (2020-21), Washington State (2022-23) and Miami (2024). In 57 career games—all starts—he completed 1,516 of 2,330 passes for 18,184 yards, and his 158 touchdown passes set an NCAA Division I (FBS/FCS) record. He also totaled 399 rushes for 473 yards and 20 touchdowns.

During his graduate campaign at Miami, he started all 13 games and led the Hurricanes to a 10-3 record, giving them their first 10-win season since 2017. He earned first-team Associated Press All-America honors and was a Heisman finalist after establishing Miami's single-season records for passing yards (4,313), touchdowns (39) and completion percentage (67.2 percent, 305-for-454), while throwing only seven interceptions. He received the 2024 Davey O'Brien Award, recognizing the nation's top quarterback, and was named ACC Player of the Year, ACC Offensive Player of the Year and first-team All-ACC.

At Washington State in 2023, Ward started all 12 games and completed 324 of 486 passes for 3,732 yards and 25 touchdowns with seven interceptions. He also accounted for eight rushing touchdowns. At the conclusion of the season, he received All-Pac-12 Conference honorable mention for the second consecutive season.

Ward arrived at Washington State as a junior in 2022. He started all 13 games in his first season with the Cougars and completed 320 of 497 passes for 3,231 yards and 23 touchdowns with nine interceptions. He added five rushing touchdowns.



In 2021, Ward was a sophomore at Incarnate Word, where he was named Southland Conference Offensive Player of the Year, FCS All-American second team and a Walter Payton Award Finalist after leading UIW to Southland Conference Championship, a 10-3 record and into the second round of the FCS playoffs. His statistics included 384 completions on 590 attempts for 4,648 yards, 47 touchdowns and 10 interceptions. He set program records for single game passing yards (610), single-game passing touchdowns (seven), career passing touchdowns (71) and career passing yards (6,908).

As a freshman in 2020, Ward started in all six games at Incarnate Word during the spring season (2021) that resulted from the COVID-19 outbreak. He completed 183 of 303 passes for 2,260 yards and 24 touchdowns and was named the Jerry Rice Award winner, given to the top FCS freshman.

Ward is a native of West Columbia, Texas.

Cameron Ward's 2025 NFL Preseason Statistics:

Year	Passing															Rushing				
	G	S	Att	Cmp	Pct	Yds	Yd/Att	TD	TD%	Int	Int%	Lg	Sack	Lost	Rate	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2025	1	1	8	5	62.5	67	8.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	27	0	0	89.1	0	0	-	-	0
Totals	1	1	8	5	62.5	67	8.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	27	0	0	89.1	0	0	-	-	0

Cameron Ward's College Statistics:

Year	Team	Passing										Rushing				
		G	S	Att	Cmp	Pct	Yds	Yd/Att	TD	INT	Lg	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2020	Incarnate Word	6	6	303	183	60.4	2,260	7.46	24	4	59	38	2	0.1	21	2
2021	Incarnate Word	13	13	590	384	65.1	4,648	7.88	47	10	80t	74	65	0.9	45	1
2022	Washington St.	13	13	329	497	64.4	3,231	6.50	23	9	60	107	58	0.5	17t	5
2023	Washington St.	12	12	324	486	66.7	3,732	7.68	25	7	63t	120	144	1.2	23	8
2024	Miami (Fla.)	13	13	305	454	67.2	4,313	9.50	39	7	77	60	204	3.4	24t	4
Totals		57	57	1,516	2,330	65.1	18,184	7.80	158	37	80t	399	473	1.2	45	20



#8 • QB WILL LEVIS

6-4, 229, 3rd Year/3rd with Titans, Kentucky

[Click for complete bio](#)

Quarterback **Will Levis** is in his third season in 2025. He was selected by the Titans in the second round (33rd overall) of the 2023 NFL Draft after the Titans traded up to select him.

Levis will spend the 2025 campaign on injured reserve due to a shoulder injury.

During his first two NFL seasons, Levis totaled 21 starts. In franchise history, only **Warren Moon** (30), **Vince Young** (28) and **Marcus Mariota** (27) started more games at quarterback than Levis within their first two NFL seasons. Levis' career numbers through his first two campaigns included 339 completions, 556 attempts, 3,899 yards, 21 touchdowns and 16 interceptions.

In 2024, Levis finished with a team-high 301 pass attempts, 190 completions, 2,091 yards, 13 touchdowns and 81.4 passer rating. His 63.1 completion percentage qualified for the 10th-best mark in franchise history. He added 183 rushing yards on 45 attempts.

In his debut season, Levis recorded starts in all nine games in which he appeared, becoming the third rookie quarterback in franchise history to start at least nine games. Only Young (13 starts in 2006) and Mariota (12 starts in 2015) preceded him in the accomplishment. Levis' rookie passing totals included 255 attempts, 149 completions, 1,808 yards, eight touchdowns and four interceptions. His 84.2 passer rating was the second best in franchise history by a rookie quarterback (91.5 by Mariota in 2015), and the number also ranked first in NFL history among second-round quarterbacks in their rookie season (minimum 200 attempts). Levis had an additional 57 yards and a touchdown rushing.

Prior to entering the NFL, Levis spent two seasons at the University of Kentucky after transferring from Penn State. In four combined college seasons, he appeared in 39 games with 26 starts. He completed 479 of his 738 passes (64.9 percent) for 5,876 yards with 46 touchdowns and 25 interceptions. He also rushed for 742 yards and 17 touchdowns.

At Kentucky, Levis went 17-7 as a starter, tying Terry Wilson for the second-most quarterback wins since 1993. The two-time team captain completed 418 of 636 passes for 5,233 yards with 43 passing touchdowns and 11 rushing scores for the Wildcats. His six 300-yard passing games were the fourth-most in school history.

As a senior in 2022, he started 11 games at quarterback and connected on 185 of 283 passes for 2,406 yards with 19 passing scores, while ranking fourth in the SEC in pass efficiency (151.9). He finished fifth in the SEC with 19 passing scores.

As a junior in 2021, he transferred from Penn State to Kentucky and started in all 13 games, helping to lead UK to 10 wins for the fourth time in school history. He totaled 3,203 yards total offense, becoming the seventh player in school history to reach 3,000 yards of total offense in a season. He was 233-of-353 passing for 2,826 yards and 24 touchdowns, and he also registered 107 rushes for 376 yards and a team-high tying nine rushing touchdowns.

He is a native of Madison, Conn.



TITANS RUNNING BACKS

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
36	Chestnut, Julius	5-11	228	4	Sacred Heart
32	Jefferson, Jermar	5-10	215	2	Oregon State
24	Mims, Jordan	6-0	205	2	Fresno State
28	Mullings, Kalel	6-2	226	R	Michigan
20	Pollard, Tony	6-0	209	7	Memphis
2	Spears, Tyjae	5-11	195	3	Tulane

#20 • RB TONY POLLARD

6-0, 209, 7th Year/2nd with Titans, Memphis

[Click for complete bio](#)

Running back **Tony Pollard** is in his seventh NFL season and his second campaign with the Titans in 2025. The Memphis native was signed as an unrestricted free agent on March 14, 2024.

During his first year with the Titans, Pollard ranked third in the AFC and tied for 12th in the NFL with a career-best 1,079 rushing yards on a career-high 260 carries. Both numbers led the team, as did his five rushing touchdowns. With an additional 238 yards on 41 receptions, he produced a team-high 1,317 scrimmage yards—the second-best total of his career.

Prior to joining the Titans, Pollard spent five seasons (2019-23) with the Dallas Cowboys, who selected him in the fourth round (128th overall) of the 2019 NFL Draft. During his time in Dallas, he appeared in 79 games with 23 starts, totaling 3,621 rushing yards and 23 touchdowns on 762 carries. With an additional 176 receptions for 1,319 yards and five receiving touchdowns, he reached 1,000 scrimmage yards in each of his final three years in Dallas while also returning 63 kickoffs for 1,500 yards, including one return for a score.

In 2023, his first season as the lead running back in Dallas, Pollard started all 17 games for the first time in his career and led the team with 1,005 rushing yards on a career-high 252 carries (4.0 avg.) with six touchdowns.

In 2022, he set career marks with 193 carries for 1,007 yards and nine scores, averaging 5.2 yards-per-carry to rank third in the NFL and earn his first Pro Bowl nod.

At the University of Memphis, he played in 40 games at running back and wide receiver, amassing 2,233 yards and 18 touchdowns on offense. He also averaged 30.1 yards per kickoff return and tied an NCAA record with seven kickoff returns for touchdowns.

Pollard's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	GP	GS	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2025	1	1	4	9	2.3	5	1	0	0	-	-	0

Pollard's Career Regular Season Statistics (Dallas 2019-23):

Year	GP	GS	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2019	15	0	86	455	5.3	44t	2	15	107	7.1	21t	1
2020	16	2	101	435	4.3	42t	4	28	193	6.9	30	1
2021	15	0	130	719	5.5	58t	2	39	337	8.6	32	0
2022	16	4	193	1,007	5.2	57t	9	39	371	9.5	68t	3
2023	17	17	252	1,005	4.0	31	6	55	311	5.7	60	0
2024	16	16	260	1,079	4.2	41	5	41	238	5.8	30	0
2025	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0
Totals	95	39	1,022	4,700	4.6	58t	28	217	1,557	7.2	68t	5

Pollard's Career Postseason Statistics (Dallas 2019-23):

Year	GP	GS	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2021	1	0	4	14	3.5	8	0	2	12	6.0	10	0
2022	2	0	21	99	4.7	18	0	5	23	4.6	8	0
2023	1	1	15	56	3.7	11	1	7	29	4.1	9	0
Totals	4	1	40	169	4.2	18	1	14	64	4.6	10	0



Pollard's Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

Rushes - 28 vs. New England (11/3/24)
Rushing Yards - 131 (Twice, last vs. Chicago 10/30/22)
Long Rush - 58t at New Orleans (12/2/21)
Touchdowns - 3 vs. Chicago (10/30/22)
Receptions - 7 (Twice, last vs. Philadelphia 12/10/23)
Receiving Yards - 109 at Minnesota (11/20/22)
Long Reception - 68t at Minnesota (11/20/22)
Receiving Touchdowns - 2 at Minnesota (11/20/22)

Pollard's Postseason Single-Game Highs:

Rushes - 15 (Twice, last vs. Green Bay 1/14/24)
Rushing Yards - 77 at Tampa Bay (1/16/24)
Long Rush - 18 at Tampa Bay (1/16/23)
Touchdowns - 1 vs. Green Bay (1/14/24)
Receptions - 7 vs. Green Bay (1/14/24)
Receiving Yards - 29 vs. Green Bay (1/14/24)
Long Reception - 10 vs. San Francisco (1/16/22)

2024 NFL RUSHING LEADERS

During his first season in Tennessee, **Tony Pollard** tied for 12th in the NFL in rushing and had the third-best rushing yardage total in the AFC. Within the conference, only **Derrick Henry** (1,921) and **Jonathan Taylor** (1,431) had more rushing yards than Pollard.

NFL rushing leaders in 2024:

Player	Team	Rushing Yards
1. Saquon Barkley	Philadelphia Eagles	2,005
2. Derrick Henry	Baltimore Ravens	1,921
3. Bijan Robinson	Atlanta Falcons	1,456
4. Jonathan Taylor	Indianapolis Colts	1,431
5. Jahmyr Gibbs	Detroit Lions	1,412
6. Josh Jacobs	Green Bay Packers	1,329
7. Kyren Williams	Los Angeles Rams	1,299
8. Chuba Hubbard	Carolina Panthers	1,195
9. Aaron Jones	Minnesota Vikings	1,138
10. Bucky Irving	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	1,122
11. James Conner	Arizona Cardinals	1,094
12. Tony Pollard	Tennessee Titans	1,079
Rico Dowdle	Dallas Cowboys	1,079

1,000 YARDS IN YEAR 1 WITH THE TITANS

In his first season with the Titans, running back **Tony Pollard** notched his third consecutive 1,000-yard rushing campaign while also setting a career high with 1,079 rushing yards. In his final two seasons with the Dallas Cowboys, the Memphis native rushed for a then-career-best 1,007 yards in 2022 and 1,005 yards in 2023.

Pollard became the fifth player in Titans/Oilers history with 1,000 rushing yards in his first season with the organization. The first four were **Earl Campbell** (1978), **Eddie George** (1996), **Chris Johnson** (2008) and **DeMarco Murray** (2016).

Players in franchise history with 1,000 rushing yards in their first season with the organization:

Player	Season	Rushing Yards
1. Earl Campbell	1978	1,450
2. Eddie George	1996	1,368
3. DeMarco Murray	2016	1,287
4. Chris Johnson	2008	1,228
5. Tony Pollard	2024	1,079

CONSISTENCY FROM 2022-2024

In addition to his 1,079 rushing yards in 2024, Tony Pollard accounted for 238 receiving yards out of the backfield. With 1,317 total scrimmage yards, Pollard registered his third consecutive season in which he accounted for at least 1,200 scrimmage yards and at least five scrimmage touchdowns. He did so in each of his final two seasons with the Dallas Cowboys prior to signing with the Titans as an unrestricted free agent.

Pollard was one of only five NFL running backs with 1,200 scrimmage yards and five scrimmage touchdowns in each of the 2022, 2023 and 2024 campaigns. The others on the list were Baltimore's **Derrick Henry**, Houston's **Joe Mixon**, Philadelphia's **Saquon Barkley** and Pittsburgh's **Najee Harris**.

Running backs with 1,200 scrimmage yards and five scrimmage TDs in 2022, 2023 and 2024:

Player	'22 Scrimmage		'23 Scrimmage		'24 Scrimmage	
	Yards	TDs	Yards	TDs	Yards	TDs
Saquon Barkley	1,650	10	1,242	10	2,283	15
Najee Harris	1,263	10	1,205	8	1,326	6
Derrick Henry	1,936	13	1,381	12	2,114	18
Joe Mixon	1,255	9	1,410	12	1,325	12
Tony Pollard	1,378	12	1,316	6	1,317	5

SCRIMMAGE YARDS OVER FOUR SEASONS

Tony Pollard signed with the Titans as an unrestricted free agent in 2024 after beginning his career with the Dallas Cowboys. From 2021 through 2024, he ranked ninth in scrimmage yards among all NFL running backs.

Most scrimmage yards among running backs, 2021-24:

Player	Rushing Yards	Receiving Yards	Scrimmage Yards
1. Derrick Henry	5,563	959	6,522
2. Josh Jacobs	4,659	1,386	6,045
3. Saquon Barkley	4,872	1,159	6,031
4. Jonathan Taylor	4,844	792	5,636
5. Joe Mixon	4,069	1,440	5,509
6. Najee Harris	4,312	1,149	5,461
7. Alvin Kamara	3,439	1,938	5,377
8. Aaron Jones	3,714	1,427	5,141
9. Tony Pollard	3,810	1,257	5,067
10. Christian McCaffrey	3,242	1,794	5,036

Within the same time period, Pollard averaged 5.02 yards per scrimmage touch (rushing attempts and receptions). Among running backs with at least 800 touches, Pollard owned the sixth-best figure.

Highest average scrimmage yards per touch among running backs, 2021-24 (minimum 800 total scrimmage touches):

Player	Scrimmage Touches	Scrimmage Yards	Yards Per Touch
1. Christian McCaffrey	869	5,036	5.80
2. Austin Ekeler	929	4,992	5.37
3. Aaron Jones	973	5,141	5.28
4. Derrick Henry	1,271	6,522	5.13
5. Jonathan Taylor	1,101	5,636	5.12
6. Tony Pollard	1,009	5,067	5.02
7. D'Andre Swift	923	4,608	4.99
James Conner	986	4,922	4.99
9. Saquon Barkley	1,221	6,031	4.94
10. Alvin Kamara	1,118	5,377	4.81



#2 • RB TYJAE SPEARS

5-11, 195, 3rd Year/3rd with Titans, Tulane

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Running back **Tyjae Spears** is in his third NFL season. He was selected by the Titans in the third round (81st overall) of the 2023 NFL Draft.

In 2024, Spears appeared in 12 games with one start. His totals included 312 yards and four touchdowns on 84 rushing attempts, and he added 30 receptions for 224 yards and a touchdown.

As a rookie, Spears did not miss a game and registered one start. He carried the ball 100 times for 453 yards and two touchdowns, and he added 52 receptions for 385 yards and one score. His 838 scrimmage yards ranked seventh in franchise history among rookie running backs, and the total also placed fourth among rookie running backs in 2023 behind Atlanta's **Bijan Robinson**, Detroit's **Jahmyr Gibbs** and Miami's **De'Von Achane**. Spears became the franchise's first rookie running back with at least 50 receptions since **Sid Blanks** in 1964 (56).

Spears spent four years at Tulane (2019-22) prior to entering the NFL. He appeared in 33 games with 20 starts at running back for the Green Wave, totaling 2,910 yards and 31 touchdowns on 427 carries with an additional 48 receptions for 564 yards and three scores. He ended his career as the school's all-time leader in yards per carry (6.8), tied for second in 100-yard rushing games (15), tied for third in rushing touchdowns (31), fourth in rushing yards per game (85.6) and sixth in rushing yards (2,910) and total touchdowns (34). His 6.8 yards per carry from 2019 to 2022 ranked second in the FBS behind only Alabama-Birmingham running back **DeWayne McBride's** 7.3-yard average (minimum 400 attempts).

As a junior in 2022, he started all 14 games for the Green Wave, totaling 1,581 yards and 19 touchdowns on 229 rushing attempts and adding 22 receptions for 256 yards and two touchdowns. He tied for the national lead with 21 total touchdowns and tied for third in the country with 19 rushing touchdowns, a total that ranked second in Tulane single-season history. His 1,581 rushing yards led the conference and made up the Green Wave's all-time second-highest single-season total. His nine 100-yard rushing games included eight consecutive such efforts to finish the season. He was named the American Athletic Conference Offensive Player of the Year and also earned first-team All-AAC honors. His efforts helped Tulane earn a 12-2 record and win an American Athletic Conference title.

He is a native of Ponchatoula, La.

Spears' 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	GP	GS	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2025	1	0	3	-1	-0.3	3	0	1	13	13.0	13	0

Spears' Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	GP	GS	Att	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2023	17	1	100	453	4.5	23	2	52	385	7.4	48	1
2024	12	1	84	312	3.7	23	4	30	224	7.5	43	1
2025	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0
Totals	29	2	184	765	4.2	23	6	82	609	7.4	48	2

Spears' Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

Rushing Attempts - 20 at Jacksonville (12/29/24)

Rushing Yards - 95 at Jacksonville (12/29/24)

Long Rush - 23 (Twice, last at Jacksonville, 12/29/24)

Rushing Touchdowns - 2 at Indianapolis (12/22/24)

Receptions - 6 (Twice, last against Cincinnati, 12/15/24)

Receiving Yards - 89 at Miami (12/11/23)

Long Reception - 48 vs. Baltimore (10/15/23)

Receiving Touchdowns - 1 (Twice, last vs. Cincinnati, 12/15/24)

SCRIMMAGE YARDS, 2023 DRAFT CLASS

In his first two NFL seasons, Titans running back **Tyjae Spears** totaled 1,374 scrimmage yards, including 765 rushing yards and 600 receiving yards. Through 2024, Spears' career scrimmage yards total ranked sixth among the 19 running backs selected in the 2023 NFL Draft.

Most career scrimmage yards through 2024 by running backs drafted in 2023:

Player	Team	Round (Overall)	Rush Yards	Rec Yards	Scrim Yards
1. Bijan Robinson	Atlanta	1 (8)	2,432	918	3,350
2. Jahmyr Gibbs	Detroit	1 (12)	2,357	833	3,190
3. De'Von Achane	Miami	3 (84)	1,707	789	2,496
4. Chase Brown	Cincinnati	5 (163)	1,169	516	1,685
5. Zach Charbonnet	Seattle	2 (52)	1,031	549	1,580
6. Tyjae Spears	Tennessee	3 (81)	765	609	1,374
7. Tank Bigsby	Jacksonville	3 (88)	898	60	958
8. Roschon Johnson	Chicago	4 (115)	502	313	815
9. Kendre Miller	New Orleans	3 (71)	304	150	454
10. Chris Rodriguez Jr.	Washington	6 (193)	420	24	444

3RD-DOWN CONVERSIONS AMONG ALL RBs

On third down in 2023, **Tyjae Spears** not only led all NFL rookie running backs in conversions, but he also led all other running backs in the category as well. His 20 third-down conversions, which included 11 receptions and nine rushing attempts, ranked first among players at his position.

Most third-down conversions by all running backs in 2023:

Player	Team	Third-Down Conversions ...		
		Receiving	Rushing	Total
1. Tyjae Spears	Tennessee	11	9	20
2. Rachaad White	Tampa Bay	9	10	19
3. Latavius Murray	Buffalo	6	12	18
Bijan Robinson	Atlanta	11	7	18
5. David Montgomery	Detroit	2	15	17
Tony Pollard	Dallas	4	13	17
Christian McCaffrey	San Francisco	5	12	17
Kyren Williams	LA Rams	1	16	17
9. Saquon Barkley	NY Giants	8	8	16
Chuba Hubbard	Carolina	2	14	16





TITANS TIGHT ENDS

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
86	Dabney, Drake	6-5	246	R	Texas Christian
84	Helm, Gunnar	6-5	241	R	Texas
88	Martin-Robinson, David	6-3	247	2	Temple
89	Odukoya, Thomas	6-6	253	2	Eastern Michigan
85	Okonkwo, Chig	6-3	238	4	Maryland
81	Whyte, Josh	6-7	248	3	Cincinnati

#85 • TE CHIG OKONKWO

6-3, 238, 4th Year/4th with Titans, Maryland

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Tight end **Chig Okonkwo** (pronounced “CHIGG oh-KAHN-kwoh”) is in his fourth NFL season in 2025. He was selected by the Titans in the fourth round (143rd overall) of the 2022 NFL Draft.

Through his first three seasons, Okonkwo led the team's tight ends with 138 receptions for 1,457 yards and six touchdowns. During that time, he did not miss a game, appearing in 51 contests with 30 starts. His career yardage total through 2024 ranked second among all tight ends drafted in 2022, trailing only **Trey McBride** (2,236).

Okonkwo became the fifth tight end in franchise history to register three or more seasons with a minimum of 30 receptions and 450 receiving yards per season. He joined **Frank Wycheck** (1995–2001), **Delanie Walker** (2013–2017), **Dave Casper** (1980–1982) and **Alvin Reed** (1968–1970).

In 2024, Okonkwo tied his career high with 11 starts, matching his 2023 total. He ranked second on the team and led the Titans tight ends with 52 receptions. His 479 receiving yards ranked third on the team and led the team's tight ends, and he had two touchdown receptions.

Okonkwo started 11 games in 2023 and finished the season with 54 receptions for 528 yards and one touchdown. He ranked second on the team in receptions and receiving yards.

During his rookie season, Okonkwo appeared in all 17 games with eight starts and totaled 32 receptions for 450 yards (14.1 avg.) and three touchdowns. His yardage total ranked second on the team. He also tied for fifth on the team with seven special teams tackles. He was named to the Pro Football Writers of America All-Rookie team.

Okonkwo's 450 receiving yards in 2022 established a new record for franchise rookie tight ends, surpassing **Ben Troupe's** 329 yards in 2004. Okonkwo tied **Chris Dressel** (32 receptions in 1983) for the third-best reception total among all Titans/Oilers rookie tight ends, trailing only **Bo Scaife** (37 in 2005) and Troupe (33 in 2004), and he became the second rookie tight end in franchise history with at least three touchdown catches, joining Dressel (four in 1983).

The Powder Springs, Ga., native appeared in 37 games with 20 starts over four seasons (2018-21) at Maryland and caught 77 passes for 717 yards and eight touchdowns. He added three carries for 72 yards and three touchdowns, including a career-long rush of 54 yards.

As a senior in 2021, he started all 13 games and posted career-high marks with 52 catches for 447 yards and a team-leading five touchdowns. His 52 receptions ranked second in Terrapins history for a single season by a tight end, behind only Wycheck (58 in 1990). Okonkwo's 447 receiving yards were the most by a Terps tight end in a season since **Vernon Davis** (871 in 2005).

He sat out the 2020 season with myocarditis due to COVID-19. Prior to then, he saw action in 12 games (four starts) as a freshman and 12 games (three starts) as a sophomore.

Okonkwo's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2025	Ten	1	1	1	10	10.0	10	0

Okonkwo's Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2022	Ten	17	8	32	450	14.1	48	3
2023	Ten	17	11	54	528	9.8	39	1
2024	Ten	17	11	52	479	9.2	70t	2
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
Totals		51	30	138	1,457	10.6	70t	6

Okonkwo's Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

Receptions - 9 at Indianapolis (12/22/24)

Receiving Yards - 81 at Indianapolis (12/22/24)

Long Reception - 70t at Houston (11/24/24)

Receiving Touchdowns - 1 (Six times, last at Houston, 11/24/24)

FRANCHISE TEs THROUGH 50 GAMES

On Dec. 29, 2024 at Jacksonville, Titans tight end **Chig Okonkwo** played in his 50th career game for the team without having missed a game in his first three seasons. Within his first 50 games, Okonkwo accumulated 138 receptions for 1,457 yards and six touchdowns.

In franchise history, he ranked fourth for receptions in a tight end's first 50 games with the club. Only **Delanie Walker** (234 receptions), **Frank Wycheck** (166) and **Willard Dewveall** (141) had more than Okonkwo, and each of those previous players joined the club as veterans from other organizations.

Okonkwo's receiving yardage total was the sixth-best figure among franchise tight ends within their first 50 games with the team.

Most receptions by a Titans/Oilers tight end in his first 50 games with the franchise:

Player	Seasons	Receptions
1. Delanie Walker*	2013–2016	234
2. Frank Wycheck*	1995–1998	166
3. Willard Dewveall*	1961–1964	141 (49 Games)
4. Chig Okonkwo	2022–2024	138
5. Alvin Reed	1967–1970	133

Most receiving yards by a Titans/Oilers tight end in his first 50 games with the franchise:

Player	Seasons	Receiving Yards
1. Delanie Walker*	2013–2016	2,795
2. Willard Dewveall*	1961–1964	2,080 (49 Games)
3. Alvin Reed	1967–1970	1,954
4. Frank Wycheck*	1995–1998	1,819
5. Dave Casper*	1980–1983	1,750 (38 Games)
6. Chig Okonkwo	2022–2024	1,457

* Joined the Titans/Oilers as NFL veterans after spending time with another organization(s).



THE 2022 TIGHT END DRAFT CLASS

Chig Okonkwo was selected by the Titans in the fourth round of the 2022 NFL Draft with the 143rd overall pick. He was the 10th tight end selected in the draft. Among the 19 tight ends in his class, the former Maryland Terrapin ranked second from 2022 to 2024 with 1,457 career receiving yards, trailing only Arizona's **Trey McBride** (2,236). Okonkwo's 138 receptions ranked fourth in the group, and his 66 receptions for first downs tied for third.

Most receiving yards by a member of the 2022 tight end draft class through the 2024 season:

Player	Team	Round (Overall)	Rec	Yards	Avg	TD	1st Downs
1. Trey McBride	Arizona	2 (55)	221	2,236	10.1	6	117
2. Chig Okonkwo	Tennessee	4 (143)	138	1,457	10.6	6	66
3. Cade Otton	Tampa Bay	4 (106)	148	1,446	9.8	10	72
4. Jake Ferguson	Dallas	4 (129)	149	1,429	9.6	7	66
5. Isaiah Likely	Baltimore	4 (139)	108	1,261	11.7	14	59
6. Daniel Bellinger	New York	4 (112)	69	648	9.4	2	28
7. Greg Dulcich	New York	3 (80)	41	464	11.3	2	20
8. Grant Calcaterra	Philadelphia	6 (198)	33	418	12.7	1	21
9. Connor Heyward	Pittsburgh	6 (208)	41	358	8.7	2	17
10. Jelani Woods	Indianapolis	3 (73)	25	312	12.5	3	16

FRANCHISE ROOKIE TIGHT ENDS

In 2022, **Chig Okonkwo** had one of the most productive seasons in franchise history by a rookie tight end. His 450 receiving yards established a new record for Titans/Oilers rookies at his position, while his 32 receptions tied for the third-best total among the organization's rookies at his position. The fourth-round pick from the University of Maryland also became the second Titans/Oilers rookie tight end with three or more touchdown receptions, joining **Chris Dressel**, who had four touchdown catches after entering the NFL in 1983.

Most receiving yards by a rookie tight end in franchise history:

Player	Rookie Year	Receiving Yards
1. Chig Okonkwo	2022	450
2. Ben Troupe	2004	329
3. Chris Dressel	1983	316
4. Bo Scaife	2005	273
5. Willie Frazier	1964	227

Most receptions by a rookie tight end in franchise history:

Player	Rookie Year	Receptions
1. Bo Scaife	2005	37
2. Ben Troupe	2004	33
3. Chig Okonkwo	2022	32
Chris Dressel	1983	32
5. Erron Kinney	2000	19

Most touchdown receptions by a rookie tight end in franchise history:

Player	Rookie Year	TD Receptions
1. Chris Dressel	1983	4
2. Chig Okonkwo	2022	3
3. Jonnu Smith	2017	2
Bo Scaife	2005	2
Willie Frazier	1964	2



TITANS WIDE RECEIVERS

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
5	Ayomanor, Elic	6-2	206	R	Stanford
16	Burks, Treyton (IR)	6-2	225	4	Arkansas
17	Dike, Chimere	6-1	196	R	Florida
19	Jackson, Jha'Quan	5-9	188	2	Tulane
11	Jefferson, Van	6-1	200	6	Florida
12	Kinsey, Mason	5-11	200	3	Berry College
83	Landers, Matt	6-4	200	1	Arkansas
4	Lockett, Tyler	5-10	182	11	Kansas State
80	Oliver, Bryce	6-1	214	2	Youngstown State
13	Proche II, James	5-11	193	6	Southern Methodist
87	Restrepo, Xavier	5-10	202	R	Miami (Fla.)
0	Ridley, Calvin	6-1	190	7	Alabama
82	Sheffield, TJ	5-10	188	R	Connecticut

#11 • WR VAN JEFFERSON

6-1, 200, 6th Year/1st with Titans, Florida

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Wide receiver **Van Jefferson** is in his sixth NFL season and his first campaign with the Titans in 2025. He was signed as an unrestricted free agent on March 14, 2025.

Jefferson has previously played for the Los Angeles Rams (2020-23), Atlanta Falcons (2023) and Pittsburgh Steelers (2024). In 78 games prior to his arrival in Tennessee, he totaled 137 receptions for 1,876 yards and 12 touchdowns.

As a member of the Steelers in 2024, he appeared in 17 games for the second consecutive season. He registered 24 catches for 276 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

His breakout season came in 2021 for the Rams, recording 50 receptions for 802 yards and six touchdowns while starting all 17 contests. His receiving and yardage totals ranked third on the team that would go on to win Super Bowl LVI. During the team's championship run, Jefferson started all four postseason games, tallying nine catches for 102 yards.

Jefferson entered the NFL as a second-round selection (57th overall) by the Rams in the 2020 NFL Draft. As a college player, he spent two seasons at Ole Miss before playing his final two years at the University of Florida. Over his four years of college, he posted 175 receptions for 2,159 yards and 16 touchdowns in 48 total games.

He is the son of former Titans wide receivers coach **Shawn Jefferson** and attended Ravenwood High School in Brentwood, Tenn.



Jefferson's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2025	Ten	1	1	0	0	-	-	0

Jefferson's Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2020	LAR	16	0	19	220	11.6	31	1
2020	LAR	16	0	19	220	11.6	31	1
2021	LAR	17	17	50	802	16.0	79t	6
2022	LAR	11	9	24	369	15.4	39	3
2023	LAR/Atl	17	9	20	209	10.5	46	0
2024	Pit	17	12	24	276	11.5	43	2
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
Totals		78	47	137	1876	13.7	79t	12

Jefferson's Career Postseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2020	LAR	2	1	6	46	7.7	16	1
2021	LAR	4	4	9	102	11.3	41	0
2024	Pit	1	1	2	37	18.5	30t	1
NFL Totals		7	6	17	185	10.9	41	2

Jefferson's Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

Receptions - 6 (Twice, last vs. Jacksonville, 12/5/21)

Receiving Yards - 93 at Green Bay (11/28/21)

Long Reception - 79t at Green Bay (11/28/21)

Touchdowns - 1 (12 times, last vs. Cleveland, 12/8/24)

Jefferson's Postseason Single-Game Highs:

Receptions - 6 at Green Bay (1/16/21)

Receiving Yards - 46 at Green Bay (1/16/21)

Long Reception - 41 vs. Arizona (1/17/22)

Touchdowns - 1 (Twice, last at Baltimore, 1/11/25)

#4 • WR TYLER LOCKETT

5-10, 182, 11th Year/1st with Titans, Kansas State

[Click for complete bio](#)



Wide receiver **Tyler Lockett** is in his 11th NFL season and his first campaign with the Titans. He was signed by the Titans as a free agent on April 28, 2025.

Prior to his arrival in Tennessee, Lockett played in 161 games with 134 starts as a member of the Seattle Seahawks (2015-24), who selected him in the fifth round (69th overall) of the 2015 NFL Draft. During his tenure in Seattle, he posted 661 receptions for 8,594 yards and 61 touchdowns. He departed as the franchise's second all-time leader in receptions, yards and touchdowns, trailing only Pro Football Hall of Famer **Steve Largent**.

Lockett also became a decorated return specialist with the Seahawks. His return totals for Seattle included 145 punt returns for 1,078 yards and one touchdown and 127 kickoff returns for 3,188 yards and two scores. As a rookie in 2015, he was named to the Pro Bowl as a returner and added first-team Associated Press All-Pro recognition. He earned second-team AP All-Pro recognition in 2016 and 2017.

Lockett was a member of six playoff teams during his time in Seattle. His Seahawks postseason totals included 29 receptions for 510 yards and two touchdowns in seven games.

From 2019 to 2022, Lockett amassed at least 70 receptions and 1,000 yards in four consecutive seasons, matched during that stretch only by Chiefs tight end **Travis Kelce**. He achieved a career high with 100 receptions in 2020, followed by a career-high 1,175 receiving yards in 2021.

In 2024, Lockett played in 17 games for the second straight year, registering 49 catches for 600 yards and two scores in his final year in Seattle.

As a college player, the Tulsa, Okla., native was the first Kansas State player to earn an All-American honor in each of his four seasons with the team (2012-14). He set several school records including career receptions (249), receiving yards (3,710) and receiving touchdowns (29). He finished as Kansas State's all-time top kickoff returner in attempts (77) and yards (2,196).

Lockett's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2025	Ten	1	0	1	7	7.0	7	0

Lockett's Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2015	Sea	16	8	51	664	13.0	49t	6
2016	Sea	15	9	41	597	14.6	57t	1
2017	Sea	16	8	45	555	12.3	74t	2
2018	Sea	16	14	57	965	16.9	52t	10
2019	Sea	16	16	82	1,057	12.9	44t	8
2020	Sea	16	16	100	1,054	10.5	47t	10
2021	Sea	16	16	73	1,175	16.1	69t	8
2022	Sea	16	16	84	1,033	12.3	40t	9
2023	Sea	17	17	79	894	11.3	37	5
2024	Sea	17	14	49	600	12.2	37	2
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
Totals		161	134	661	8,594	13.0	74t	61

Lockett's Career Postseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2015	Sea	2	0	4	110	27.5	35	1
2018	Sea	1	1	4	120	30.0	53	0
2019	Sea	2	2	13	198	15.2	31	1
2020	Sea	1	1	2	43	21.5	24	0
2022	Sea	1	1	6	39	6.5	10	0
Totals		7	5	29	510	17.6	53	2

Lockett's Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

Receptions - 15 at Arizona (10/25/20)

Receiving Yards - 200 at Arizona (10/25/20)

Long Reception - 74t at Jacksonville (12/10/17)

Touchdowns - 3 (Twice, last at Arizona, 10/25/20)

Punt Returns - 5 (Three times, last at Washington, 11/5/17)

Punt Return Yards - 139 at Arizona (1/3/16)

Long Punt Return - 66 at Arizona (1/3/16)

Punt Return Touchdowns - 1 at St. Louis (9/13/15)

Kickoff Returns - 6 vs. L.A. Rams (12/17/17)

Kickoff Return Yards - 197 vs. Atlanta (11/20/17)

Long Kickoff Return - 105t vs. Chicago (9/27/15)

Kickoff Return Touchdowns - 1 (Twice, last vs. Arizona, 12/31/17)

Lockett's Postseason Single-Game Highs:

Receptions - 9 at Green Bay (1/12/20)

Receiving Yards - 136 at Green Bay (1/12/20)

Long Reception - 53 at Dallas (1/5/19)

Touchdowns - 1 (Twice, last at Green Bay, 1/12/20)

Punt Returns - 3 (Twice, last at Dallas, 1/5/19)

Punt Return Yards - 22 at Dallas (1/5/19)

Long Punt Return - 12 at Dallas (1/5/19)

Kickoff Returns - 3 (Twice, last at Philadelphia, 1/5/20)

Kickoff Return Yards - 92 at Carolina (1/17/16)

Long Kickoff Return - 52 at Dallas (1/5/19)



WIDE RECEIVER LEADERS, 2015-2024

Since **Tyler Lockett** entered the NFL as a fifth-round pick in the 2015 NFL Draft, his reception and receiving yardage totals are among the leaders in the NFL at his position.

Most NFL receptions among wide receivers, 2015 to 2024:

Player	Receptions
1. Davante Adams	919
2. Stefon Diggs	857
3. DeAndre Hopkins	856
4. Keenan Allen	826
5. Tyreek Hill	798
6. Mike Evans	768
7. Amari Cooper	711
8. Adam Thielen	677
9. Tyler Lockett	661
10. Brandin Cooks	657

Most NFL receiving yards among wide receivers, 2015 to 2024:

Player	Receiving Yards
1. Mike Evans	11,633
2. Davante Adams	11,398
3. Tyreek Hill	11,098
4. DeAndre Hopkins	10,953
5. Stefon Diggs	10,491
6. Amari Cooper	10,033
7. Keenan Allen	9,445
8. Julio Jones	9,373
9. Brandin Cooks	8,982
10. Tyler Lockett	8,594

SEATTLE RECORD BOOKS

During his 10 seasons in Seattle, wide receiver **Tyler Lockett** ascended to near the top of the Seahawks record books in several categories, including receptions, receiving yards, receiving touchdowns and combined yards.

Most combined total yards, Seahawks history:

Player	Rec Yards	Rush Yards	KR Yards	PR Yards	Total Yards
1. Steve Largent	13,089	83	156	68	13,396
2. Tyler Lockett	8,594	265	3,188	1,078	13,125
3. Shaun Alexander	1,511	9,429	0	0	10,940

Most receptions, Seahawks history:

Player	Receptions
1. Steve Largent	819
2. Tyler Lockett	661
3. Brian Blades	581

Most receiving yards, Seahawks history:

Player	Receiving Yards
1. Steve Largent	13,089
2. Tyler Lockett	8,594
3. Brian Blades	7,620

Most receiving touchdowns, Seahawks history:

Player	Receiving TDs
1. Steve Largent	100
2. Tyler Lockett	61
3. Doug Baldwin	49

Most 100-yard receiving games, Seahawks history:

Player	100-Yard Rec Games
1. Steve Largent	40
2. Darrell Jackson	19
3. Tyler Lockett	18

Note: Statistics and rankings through the 2024 season.

LOCKETT'S CAREER 100-YARD RECEIVING GAMES

Date	Opp	W/L	Rec.	Yds.	Avg.	Lg	TD
10/25/20	at Arizona	L	15	200	13.3	47t	3
09/19/21	Tennessee	L	8	178	22.3	63t	1
09/22/19	New Orleans	L	11	154	14.0	40	1
11/03/19	Tampa Bay	W	13	152	11.7	30	2
10/31/21	Jacksonville	W	12	142	11.8	28	0
12/12/21	at Houston	W	5	142	28.4	55t	1
12/15/16	L.A. Rams	W	7	130	18.6	57t	1
12/04/22	at L.A. Rams	W	9	128	14.2	36t	1
10/29/17	Houston	W	6	121	20.2	54	0
12/15/19	at Carolina	W	8	120	15.0	44	1
11/21/21	Arizona	L	4	115	28.8	48	0
11/25/18	at Carolina	W	5	107	21.4	43	1
09/18/22	at San Francisco	L	9	107	11.9	27	0
12/13/15	at Baltimore	W	6	104	17.3	49t	2
10/09/22	at New Orleans	L	5	104	20.8	40t	2
10/27/19	at Atlanta	W	6	100	16.7	20	0
09/27/20	Dallas	W	9	100	11.1	43t	3
09/12/21	at Indianapolis	W	4	100	25.0	69t	2



#0 • WR CALVIN RIDLEY

6-1, 190, 7th Year/2nd with Titans, Alabama

[Click for complete bio](#)

Wide receiver **Calvin Ridley** is in his seventh NFL season and his second season with the Titans in 2025. He was signed by the Titans as an unrestricted free agent on March 15, 2024.

During the 2024 campaign, Ridley led the Titans offense with 64 receptions and 1,017 receiving yards and caught four touchdown passes. His 15.9-yard receiving average in 2024 ranked fifth in the NFL among qualifiers. Only Ridley and Philadelphia's **A.J. Brown** (67 receptions for 1,079 yards, 16.1 avg.) accumulated at least 60 receptions and 1,000 receiving yards with an average of at least 15.0 yards per catch. Ridley also rushed for 55 yards and a touchdown.

Ridley's 2024 season was his third career 1,000-yard receiving season (2020 and 2023), and it was the franchise's 12th 1,000-yard receiving season during its "Titans era" (1999 to present). He became the ninth player in NFL history to have at least one 1,000-yard receiving season with three different teams, joining **Brandon Cooks** (four teams), **Brandon Marshall** (four), **Amari Cooper** (three), **DeAndre Hopkins** (three), **Irving Fryar** (three), **Randy Moss** (three), **Terrell Owens** (three) and **Tony Martin** (three). Ridley became the first player in NFL history to secure his first three 1,000-yard receiving seasons with three different teams.

Prior to joining the Titans, Ridley appeared in 66 NFL games with 52 starts. He was originally drafted by the Atlanta Falcons with the 26th overall pick of the 2018 NFL Draft and was traded to the Jacksonville Jaguars in 2022. His statistical totals with the Falcons and Jaguars included 324 receptions for 4,358 yards and 36 touchdowns.

In 2023, Ridley started a career-high 17 games for the Jaguars and led the team with 1,016 yards and eight receiving touchdowns on 76 catches.

From 2018 through 2020, no member of the 2018 draft class had more receptions or touchdown catches than Ridley, who totaled 217 grabs and 26 scores for the Falcons during that span. His 3,061 receiving yards ranked second in his draft class behind only **DJ Moore's** 3,156. Ridley's 90 receptions and 1,374 yards in 2020 were career highs.

As a rookie in 2018, Ridley played in all 16 games and accumulated 64 receptions. He led all rookie receivers in the NFL with 821 receiving yards and a team-high 10 receiving touchdowns, including an NFL-rookie record six receiving scores in the team's first four games. He was named to the All-Rookie team by the Professional Football Writers of America.

A native of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Ridley attended the University of Alabama, where he played in 44 games over three seasons (2015-17). He finished his career second in Crimson Tide history with 224 receptions and 19 receiving touchdowns. He also ranked third with 2,781 receiving yards, while totaling eight career 100-yard receiving games to tie for third in the Alabama record books.

Ridley's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2025	Ten	1	1	3	50	16.7	27	0

Ridley's Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
2018	Atl	16	5	64	821	12.8	75t	10
2019	Atl	13	10	63	866	13.7	36	7
2020	Atl	15	15	90	1,374	15.3	63	9
2021	Atl	5	5	31	281	9.1	22	2
2022	Atl/Jax	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
2023	Jax	17	17	76	1,016	13.4	59t	8
2024	Ten	17	14	64	1,017	15.9	63	4
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
Totals		83	66	388	5,375	13.9	75t	40

Ridley's Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

Receptions - 10 (Twice, last at Detroit, 10/27/24)**Receiving Yards** - 163 vs. Tampa Bay (12/20/20)**Long Reception** - 75t (Twice, last at Carolina, 12/23/18)**Touchdowns** - 3 at New Orleans (9/23/18)

RECEIVING AVERAGE IN 2024

During his first season in Tennessee, **Calvin Ridley** caught 64 passes for 1,017 yards, resulting in a career-best 15.9-yard receiving average. His average ranked fifth in the NFL among qualifiers.

Only Ridley and Philadelphia's **A.J. Brown** (67 receptions for 1,079 yards, 16.1 avg.) averaged at least 15.0 yards per catch while also tallying at least 60 receptions and 1,000 receiving yards.

Best receiving average in 2024*:

Player	Team	Receptions	Yards	Average
1. Alec Pierce	Indianapolis Colts	37	824	22.3
2. Jameson Williams	Detroit Lions	58	1,001	17.3
3. Rashod Bateman	Baltimore Ravens	45	756	16.8
4. A.J. Brown	Philadelphia Eagles	67	1,079	16.1
5. Calvin Ridley	Tennessee Titans	64	1,017	15.9
6. Jayden Reed	Green Bay Packers	55	857	15.6
7. Darnell Mooney	Atlanta Falcons	64	992	15.5
8. George Pickens	Pittsburgh Steelers	59	900	15.3
9. Calvin Austin III	Pittsburgh Steelers	36	548	15.2
10. DK Metcalf	Seattle Seahawks	66	992	15.0
Josh Palmer	Los Angeles Chargers	39	584	15.0

* Minimum two receptions per team game

1,000 IN FIRST SEASON WITH THE TITANS

In 2024, **Calvin Ridley's** first campaign in Tennessee, he paced the club with 64 receptions and 1,017 receiving yards. He reached the 1,000-yard receiving mark for the third time in his career.

Ridley became the sixth player in franchise history to accomplish the feat in his first season with the franchise. He joined **Bill Groman**, **Drew Hill**, **Ernest Givins**, **A.J. Brown** and **DeAndre Hopkins**.

Titans/Oilers players with 1,000 receiving yards in their first season with the franchise:

Player	Season	Receptions	Yards
1. Bill Groman*	1960	72	1,473
2. Drew Hill	1985	64	1,169
3. Ernest Givins*	1986	61	1,062
4. DeAndre Hopkins	2023	75	1,057
5. A.J. Brown*	2019	52	1,051
6. Calvin Ridley	2024	64	1,017

* Rookie

20-YARD RECEPTIONS IN 2024

Calvin Ridley's receiving totals in 2024 included 19 receptions that went at least 20 yards. He tied for the fifth-highest total in the NFL behind only **Justin Jefferson** (28), **Darnell Mooney** (21), **George Kittle** (21) and **DK Metcalf** (20).

Most receptions of at least 20 yards in 2024:

Player	Team	20-Yard Receptions
1. Justin Jefferson	Minnesota Vikings	28
2. Darnell Mooney	Atlanta Falcons	21
3. George Kittle	San Francisco 49ers	21
4. DK Metcalf	Seattle Seahawks	20
5. Calvin Ridley	Tennessee Titans	19
6. Ja'Marr Chase	Cincinnati Bengals	19
7. Zay Flowers	Baltimore Ravens	19
8. Brian Thomas Jr.	Jacksonville Jaguars	18
9. A.J. Brown	Philadelphia Eagles	17
Courtland Sutton	Denver Broncos	17
Amon-Ra St. Brown	Detroit Lions	17
George Pickens	Pittsburgh Steelers	17





1,000 REC YARDS WITH THREE TEAMS

Calvin Ridley has registered a 1,000-yard receiving season with three different NFL teams. He first hit the plateau as a member of the Atlanta Falcons in 2020 (1,374 yards), and in 2023, he hit 1,000 yards (1,016) while playing for the Jacksonville Jaguars. He posted 1,017 receiving yards for the Titans in 2024.

In NFL history, only eight players previously had a 1,000-yard receiving season with three different teams. **DeAndre Hopkins** was the most recent member to join the group after accomplishing the feat with the Titans in 2023.

Ridley became the first player in NFL history to secure his first three 1,000-yard receiving seasons with three different teams.

NFL players with 1,000-yard receiving seasons for three different teams, all-time:

Player	Number of	
	Teams	Teams
Brandin Cooks	4	Houston, LA Rams, New England, New Orleans
Brandon Marshall	4	Chicago, Denver, Miami, NY Jets
Amari Cooper	3	Cleveland, Dallas, Oakland
DeAndre Hopkins	3	Houston, Tennessee, Arizona
Irving Fryar	3	Miami, New England, Philadelphia
Randy Moss	3	Oakland, Minnesota, New England
Terrell Owens	3	Dallas, Philadelphia, San Francisco
Tony Martin	3	Atlanta, Miami, San Diego
Calvin Ridley	3	Atlanta, Jacksonville, Tennessee

RIDLEY'S CAREER 100-YARD RECEIVING GAMES

Date	Opp	W/L	Rec.	Yds.	Avg.	Lg	TD
12/20/20	Tampa Bay	L	10	163	16.3	33	1
9/23/18	New Orleans	L	7	146	20.9	75t	3
10/27/24	at Detroit	L	10	143	14.3	47	0
11/17/19	at Carolina	W	8	143	17.9	36	1
10/11/20	Carolina	L	8	136	17	26	0
9/13/20	Seattle	L	9	130	14.4	22	2
12/27/20	at Kansas City	L	5	130	26	54	0
12/13/20	at LA Chargers	L	8	124	15.5	39t	1
10/8/23	at Buffalo	W	7	122	17.4	32	0
9/27/20	Chicago	L	5	110	22	63	0
9/20/20	at Dallas	L	7	109	15.6	25	2
12/6/20	New Orleans	L	5	108	21.6	31	0
1/7/24	at Tennessee	L	6	106	17.7	59t	1
9/15/19	Philadelphia	W	8	105	13.1	34t	1
11/19/23	Tennessee	W	7	103	14.7	34	2
9/10/23	at Indianapolis	W	8	101	12.6	29	1



TITANS OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

CENTERS

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
79	Cushenberry III, Lloyd	6-4	315	6	Louisiana State
62	Levin, Corey	6-4	307	7	Chattanooga
60	Mustipher, Sam	6-3	306	6	Notre Dame

GUARDS

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
67	Brewer, Chandler (IR)	6-6	320	3	Middle Tennessee St
68	Arlington Hambricht	6-5	300	3	Colorado
73	Hance, Blake	6-5	310	5	Northwestern
66	Jaimes, Brenden	6-5	300	5	Nebraska
76	Rupcich, Andrew	6-6	318	2	Culver-Stockton
77	Skoronski, Peter	6-4	313	3	Northwestern
64	Slater, Jackson	6-3	311	R	Sacramento State
70	Zeitler, Kevin	6-4	332	14	Wisconsin

TACKLES

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
78	Crenshaw-Dickson, Brandon	6-7	316	R	Florida
71	Duncan, Jaelyn	6-6	306	3	Maryland
55	Latham, JC	6-6	342	2	Alabama
75	Moore Jr., Dan	6-5	315	5	Texas A&M
61	Ojukwu, John	6-5	309	2	Boise State
72	Udoh, Oluisaemeka	6-6	320	7	Elon

#79 • C LLOYD CUSHENBERRY III

6-4, 315, 6th Year/2nd with Titans, Louisiana State
[Click for complete bio](#)



Lloyd Cushenberry III is in his sixth NFL season and his second campaign with the Titans in 2025. He was signed by the Titans as an unrestricted free agent on March 14, 2014.

Cushenberry was voted a permanent team captain prior to the 2024 season. He then started the first eight games at center before landing on injured reserve for the remainder of the season.

Prior to arriving in Tennessee, Cushenberry played his first four NFL seasons with the Denver Broncos after the team selected him in the third round (83rd overall) of the 2010 NFL Draft.

He started at center in all 57 games in which he appeared during his time in Denver, beginning with starts in all 16 games as a rookie. In 2021, he started 16 games, followed by eight starts in 2022 and 17 starts in 2023.

A native of Carville, La., Cushenberry played four seasons at Louisiana State (2016-19), starting in 28 of his 39 total games played. He was a member of the Tigers' 15-0 national championship season in 2019.

Cushenberry's 2025 Preseason Games Played/Games Started:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Starts by Position
2025	Ten	0	0	

Cushenberry's Career Regular Season Games Played/Games Started:

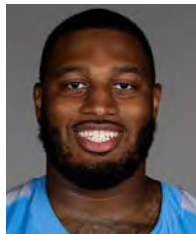
Year	Team	GP	GS	Starts by Position
2020	Den	16	16	C-16
2021	Den	16	16	C-16
2022	Den	8	8	C-8
2023	Den	17	17	C-17
2024	Ten	8	8	C-8
2025	Ten	0	0	
NFL Totals		65	65	C-65



#55 • T JC LATHAM

6-6, 342, 2nd Year/2nd with Titans, Alabama

[Click for complete bio](#)



JC Latham is in his second NFL season. He was drafted by the Titans with the seventh overall pick in the first round of the 2024 NFL Draft.

As a rookie, Latham finished the season with 17 starts at left tackle, joining Jack Conklin (2016), Chance Warmack (2013) and Michael Roos (2005) as the franchise's only rookie offensive linemen in the "Titans era" (1999–present) to start every game. He was the first to do so exclusively at left tackle. Pro Football Focus named him to its All-Rookie team.

Latham did not miss an offensive snap during his rookie season. He led all rookie offensive linemen and ranked third among all rookies in 2024 with 1,032 offensive snaps. Only Chicago quarterback Caleb Williams (1,052) and Denver quarterback Bo Nix (1,040) played more offensive snaps than Latham among the 2024 rookie class.

Prior to entering the NFL, Latham spent three seasons at the University of Alabama, where he appeared in 41 total games, including 27 consecutive starts at right tackle to conclude his collegiate career. He was credited with allowing only four sacks during his time with the Tide.

As a junior in 2023, Latham was a second-team All-American and a first-team All-SEC selection at right tackle. He recorded 41 knockdown blocks and allowed only two sacks.

A native of Oak Creek, Wis., Latham attended IMG Academy for the final two years of high school. He began his high school career as a defensive lineman before finishing as one of the nation's top left tackle prospects.

Latham's 2025 Preseason Games Played/Games Started:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Starts by Position
2025	Ten	1	1	RT-1

Latham's Career Regular Season Games Played/Games Started:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Starts by Position
2024	Ten	17	17	LT-17
2025	Ten	0	0	
NFL Totals		17	17	LT-17



STARTS BEFORE 22ND BIRTHDAY

First-round draft pick JC Latham started every game at left tackle in 2024. With 17 starts before his 22nd birthday (Feb. 8, 2025), he ranked second in franchise history for starts before turning 22. He finished behind only former defensive tackle Randy Starks, who registered 21 starts before celebrating his 22nd birthday in 2005.

Latham was the NFL's only player under age 22 to log 17 starts in 2024.

Most starts in franchise history (1960–2024) before a player's 22nd birthday:

Player	Position	Season(s)	Starts
1. Randy Starks	DT	2004-05	21
2. JC Latham	T	2024	17
3. Jurrell Casey	DT	2011	11

STARTS BY ROOKIE O-LINEMEN IN 2024

In 2024, JC Latham was one of only three NFL rookie offensive linemen to register a start in every game for their team. The only other members of the group were New Orleans Saints left tackle Taliese Fuaga and San Francisco 49ers right guard Dominick Puni.

Rookie offensive linemen with the most starts in 2024:

Player	Team	Primary Position	Round (Overall)	Starts	
1. JC Latham	Tennessee Titans	LT	1 (7)	17	
	Taliese Fuaga	New Orleans Saints	LT	1 (14)	17
	Dominick Puni	San Francisco 49ers	RG	3 (86)	17
4. Cooper Beebe	Dallas Cowboys	C	3 (73)	16	
	Joe Alt	Los Angeles Chargers	RT	1 (5)	16
	Graham Barton	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	C	1 (26)	16
7. Zach Frazier	Pittsburgh Steelers	C	2 (51)	15	
8. (five tied)				14	

#75 • T DAN MOORE JR.

6-5, 315, 5th Year/1st with Titans, Texas A&M

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Dan Moore Jr. is in his fifth NFL season and his first campaign with the Titans in 2025. He was signed by the Titans on March 13, 2025.

Prior to joining the Titans, Moore spent the previous four seasons (2021-24) with the Pittsburgh Steelers. He started 66 total games—all at left tackle—protecting the blind side for all but two contests during his time in the Steel City. During that span, Moore ranked third in the NFL in offensive snaps (4,109) played by tackles, trailing only Penei Sewell (4,328) and Jawaan Taylor (4,135).

In each of Moore's four seasons with the Steelers, running back Najee Harris surpassed 1,000 rushing yards. In 2023, the Steelers offensive line allowed only 36 sacks, which ranked ninth in the NFL.

Moore was drafted by the Steelers in the fourth round (128th overall) of the 2021 NFL Draft after attending Texas A&M University. The Beaumont, Texas, native appeared in 44 games with 37 starts for the Aggies, including starts at left tackle in each of the final 36 games of his collegiate career.

Moore's 2025 Preseason Games Played/Games Started:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Starts by Position
2025	Ten	1	1	LT-1

Moore's Career Regular Season Games Played/Games Started:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Starts by Position
2001	Pit	16	16	LT-16
2022	Pit	17	17	LT-17
2023	Pit	16	16	LT-16
2024	Pit	17	17	LT-17
2025	Ten	0	0	
NFL Totals		66	66	LT-66



Moore's Career **Postseason** Games Played/Games Started:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Starts by Position
2001	Pit	1	1	LT-1
2023	Pit	1	1	LT-1
2024	Pit	1	1	LT-1
NFL Totals		3	3	LT-3

#77 • G PETER SKORONSKI

6-4, 313, 3rd Year/3rd with Titans, Northwestern
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Peter Skoronski is in his third NFL season. He was selected by the Titans with the 11th overall pick in the first round of the 2023 NFL Draft.

During his first two seasons, Skoronski started 31 games at left guard. After missing three of the first four games during his rookie season due to an appendectomy, he started the next 30 games through the end of the 2024 campaign. In 2024, he did not miss a snap.

As a rookie in 2023, Skoronski started 14 games at left guard and helped running back **Derrick Henry** finish second in the NFL with 1,167 rushing yards. He was one of nine NFL rookie offensive linemen in 2023 to register 14 or more starts, and he joined **Nicholas Petit-Frere** (2022), **Jack Conklin** (2016), **Chance Warmack** (2013), **Michael Roos** (2005) and **Jacob Bell** (2004) as the only rookie offensive linemen to record at least 14 starts for the franchise during its "Titans era" (1999–present).

During a three-year career at Northwestern University, Skoronski started all 33 games at left tackle without missing a game. He earned second-team All-Big Ten honors as a freshman and first-team recognition in each of the next two seasons. He became the first offensive lineman in program history to earn two All-Big Ten first-team awards.

As a junior in 2022, he was named the Rimington-Pace Big Ten Offensive Lineman of the Year—the first ever by a Northwestern lineman—after starting all 12 games at left tackle. He was the first player in school history to become a unanimous first-team All-American and was named first-team All-Big Ten by coaches and media. He finished as a finalist for the 2022 Outland Trophy.

When the Titans drafted Skoronski, he became Northwestern's highest draft selection since guard **Chris Hinton** went to Denver with the fourth pick in 1983, and he was the 11th player in program history to be picked in the first round.

His grandfather, **Bob Skoronski Sr.**, was a left tackle for the Green Bay Packers, playing nine total seasons with the franchise. He was a permanent offensive captain for the Packers under **Vince Lombardi** and played on five NFL championship teams. In 1976, he was inducted into the Packers Hall of Fame. **Bob Skoronski Jr.**, Peter's father, was an All-Ivy League football player at Yale.

Peter Skoronski attended Maine South High School in Park Ridge, Ill.



Skoronski's 2025 **Preseason** Games Played/Games Started:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Starts by Position
2025	Ten	1	1	LG-1

Skoronski's Career **Regular Season** Games Played/Games Started:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Starts by Position
2023	Ten	14	14	LG-14
2024	Ten	17	17	LG-17
2025	Ten	0	0	
Totals		31	31	LG-31

#70 • G KEVIN ZEITLER

6-4, 332, 14th Year/1st with Titans, Wisconsin
[Click for complete bio](#)

Kevin Zeitler is in his 14th NFL season and his first campaign with the Titans in 2025. He was signed by the Titans as an unrestricted free agent on March 13, 2025.

Prior to his arrival in Tennessee, Zeitler appeared in 198 games with 197 starts in 13 total seasons with the Cincinnati Bengals (2012-16), Cleveland Browns (2017-18), New York Giants (2019-20), Baltimore Ravens (2021-23) and Detroit Lions (2024). From the time he entered the NFL in 2012 through the 2024 campaign, he played more offensive snaps (12,443) than any other offensive lineman in the league.

In 2023, he was named to the Pro Bowl for the first time after starting 15 contests in his final season with the Ravens. Then, in 2024, he was a 16-game starter at right guard for the Lions.

Zeitler also arrived in Tennessee with significant playoff experience. He accumulated seven total starts over four playoff seasons with the Bengals (2012-15) and two postseasons with the Ravens (2022-23). Additionally, he contributed to Detroit's 2024 division championship but was inactive during the playoffs due to injury.

Zeitler entered the NFL with the Bengals as first-round selection (27th overall) in the 2012 NFL Draft. As a rookie, he was named to the Pro Football Writer's Association All-Rookie team.

At the University of Wisconsin, Zeitler played in 43 career games with 36 starts in four seasons (2008-11). He helped the Badgers to consecutive Big Ten titles and Rose Bowl berths in his junior and senior campaigns, and as a senior, he earned first-team All-Big Ten honors.

Zeitler's 2025 **Preseason** Games Played/Games Started:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Starts by Position
2025	Ten	0	0	

Zeitler's Career **Regular Season** Games Played/Games Started:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Starts by Position
2012	Cin	16	16	RG-16
2013	Cin	12	11	RG-11
2014	Cin	12	12	RG-12
2015	Cin	16	16	RG-16
2016	Cin	16	16	RG-16
2017	Cle	16	16	RG-16
2018	Cle	16	16	RG-16
2019	NYG	15	15	RG-15
2020	NYG	16	16	RG-16
2021	Bal	17	17	RG-17
2022	Bal	15	15	RG-15
2023	Bal	15	15	RG-15
2024	Det	16	16	RG-16
2025	Ten	0	0	
NFL Totals		198	197	RG-197

Zeitler's Career **Postseason** Games Played/Games Started:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Starts by Position
2012	Cin	1	1	RG-1
2013	Cin	1	1	RG-1
2014	Cin	1	1	RG-1
2015	Cin	1	1	RG-1
2022	Bal	1	1	RG-1
2023	Bal	2	2	RG-2
2024	Det	0	0	
NFL Totals		7	7	RG-7





TITANS DEFENSIVE LINEMEN

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
95	Blidi, Philip	6-3	284	R	Auburn
73	Bronson, Josiah	6-3	295	2	Washington
90	Gaziano, Joe	6-4	280	4	Northwestern
94	Horne, Timmy	6-4	323	4	Kansas State
72	Horsley, Cam	6-3	312	R	Boston College
69	Joseph-Day, Sebastian	6-4	310	7	Rutgers
97	Lynch, James	6-4	295	6	Baylor
76	Raikes, Isaiah	6-1	310	R	Auburn
98	Simmons, Jeffery	6-4	305	7	Mississippi State
93	Sweat, T'Vondre	6-4	366	2	Texas
96	Watkins, Carlos	6-3	305	9	Clemson

#69 • DE SEBASTIAN JOSEPH-DAY

6-4, 310, 7th Year/2nd with Titans, Rutgers
[Click for complete bio](#)



Defensive lineman **Sebastian Joseph-Day** is in his seventh NFL season and his second season with the Titans in 2025. He was signed by the Titans as an unrestricted free agent on March 20, 2024.

During the 2024 campaign, Joseph-Day registered 17 games played for the first time in his career. His first year in Tennessee concluded with 44 tackles, 2.5 sacks, 14 quarterback pressures, three tackles for loss and one pass defended for the NFL's second-overall ranked defense.

Prior to arriving in Tennessee, Joseph-Day totaled 71 games played and 68 starts for the Los Angeles Rams (2018-21), Los Angeles Chargers (2022-23) and San Francisco 49ers (2023). His statistical totals during that time included 230 tackles, 11 sacks, one interception, five passes defended, two forced fumbles and one fumble recovery.

In 2023, Joseph-Day started the first 14 games of the season with the Chargers and collected 32 tackles, three sacks and 25 quarterback pressures. After being released by the Chargers, he was signed by the 49ers as a free agent on Dec. 27 and saw action as a reserve in the final two regular season contests, amassing five tackles. He then appeared as a reserve in all three of the 49ers' postseason contests and registered three tackles, including a tackle in Super Bowl LVIII.

Joseph-Day originally entered the NFL as a sixth-round pick (195th overall) of the Rams in 2018. After not seeing game action his entire rookie campaign, he totaled 38 starts and six sacks over the next three seasons with the Rams, culminating with an appearance in the Rams' Super Bowl LVI victory. He then joined the Chargers during the 2022 offseason and played in 30 regular season games with the club before heading to San Francisco.



The Stroudsburg, Pa., native played five seasons at Rutgers, where he amassed 90 total tackles, 3.5 sacks, two passes defended, two forced fumbles and one fumble recovery.

Joseph-Day's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2025	Ten	1	1	0	0.0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Joseph-Day's Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2018	LAR	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	LAR	16	15	44	2.0	10	5	0	1	0	0
2020	LAR	16	16	55	1.0	9	1	0	3	1	0
2021	LAR	7	7	38	3.0	14	3	0	0	0	0
2022	LAC	16	16	56	2.0	19	9	1	1	1	1
2023	LAC/SF	16	14	37	3.0	25	3	0	0	0	0
2024	Ten	17	12	44	2.5	14	3	0	1	0	0
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		88	80	274	13.5	91	24	1	6	2	1

Joseph-Day's Career Postseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2018	LAR	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	LAR	2	2	8	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	LAR	1	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	LAC	1	1	3	0.5	1	0	0	1	0	0
2023	SF	3	0	3	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		7	3	14	0.5	1	0	0	1	0	0

Joseph-Day's Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

Tackles - 9 at Indianapolis (9/19/21)
Sacks - 1 (13 times, last at Miami, 9/30/24)
Interceptions - 1 at Denver (1/8/23)
Forced Fumbles - 1 (Twice, last vs. Kansas City, 11/20/22)
Fumble Recoveries - 1 at Arizona (11/27/22)
Passes Defended - 1 (Six times, last at Chicago, 9/8/24)

Joseph-Day's Postseason Single-Game Highs:

Tackles - 6 at Green Bay (1/16/21)
Sacks - 0.5 at Jacksonville (1/14/23)
Passes Defended - 1 at Jacksonville (1/14/23)

#98 • DT JEFFERY SIMMONS

6-4, 305, 7th Year/7th with Titans, Mississippi State
[Click for complete bio](#)



Defensive lineman **Jeffery Simmons** completed is in his seventh NFL season in 2025. He was selected by the Titans in the first round (19th overall) of the 2019 NFL Draft.

During his first six seasons, Simmons earned three Pro Bowl berths (2021-22, 2024), was a four-time team captain (2021-24), and was nominated two times for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award (2023-24). During that span, he appeared in 84 games with 82 starts, accumulating 316 tackles, 31.5 sacks, 24 passes defended, five forced fumbles and six fumble recoveries. He was second on the defense in sacks during that span behind only **Harold Landry III** (46).

Simmons missed only one game in 2024. His 16 starts made up the second-highest total of his career through six seasons behind his 17 starts in 2021. Among his season totals, he set career highs with 76 tackles and two forced fumbles, and he added five sacks and a team-high 42 quarterback pressures. He was rewarded with his third Pro Bowl invitation.

Simmons' 76 tackles ranked second on the Titans in 2024. It was the best number for any defensive lineman for the organization in its "Titans era" (1999 to present), topping defensive end **Kyle Vanden Bosch's** previous mark of 75 tackles in 2006 (press box statistics). Among NFL defensive linemen in 2024, Simmons finished second in tackles behind Carolina's **A'Shawn Robinson** (80).

The 2024 campaign marked Simmons' fourth consecutive season with at least five sacks. His 31.5 career sacks through 2024 ranked 13th in franchise history and sixth for the organization during its "Titans era" (1999 to present).



In 2023, although he was limited to 12 games and finished the season on injured reserve, he managed to register 5.5 sacks, marking his third consecutive season to reach that number or higher. He added 44 tackles, 38 quarterback pressures, 11 tackles for loss, one forced fumble, one fumble recovery and one pass defended. For the first time in his career, he received the honor of the team's nomination for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year award.

In 2022, Simmons appeared in 15 games and anchored a unit that ranked first in the NFL in rushing defense (76.9 opponent rushing yards per game). En route to his second consecutive Pro Bowl appearance, he totaled 53 tackles, 7.5 sacks, 43 quarterback pressures, nine tackles for loss, one forced fumble and a career-high seven passes defended, which tied for the fourth-best mark among all NFL defensive linemen. Simmons and Arizona's **J.J. Watt** were the NFL's only players in 2022 with at least seven sacks and seven passes defended.

Before the start of the 2021 season, Simmons was named a team captain for the first time in his career, and he went on to become one of six players on the roster to start all 17 games. He was named to his first career Pro Bowl and added Associated Press second-team All-Pro honors after setting career highs in several categories, including sacks (8.5), tackles (54), quarterback pressures (58), tackles for loss (12) and passes defended (six). He led the squad in pressures and placed third in sacks. Among all defensive tackles in the NFL, his 8.5 sacks ranked sixth. In the divisional playoffs, he set a franchise postseason record with three sacks.

In 2020, Simmons appeared and started in 15 games. With three defensive fumble recoveries, he tied **Chase Young** for the most in the NFL in 2020 and was the first Titans defender with three fumble recoveries in a season since 2005, when linebacker **Brad Kassell** accomplished the feat. Simmons ranked second on the team with 19 quarterback pressures and added 49 tackles, three sacks, three tackles for loss, five passes defended and one forced fumble. In the franchise's "Titans era" (since 1999), he became the first player to post at least three fumble recoveries, three sacks and five passes defended in the same season. He also had three tackles and a tackle for loss in one playoff contest.

Simmons began his rookie season on the non-football injury list due to a knee injury he suffered during training in February 2019. He missed the first six games of the season before joining the 53-man roster in Week 7.

His rookie totals included 40 tackles, two sacks, two tackles for loss, 14 quarterback pressures and one pass defended in nine games (seven starts). He added four tackles, three quarterback pressures and a fumble recovery in three playoff contests.

During a three-year career as a defensive tackle at Mississippi State, Simmons appeared in 38 contests with 28 starts. He finished his career

ranked sixth in school history with 32.5 tackles for loss. He also tied for sixth in MSU annals with five forced fumbles and tied for fourth with three blocked kicks. His totals also included 163 tackles, seven sacks, seven passes defended and two defensive touchdowns.

He was a first-team All-SEC selection as a sophomore and junior and was one of two players in the nation to be named a Bednarik Award Semifinalist in both 2017 and 2018.

As a junior in 2018, Simmons was named second-team All-American after totaling 63 tackles, 17 tackles for loss and two sacks. His 17 tackles for loss led the team, ranked fourth in the SEC and were the third-most in single-season school history.

During his sophomore season (2017), he set a career high with five sacks and added 12 tackles for loss. With three total blocked kicks and punts, he became the first SEC player since 2004 to lead the nation in the category.

Simmons is a native of Macon, Miss.

Simmons' 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Simmons' Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2019	Ten	9	7	40	2.0	14	2	0	1	0	0
2020	Ten	15	15	49	3.0	20	3	0	5	1	3
2021	Ten	17	17	54	8.5	58	12	0	6	0	0
2022	Ten	15	15	53	7.5	43	9	0	7	1	0
2023	Ten	12	12	44	5.5	38	11	0	1	1	1
2024	Ten	16	16	76	5.0	42	11	0	4	2	2
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		84	82	316	31.5	215	48	0	24	5	6

Simmons' Career Postseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2019	Ten	3	0	4	0.0	3	0	0	0	0	1
2020	Ten	1	1	3	0.0	0	1	0	0	0	0
2021	Ten	1	1	8	3.0	3	3	0	0	0	0
Totals		5	2	15	3.0	6	4	0	0	0	1

Simmons' Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

Tackles - 9 (Twice, last at Indianapolis, 12/22/24)
Sacks - 3 at Los Angeles Rams (11/7/21)
Forced Fumbles - 1 (Five times, last vs. Minnesota, 11/17/24)
Fumble Recoveries - 1 (Six times, last vs. Minnesota, 11/17/24)

Simmons' Postseason Single-Game Highs:

Tackles - 8 vs. Cincinnati (1/22/22)
Sacks - 3 vs. Cincinnati (1/22/22)
Forced Fumbles - 1 (Twice, last vs. N.Y. Giants, 9/11/22)
Fumble Recoveries - 1 at Baltimore (1/11/20)

SACKS BY DEFENSIVE TACKLES SINCE 2020

Since the beginning of **Jeffery Simmons'** second NFL season in 2020, he ranks in the NFL's top 10 in sacks among defensive tackles (or nose tackles).

Most sacks by defensive tackles (or nose tackles) from 2020 to 2024:

Defensive Tackle	Sacks
1. Chris Jones	47.5
2. DeForest Buckner	39.0
Aaron Donald	39.0
4. Quinnen Williams	36.5
5. Cameron Heyward	34.5
6. Javon Hargrave	31.0
7. Jeffery Simmons	29.5
8. Zach Sieler	29.0
8. Nnamdi Madubuike	28.0
9. Dexter Lawrence II	27.5



2019-24 TACKLES, SACKS & PASSES DEFENSED

From the time **Jeffery Simmons** entered the NFL as a first-round pick in 2019 through the end of the 2024 campaign, he was one of only seven NFL players with at least 300 total tackles, 30 sacks and 20 passes defended. The rest of the group included **T.J. Watt**, **Cameron Jordan**, **Brian Burns**, **Maxx Crosby**, **Cameron Heyward** and **Kyle Van Noy**. Simmons and Heyward were the only interior defensive linemen in the league to accomplish the feat.

NFL players with a minimum of 300 tackles, 30 sacks and 20 passes defended from 2019 to 2024:

Player	Team	Total Tackles	Sacks	Passes Defended
Brian Burns	Car/NYG	315	54.5	21
Maxx Crosby	Las Vegas	364	59.5	23
Cameron Heyward	Pittsburgh	404	43.5	34
Cameron Jordan	New Orleans	306	50.0	21
Kyle Van Noy	NE/Mia/LAC/Bal	308	44.0	28
Jeffery Simmons	Tennessee	309	31.5	24
T.J. Watt	Pittsburgh	340	88.0	39

RUN-STUFFING INTERIOR D-LINEMEN, 2023-24

From the beginning of the 2023 season through 2024, Jeffery Simmons tallied 12 tackles for loss on rushing plays. Among all interior defensive linemen, Simmons' total was third behind Indianapolis' **Grover Stewart** (14) and Denver's **Zach Allen** (13).

Interior defensive linemen with the most tackles for loss on rushing plays from 2023 to 2024:

Player	2024 Team	Tackles for Loss on Rush Plays
1. Grover Stewart	Indianapolis Colts	14
2. Zach Allen	Denver Broncos	13
3. Jeffery Simmons	Tennessee Titans	12
4. Teair Tart	Los Angeles Chargers	11
Quinnen Williams	New York Jets	11
6. Calais Campbell	Miami Dolphins	10
Daron Payne	Washington Commanders	10
Shelby Harris	Cleveland Browns	10
Jalen Carter	Philadelphia Eagles	10
Calijah Kancey	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	10

TACKLES BY DEFENSIVE LINEMEN

Jeffery Simmons produced a career-high 76 total tackles in 2024. His previous career high was 54 tackles in both 2021 and 2022.

Simmons led all NFL defensive tackles in total tackles in 2024, and only one defensive lineman—Carolina Panthers defensive end **A'Shawn Robinson** (80)—had more tackles than him.

Most tackles by NFL defensive linemen in 2024:

Player	Team	Total Tackles
1. A'Shawn Robinson	Carolina Panthers	80
2. Jeffery Simmons	Tennessee Titans	76
3. Grover Stewart	Indianapolis Colts	74
4. Cameron Heyward	Pittsburgh Steelers	71
5. Davon Godchaux	New England Patriots	67
6. Adam Butler	Las Vegas Raiders	65
7. Leonard Williams	Seattle Seahawks	64
8. DaVon Hamilton	Jacksonville Jaguars	62
Kobie Turner	Los Angeles Rams	62
10. (four tied)		61

In the franchise's Titans era, Simmons' tackle total ranked first among defensive linemen for a single season (press box tackle statistics). He surpassed the previous high of 75 tackles by former defensive end **Kyle Vanden Bosch** in 2006.

Most tackles in a season by a Titans defensive lineman, 1999 to 2024 (press box statistics):

Player	Position	Season	Total Tackles
1. Jeffery Simmons	DT	2024	76
2. Kyle Vanden Bosch	DE	2006	75
3. Jurrell Casey	DT	2014	68
4. Kyle Vanden Bosch	DE	2005	66
5. Jurrell Casey	DT	2018	62
6. Jurrell Casey	DT	2017	60
Kyle Vanden Bosch	DE	2007	60
8. Jason Babin	DE	2010	58
9. Jevon Kearse	DE	1999	57
10. Jurrell Casey	DT	2013	55

#93 • NT T'VONDRE SWEAT

6-4, 366, 2nd Year/2nd with Titans, Texas

[Click for complete bio](#)



Defensive tackle **T'Vondre Sweat** is in his second NFL season. He was selected by the Titans in the second round (38th overall) of the 2024 NFL Draft.

As a rookie, Sweat appeared in all 17 games with 16 starts. His totals for the NFL's second-ranked overall defense included 51 tackles, one sack, four tackles for loss, one pass defended, one forced fumble and one fumble recovery. He earned All-Rookie honors from Pro Football Focus and Pro Football Writers of America.

Sweat became the franchise's first rookie defensive lineman to start 16 games in a season since defensive end **Jevon Kearse** (16) in 1999, and he was the NFL's first interior defensive lineman to start at least 16 games in a rookie season since **Dexter Lawrence** (16) with the New York Giants in 2019.

During his five-year career at the University of Texas, Sweat appeared in 62 games with 17 starts. He finished his collegiate career with 128 tackles, 17.5 tackles for loss, five sacks, 14 passes defended, one forced fumble, two fumble recoveries and one blocked extra point.

In 2023, Sweat's final collegiate campaign, he played in all 14 games with eight starts. His 45 tackles, 18 solo tackles, eight tackles for loss, two sacks, four pass breakups and one blocked kick all established career highs, and he added a two-yard touchdown reception on offense. His efforts



earned him the 2023 Outland Trophy, which is presented to the nation's top interior lineman. He also garnered unanimous first-team All-American, Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year and unanimous first-team All-Big 12 honors. He was the fifth Texas defensive tackle to be a unanimous All-American.

As a senior in 2022, Sweat played in all 13 games with nine starts and established a then-career high with 30 tackles and added 2.5 tackles for loss, seven quarterback hurries and four pass breakups. He was named honorable mention All-Big 12 by the league's coaches.

He is a native of Huntsville, Texas.

Sweat's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Sweat's 2024/Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2024	Ten	17	16	51	1.0	23	4	0	1	1	1
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		17	16	51	1.0	23	4	0	1	1	1

Sweat's Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

Tackles - 6 at Miami (9/30/24)

Sacks - 1 at Houston (11/24/24)

Tackles For Loss - 2 at Miami (9/30/24)

Forced Fumbles - 1 vs. Cincinnati (12/15/24)

Fumble Recoveries - 1 vs. Cincinnati (12/15/24)

SNAPS BY ROOKIE D-LINEMEN IN 2024

Rookie **T'Vondre Sweat**, who was selected by the Titans in the second round (38th overall) of the 2024 NFL Draft, played 667 defensive snaps in 2024.

Within the NFL in 2024, no rookie defensive lineman saw more snaps than Sweat, who was one of two rookie defensive linemen with at least 600 snaps. Los Angeles Rams second-round defensive end **Braden Fiske** ranked second with 626 defensive snaps.

Sweat's 667 defensive snaps amounted to the highest total by any NFL rookie interior defensive lineman since Carolina Panthers defensive tackle **Derrick Brown** played 717 snaps as a rookie in 2020.

Most defensive snaps by rookie defensive linemen in 2024:

Player	Team	Draft Round (Overall)	Defensive Snaps
1. T'Vondre Sweat	Tennessee Titans	2 (38)	667
2. Braden Fiske	Los Angeles Rams	2 (39)	626
3. Laiatu Latu	Indianapolis Colts	1 (15)	595
4. Jer'Zhan Newton	Washington Commanders	2 (36)	491
5. Kris Jenkins	Cincinnati Bengals	2 (49)	472
6. Jonah Lau	Las Vegas Raiders	7 (234)	449
7. Byron Murphy II	Seattle Seahawks	1 (16)	429
8. Elijah Chatman	New York Giants	Undrafted	402
9. Maason Smith	Jacksonville Jaguars	2 (48)	365
10. DeWayne Carter	Buffalo Bills	3 (95)	295

STARTS BY TITANS ROOKIE D-LINEMEN

T'Vondre Sweat played in all 17 games as a rookie with 16 starts. He was the franchise's first rookie defensive lineman since defensive end **Jevon Kearse** in 1999 to start at least 16 games in a season.

Most starts by Titans rookie defensive linemen, 1999–2024:

Player	Position	Season	Starts
1. T'Vondre Sweat	NT	2024	16
Jevon Kearse	DE	1999	16
3. Jurrell Casey	DT	2011	15
4. Carlos Hall	DE	2002	13
5. Randy Starks	DT	2004	8
Antwan Odom	DE	2004	8
7. Jeffery Simmons	DT	2019	7
8. Naquan Jones	DT	2021	5
9. (three tied)			3



TITANS INSIDE LINEBACKERS

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
50	Barton, Cody	6-2	237	7	Utah
58	Burney, Amari	6-2	228	3	Florida
48	Gbenda, David	6-0	236	R	Texas
51	Gray, Cedric	6-2	234	2	North Carolina
57	Jacobs, Curtis	6-1	241	2	Penn State
59	Orji, Anfernee	6-2	230	2	Vanderbilt
41	Reese IV, Otis	6-3	214	3	Mississippi
52	Williams Sr., James	6-4	232	2	Miami (Fla.)

#50 • LB CODY BARTON

6-2, 237, 7th Year/1st with Titans, Utah

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Linebacker **Cody Barton** is in his seventh NFL season and his first campaign with the Titans in 2025. He was signed as an unrestricted free agent on March 13, 2025.

After Barton was selected in the third round (88th overall) of the 2019 NFL Draft by the Seattle Seahawks, he spent four seasons in Seattle, followed by one season each in Washington (2023) and Denver (2024). During the first six years of his career, he recorded 43 starts in 95 games played. His statistics during that time included 419 tackles, 3.5 sacks, 31 quarterback pressures, 10 tackles for loss, five interceptions, 14 passes defended, three forced fumbles and three fumble recoveries.

In 2024, Barton played in all 17 games with 14 starts at linebacker for the Broncos, who finished the season in the playoffs. He recorded 104 tackles, two tackles for loss, 1.5 sacks, five passes defended, two interceptions, one forced fumble and one fumble recovery. After returning a fumble 52 yards for a touchdown at New Orleans in Week 7, he was named the AFC Defensive Player of the Week.

From 2019 through 2021, Barton tallied 34 special teams tackles as a member of the Seahawks. The total tied for the fifth most in the NFL during that period and included 16 special teams tackles in 2020, when he ranked second in the NFL and first in the NFC.

The Cottonwood Heights, Utah, native played four seasons at the University of Utah (2015-18), where he played in 50 games with 23 starts. As a senior, he was an honorable mention All-Pac 12 linebacker after leading the team with 116 tackles and adding four sacks and an interception.



Barton's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2025	Ten	1	1	1	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Barton's Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2019	Sea	16	2	17	0.0	9	0	0	1	0	1
2020	Sea	16	2	19	0.0	0	0	0	0	2	0
2021	Sea	16	1	25	0.0	1	1	0	1	0	0
2022	Sea	17	11	133	2.0	4	4	2	6	0	0
2023	Was	13	13	121	0.0	8	3	1	1	0	1
2024	Den	17	14	104	1.5	18	2	2	5	1	1
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		95	43	419	3.5	31	10	5	14	3	3

Barton's Career Postseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2019	Sea	2	2	5	1.0	2	1	0	2	0	0
2020	Sea	1	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	Sea	1	1	9	0.0	0	1	0	1	0	0
2024	Den	1	1	8	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		5	4	25	1.0	2	2	0	3	0	0

Barton's Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

- Tackles - 15 at Atlanta (10/15/23)
- Sacks - 1 (Three times, last at New Orleans, 10/17/24)
- Tackle For Loss - 2 vs. Denver (9/12/21)
- Interceptions - 1 (Five times, last vs. Cleveland, 12/2/24)
- Passes Defensed - 1 (14 times, last at Cincinnati, 12/28/24)
- Forced Fumbles - 1 (Three times, last at New Orleans, 10/17/2024)

Barton's Career Postseason Single-Game Highs:

- Tackles - 9 at San Francisco (1/14/23)
- Sacks - 1 at Philadelphia (1/5/20)
- Passes Defensed - 2 at Philadelphia (1/5/20)



TITANS OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
56	Evans, Desmond	6-6	252	R	North Carolina
99	Gaye, Ali	6-6	265	2	Louisiana State
92	Harrell, Jaylen	6-4	247	2	Michigan
45	Jones, Dre'Mont	6-3	281	7	Ohio State
49	Key, Arden	6-5	240	8	Louisiana State
7	Oladejo, Oluwafemi	6-3	259	R	UCLA
53	Ward, Jihad	6-5	285	10	Illinois

#45 • OLB DRE'MONT JONES

6-3, 281, 7th Year/1st with Titans, Ohio State
[Click for complete bio](#)



Outside linebacker **Dre'Mont Jones** is in his seventh NFL season and his first campaign with the Titans in 2025. He was signed as an unrestricted on March 14, 2025.

Jones joined the Titans after six combined seasons with the Denver Broncos (2019-22) and Seattle Seahawks (2023-24). In that span, he played in 90 games with 52 starts and totaled 210 tackles, 30.5 sacks, one interception, 40 stops for loss, three forced fumbles and one fumble recovery. Additionally, he blocked a pair of field goals.

The Broncos selected Jones in the third round (71st overall) of the 2019 NFL Draft. He spent the first four seasons of his career with the club, appearing in 56 games with 29 starts and collecting 133 tackles, 22 sacks, one interception, 28 tackles for loss, two forced fumbles and one fumble recovery.

He joined the Seattle Seahawks in 2023 and started a career-high 16 games while amassing a career-best 49 tackles with 4.5 sacks. In 2024, he appeared in all 17 games with seven starts and totaled 28 tackles to go along with four sacks and a forced fumble.

Prior to entering the NFL, Jones started 37 of 39 games at Ohio State and was selected first-team All-Big Ten Conference after his senior season. During his college career, he helped the Buckeyes win two Big Ten Conference Championships (2017-18), the Cotton Bowl (2017) and the Rose Bowl (2018).

He is a native of Cleveland, Ohio.



#7 • OLB OLUWAFEMI OLADEJO

6-3, 259, Rookie, UCLA
[Click for complete bio](#)



Outside linebacker **Oluwafemi Oladejo** (pronounced "oh-loo-wah-FEH-me oh-luh-DAY-jo") was selected by the Titans in the second round (52nd overall) of the 2025 NFL Draft.

After playing two seasons at the University of California (2021-22), Oladejo finished his collegiate career with two seasons at UCLA (2023-24). He began college as an off-the-ball linebacker before transitioning to the edge position during his senior campaign at UCLA. With 46 games played and 27 starts over his four combined seasons, he totaled 238 total tackles, 24 stops for loss, six sacks, a forced fumble and three fumbles recoveries.

As a senior at UCLA in 2024, Oladejo started two games at inside linebacker before moving to the edge spot. He recorded starts in all 12 games on the season and logged 57 total tackles, 13.5 tackles for loss, 4.5 sacks and two pass breakups. His 13.5 stops for loss, 4.5 sacks and six quarterback hurries led the team. After the season, he was named the Kenny Clark Award winner for the team's most outstanding defensive lineman.

In his first year at UCLA, Oladejo appeared in all 13 games with four starts. His statistics included 54 tackles, a half sack, 3.5 stops for loss, an interception, three passes defended and two fumble recoveries.

The Sacramento, Calif., native played in nine games at Cal as a true freshman in 2021, and in 2022, he appeared in 10 games with 10 starts.

Oladejo's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2025	Ten	1	1	4	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Oladejo's 2025/Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Oladejo's College Career Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2021	Cal	9	1	36	0.0	2.5	0	0	0	0
2022	Cal	12	10	91	1.0	4.5	1	1	1	1
2023	UCLA	13	4	54	0.5	3.5	1	3	0	2
2024	UCLA	12	12	57	4.5	13.5	0	2	0	0
Totals		46	27	238	6.0	24.0	2	6	1	3



TITANS
CORNERBACKS

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
39	Baker Jr., Darrell	6-1	190	3	Georgia Southern
29	Brownlee Jr., Jarvis	5-10	194	2	Louisville
28	Harris, Jermari	6-1	191	R	Iowa
26	Harris, Marcus	5-11	188	R	California
32	Jeudy-Lally, Gabe	6-1	189	2	Tennessee
35	Kimber, Jalen	6-0	190	R	Penn State
36	Lewis, Clarence	5-11	200	R	Syracuse
21	McCreary, Roger	5-11	190	4	Auburn
31	Oruwariye, Amani	6-2	205	6	Penn State
40	Ross, Davion	5-10	177	R	Memphis
38	Sneed, L'Jarius (PUP)	6-1	192	6	Louisiana Tech

#29 • CB JARVIS BROWNLEE JR.

5-10, 194, 2nd Year/2nd with Titans, Louisville
[Click for complete bio](#)



Cornerback **Jarvis Brownlee Jr.** is in his second NFL season. He was selected by the Titans in the fifth round (146th overall) of the 2024 NFL Draft.

As a rookie, Brownlee appeared in all 17 games during his rookie campaign with a start in each of the final 14 games. He tied for the team lead with nine passes defended, and his statistics also included 74 tackles, one interception, seven tackles for loss and one fumble recovery.

Brownlee joined **Roger McCreary** (17 starts in 2022), **Tank Williams** (16 starts in 2002) and **Adoree' Jackson** (16 starts in 2017) as the only rookie defensive backs to start at least 14 games in the franchise's "Titans era" (1999 to present). Brownlee was also one of five NFL rookie defensive backs to start at least 14 games in 2024, along with Philadelphia's **Quinyon Mitchell**, Washington's **Mike Sainristil**, Houston's **Kamari Lassiter** and Detroit's **Terrion Arnold**.

Brownlee was a two-year starter at Louisville after spending three seasons at Florida State. In five total collegiate seasons (2019-23), he appeared in 48 games with 37 starts and tallied 174 tackles, 7.5 tackles for loss, one sack, six interceptions, 28 passes defended, one forced fumble and one fumble recovery.

As a senior at Louisville in 2023, he played in 11 games with nine starts and recorded 28 tackles, one tackle for loss, one interception and one fumble recovery.





McCreary's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2025	Ten	1	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

McCreary's Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2022	Ten	17	17	85	0.0	1	2	1	8	0	0
2023	Ten	15	11	86	2.0	4	7	1	6	1	0
2024	Ten	15	7	50	1.0	4	12	0	1	0	0
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		47	35	220	3.0	9	21	2	15	1	0

McCreary's Regular Season Single-Game Highs:
Tackles - 11 at Buffalo (9/19/22)
Sacks - 1 (Three times, last at Detroit, 10/27/24)
Tackles For Loss - 3 at Chicago (9/8/24)
Interceptions - 1 (Twice, last at Tampa Bay, 11/12/23)
Passes Defensed - 2 at L.A. Chargers (12/18/22)

TACKLES FOR LOSS LEADERS AMONG DBs

In 2024, **Roger McCreary** totaled a career-high 12 tackles for loss. He tied Cincinnati Bengals cornerback **Mike Hilton** for the NFL's best total among defensive backs.

Most tackles for loss among defensive backs in 2024:

Defensive Back	Team	Tackles for Loss
1. Roger McCreary	Tennessee Titans	12
Mike Hilton	Cincinnati Bengals	12
3. Budda Baker	Arizona Cardinals	10
Derwin James	Los Angeles Chargers	10
5. Keisean Nixon	Green Bay Packers	8
Kyle Dugger	New England Patriots	8
Brian Branch	Detroit Lions	8
8. (six tied)		7

From the time McCreary entered the NFL as a second-round draft pick in 2022 through the end of the 2024 campaign, only Hilton had more tackles for loss among defensive backs. McCreary's 21 tackles for loss in that span included two tackles for loss as a rookie, seven in 2023 and 12 in 2024.

As a junior at Louisville in 2022, he started all 13 games at cornerback and finished third on the team with 66 tackles. He added 2.5 tackles for loss, two interceptions, and 12 pass breakups.
He is a native of Miami, Fla.

Brownlee's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2025	Ten	1	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Brownlee's Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2024	Ten	17	14	74	0.0	2	7	1	9	0	1
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Brownlee's Regular Season Single-Game Highs:
Tackles - 9 vs. Jacksonville (12/8/24)
Interceptions - 1 at Houston (11/24/24)
Fumble Recoveries - 1 vs. Houston (1/5/25)

#21 • CB ROGER McCREARY

5-11, 190, 4th Year/4th with Titans, Auburn
[Click for complete bio](#)



Cornerback **Roger McCreary** is in his fourth NFL season in 2025. He was selected by the Titans in the second round (35th overall) of the 2022 NFL Draft.

During his first three seasons, McCreary appeared in 47 games with 35 starts. He ranked second for the team with 15 total passes defensed, while his 21 tackles for loss led the team's defensive backs and ranked third for the defense. His 220 tackles from 2022 to 2024 tied for the NFL's fourth-highest total among cornerbacks. He and the New York Jets' **D.J. Reed** (220) trailed only Buffalo's **Taron Johnson** (252), San Francisco's **Deommodore Lenoir** (246) and Indianapolis' **Kenny Moore II** (236). McCreary's three-year totals also included two interceptions and three sacks.

In 2024, McCreary saw action in 15 games with seven starts, primarily as the nickel defensive back. He ranked second on the team with 12 tackles for loss, which tied Cincinnati Bengals cornerback **Mike Hilton**'s total for the most in the NFL among defensive backs. McCreary added 50 total tackles, one sack and one pass defensed.

In 2023, McCreary ranked third on the team and led all Titans defensive backs with 86 tackles. Among all NFL cornerbacks, his 86 tackles tied Las Vegas' **Nate Hobbs** for the third-highest total behind Johnson (98) and Indianapolis' **Kenny Moore II** (93). McCreary added one interception, six passes defensed, two sacks, four quarterback pressures, seven tackles for loss and one forced fumble.

As a rookie, McCreary was one of three players on the team to start all 17 games (**Kevin Byard**, **Aaron Brewer**), and he became the first Titans rookie cornerback since **Adoree' Jackson** in 2017 to start every game. Only two other rookie cornerbacks in the NFL—Seattle's **Tariq Woolen** and the New York Jets' **Sauce Gardner**—started all 17 games in 2022. McCreary finished third on the Titans defense with 85 tackles, ranked second on the defense with eight passes defensed, and added one interception, two tackles for loss and one quarterback pressure.

During four seasons at Auburn (2018-21), McCreary appeared in 43 games with 23 starts and posted 135 tackles, five interceptions, 35 passes defensed, 10 stops for loss, a forced fumble and two fumble recoveries.

As a senior in 2021, McCreary started 12 games at cornerback for the Tigers and collected a career-best 49 tackles, an interception, a sack, two stops for loss and a team-best 16 passes defensed. He was a first-team All-America selection by The Athletic, Associated Press, ESPN and Reese's Senior Bowl.

As a junior in 2020, he established career highs with three interceptions and seven tackles for loss.

McCreary is a native of Mobile, Ala.

Most tackles for loss among defensive backs from 2022 to 2024:

Defensive Back	2024 Team	Tackles for Loss
1. Mike Hilton	Cincinnati Bengals	28
2. Roger McCreary	Tennessee Titans	21
3. Derwin James	Los Angeles Chargers	20
4. Kyle Dugger	New England Patriots	19
5. Grant Delpit	Cleveland Browns	18
Kyle Hamilton	Baltimore Ravens	18
7. Jalen Pitre	Houston Texans	17
8. Kenny Moore II	Indianapolis Colts	16
Budda Baker	Arizona Cardinals	16
10. (four tied)		15

#38 • CB L'JARIUS SNEED

6-1, 192, 6th Year/2nd with Titans, Louisiana Tech
[Click for complete bio](#)

Cornerback **L'Jarius Sneed** is in his sixth NFL season and his second campaign with the Titans in 2025. He was acquired by the Titans in a trade with the Kansas City Chiefs on April 1, 2024.

Sneed started five games before missing the remainder of the season due to a quad injury. He was placed on injured reserve on Nov. 23. His statistics prior to the injury included 23 tackles and two tackles for loss.

Sneed spent four seasons with the Chiefs after they selected him in the fourth round (138th overall) of the 2020 NFL Draft. During that time, he tallied 10 interceptions, 40 passes defended and 6.5 sacks in 57 games. He and Harrison Smith were the only two NFL players from 2020 to 2023 to record at least 10 interceptions and 6.5 sacks.

Sneed also arrived in Tennessee with 13 games of postseason experience. He helped the Chiefs win two Super Bowls (LVII, LVIII), and his seven passes defended tied for third in the postseason from 2020 to 2023. He became one of five NFL players from 2000 to 2023 with at least 75 tackles, two sacks and seven passes defended in the postseason, joining **Ray Lewis, James Farrior, Brian Dawkins and Rodney Harrison**.

In 2023, he started 16 games at cornerback and amassed 78 tackles, two interceptions, a career-best 14 passes defended and a fumble recovery. He was in the starting lineup for all four Chiefs postseason games and generated 17 tackles, three passes defended and a forced fumble while helping the Chiefs to their second consecutive Super Bowl championship.

As a rookie in 2020, Sneed was named to the Pro Football Writers Association's All-Rookie team after notching 41 tackles, three interceptions, two sacks and seven passes defended in nine games.

As a college player at Louisiana Tech, Sneed was named second-team All-Conference USA as a senior in 2019. He played safety and cornerback in college, and in 51 games, he registered 177 tackles, eight interceptions and 19 passes defended.

He is a native of Minden, La.

Sneed's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Sneed's Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2020	KC	9	6	41	2.0	4	2	3	7	0	0
2021	KC	15	15	76	1.0	8	7	2	8	1	1
2022	KC	17	17	108	3.5	13	5	3	11	3	1
2023	KC	16	16	78	0.0	4	5	2	14	0	1
2024	Ten	5	5	23	0.0	0	2	0	0	0	0
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		62	59	326	6.5	29	21	10	40	4	3

Sneed's Career Postseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2020	KC	3	3	14	2.0	2	3	0	0	0	0
2021	KC	3	3	27	0.0	0	1	1	2	0	0
2022	KC	3	3	17	0.0	0	0	0	2	0	0
2023	KC	4	4	17	0.0	0	0	0	3	1	0
Totals		13	13	75	2.0	2	4	1	7	1	0

Sneed's Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

Tackles - 9 (Three times, last at New England, 12/17/23)
Interceptions - 1 (10 times, last vs. Philadelphia, 11/20/23)
Passes Defended - 3 (Three times, last vs. Buffalo, 12/10/23)
Sacks - 1 (Six times, last at Tampa Bay, 10/2/22)
Tackles For Loss - 2 (Twice, last at New England, 12/17/23)
Forced Fumble - 1 (Four times, last vs. Las Vegas, 10/10/22)
Fumble Recovery - 1 (Three times, last at Jacksonville, 9/17/23)

Sneed's Postseason Single-Game Highs:

Tackles - 10 vs. Cincinnati (1/30/22)
Interceptions - 1 vs. Cincinnati (1/30/22)
Passes Defended - 2 (Twice, last vs. Miami, 1/13/24)
Sacks - 1 (Twice, last vs. Buffalo, 1/24/21)
Tackles For Loss - 2 vs. Cleveland (1/17/21)
Forced Fumble - 1 at Baltimore (1/28/24)





TITANS SAFETIES

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
42	Bledsoe, Joshua	5-11	207	3	Missouri
33	Brooks, Kendall	6-0	206	1	Michigan State
44	Brown, Mike	6-1	218	3	Miami (Ohio)
28	Diggs, Quandre	5-9	197	11	Texas
37	Hooker, Amani	5-11	210	7	Iowa
23	Winston Jr., Kevin	6-2	213	R	Penn State
24	Wood, Julius	6-1	193	2	East Carolina
25	Woods, Xavier	5-11	200	9	Louisiana Tech

#28 • S QUANDRE DIGGS

5-9, 197, 11th Year/2nd with Titans, Texas

[Click for complete bio](#)



Three-time Pro Bowl safety **Quandre Diggs** is in his 11th NFL season and his second campaign with the Titans in 2025. He re-signed on Aug. 7, 2025 after initially joining the Titans as a free agent on Aug. 6, 2024.

Diggs was limited to eight games in 2024 due to a foot injury. Prior to being placed on injured reserve, he tallied 42 tackles.

Before arriving in Tennessee, Diggs totaled nine seasons between his time with the Detroit Lions (2015-19) and Seattle Seahawks (2019-23). He was originally drafted by the Lions in the sixth round (200th overall) of the 2015 NFL Draft and later traded to the Seahawks during the 2019 campaign. His career totals with the Lions and Seahawks included 137 games played, 112 starts, 24 interceptions, 56 passes defended, 574 tackles, one sack, five forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries. He was named to three consecutive Pro Bowls from 2020 to 2022.

In 2023, Diggs started every game for the Seahawks for the fourth consecutive season. He totaled a career-high 95 tackles to go along with one interception and five passes defended.

From 2017 through 2022, Diggs was the NFL's only player to record at least three interceptions every season. He set a career benchmark with five interceptions in 2020 and matched the number in 2021.

Diggs started a total of eight games in his first two years in Detroit. In his third season, he registered 11 starts before starting 16 games for the first time in 2018.

A native of Houston, Texas, Diggs played cornerback at the University of Texas, where he never missed a game in four seasons, appearing in 52 games with 49 starts. He finished his collegiate career tied for ninth in Longhorns history with 11 interceptions, while his 37 career passes defended tied for ninth on the all-time list. He earned All-Big 12 honors three times (2011, 2013, 2014).

Diggs' 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Diggs' Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2015	Det	16	4	35	0.0	0	2	0	6	1	1
2016	Det	12	4	42	0.0	2	2	0	1	1	0
2017	Det	16	11	54	1.0	3	5	3	9	1	0
2018	Det	16	16	78	0.0	1	3	3	8	0	0
2019	Det/Sea	10	10	41	0.0	0	0	3	3	1	1
2020	Sea	16	16	64	0.0	0	0	5	10	0	0
2021	Sea	17	17	94	0.0	0	1	5	7	0	0
2022	Sea	17	17	71	0.0	0	1	4	7	1	0
2023	Sea	17	17	95	0.0	1	1	1	5	0	0
2024	Ten	8	8	42	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		145	120	616	1.0	7	15	24	56	5	2

Diggs' Career Postseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2019	Sea	2	2	8	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	Sea	1	1	5	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	Sea	1	1	5	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		4	4	18	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Diggs' Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

Tackles - 13 at L.A. Rams (11/19/23)

Interceptions - 2 (Twice, last vs. Las Vegas, 11/27/22)

Passes Defended - 3 vs. Arizona (9/10/17)

Diggs' Postseason Single-Game Highs:

Tackles - 5 (Twice, last at San Francisco, 1/14/23)

INTERCEPTIONS, 2017-2024

Since the beginning of the 2017 season, which was **Quandre Diggs'** third NFL season, he ranks among the NFL leaders in interceptions. Over the course of eight seasons through 2024, only six players had more interceptions than him.

Most interceptions from 2017 to 2024:

Player	Interceptions
1. Justin Simmons	30
2. Kevin Byard	29
Xavien Howard	29
4. Tyrann Mathieu	27
5. J.C. Jackson	26
6. Harrison Smith	25
7. Quandre Diggs	24
Jessie Bates	24
9. Jordan Poyer	22
Jalen Ramsey	22
Darius Slay	22



#37 • S AMANI HOOKER

5-11, 210, 7th Year/7th with Titans, Iowa

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Safety **Amani Hooker** is in his seventh NFL season in 2025. He was selected by the Titans in the fourth round (116th overall) of the 2019 NFL Draft.

During his first six seasons, Hooker's totals included 12 interceptions, 31 passes defended and 315 tackles in 80 games (51 starts). Only **Kevin Byard** had more interceptions for the team from 2019 through 2024.

In 2024, Hooker appeared in 14 games. He led the Titans defense with a career-best five interceptions, and he tied for the team lead with a career-high nine passes defended. His 14 starts also established career highs, as did his seven quarterback pressures, four tackles for loss and two forced fumbles.

In 2023, Hooker played in 13 games and recorded 13 starts. He also established a career high with 80 tackles, which ranked fourth on the defense, and added one interception, seven passes defended, two quarterback pressures and three tackles for loss. He finished the campaign on injured reserve.

In 2022, Hooker was limited to nine games due to injuries. He contributed 46 tackles, one interception, three passes defended, one forced fumble, one fumble recovery, four quarterback pressures and one tackle for loss.

Hooker appeared in 12 games in 2021 with a career-high 12 starts. He totaled a career-best 62 tackles, one tackle for loss, one interception, four passes defended and one forced fumble. He added seven tackles and an interception in the team's divisional playoff contest.

In 2020, Hooker played 16 games with three starts. He tied **Malcolm Butler** for the team lead with four interceptions and ranked fourth on the team with seven special teams tackles. Additionally, he totaled one tackle for loss and eight passes defended.

As a rookie in 2019, Hooker played as a reserve safety in all 16 games and collected 13 tackles while ranking third on the team with eight special teams tackles.

During a three-year career at Iowa, Hooker played in 36 games with 19 starts and totaled 125 tackles, six interceptions, a sack, 3.5 tackles for loss and nine passes defended. He declared for the NFL Draft following his junior campaign.

Hooker is a native of Minneapolis, Minn.

Hooker's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2025	Ten	1	1	2	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Hooker's Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2019	Ten	16	0	13	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	Ten	16	3	44	0.0	0	1	4	8	0	0
2021	Ten	12	12	62	0.0	0	1	1	4	1	0
2022	Ten	9	9	46	0.0	4	1	1	3	1	1
2023	Ten	13	13	80	0.0	2	3	1	7	0	0
2024	Ten	14	14	70	0.0	7	4	5	9	2	0
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		80	51	315	0.0	13	10	12	31	4	1

Hooker's Career Postseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2019	Ten	3	0	3	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	Ten	1	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	Ten	1	1	7	0.0	0	0	1	2	0	0
Totals		5	1	10	0.0	0	0	1	2	0	0

Hooker's Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

Tackles - 12 at L.A. Rams (11/7/21)

Interceptions - 2 vs. New England (11/3/24)

Passes Defended - 3 vs. New England (11/3/24)

Hooker's Playoff Single-Game Highs:

Tackles - 7 vs. Cincinnati (1/22/22)

Interceptions - 1 vs. Cincinnati (1/22/22)

Passes Defended - 2 vs. Cincinnati (1/22/22)

TITANS INTERCEPTIONS, 1999-2024

During the franchise's "Titans era," which began in 1999, safety **Amani Hooker** has the ninth most interceptions for the team. He has picked off 12 passes since he was selected by the Titans in the fourth round of the 2019 NFL Draft.

Most interceptions for the Titans from 1999 to 2024:

Player	Position	Seasons	Interceptions
1. Kevin Byard III	S	2016-2023	27
2. Michael Griffin	S	2007-2015	25
3. Samari Rolle	CB	1999-2004	23
4. Keith Bulluck	LB	2000-2009	19
5. Andre Dyson	CB	2001-2004	16
Chris Hope	S	2006-2011	16
7. Cortland Finnegan	CB	2006-2011	14
8. Jason McCourty	CB	2009-2016	13
9. Amani Hooker	S	2019-2024	12
10. Alterraun Verner	CB	2010-2013	11

2024 INTERCEPTION LEADERS

With five interceptions in 2024, Titans safety **Amani Hooker** recorded a career high and tied for the sixth-best total in the NFL.

Most interceptions in 2024:

Player	Team	Position	Interceptions
1. Kerby Joseph	Detroit Lions	FS	9
2. Xavier McKinney	Green Bay Packers	FS	8
3. C.J. Gardner-Johnson	Philadelphia Eagles	S	6
Marlon Humphrey	Baltimore Ravens	CB	6
Byron Murphy	Minnesota Vikings	CB	6
6. Amani Hooker	Tennessee Titans	FS	5
Donte Jackson	Pittsburgh Steelers	CB	5
Derek Stingley Jr.	Houston Texans	CB	5
Calen Bullock	Houston Texans	FS	5
10. (nine tied)			4

#25 • S XAVIER WOODS

5-11, 200, 9th Year/1st with Titans, Louisiana Tech
[Click for complete bio](#)

Safety **Xavier Woods** is in his ninth NFL season and his first campaign with the Titans in 2025. He was signed by the Titans as a free agent on March 14, 2025.

Woods arrived in Tennessee with eight years of NFL experience, including four seasons with the Dallas Cowboys (2017-20), one season with the Minnesota Vikings (2021) and three seasons with the Carolina Panthers (2022-24). During that span, he appeared in 123 games with 111 starts and totaled 616 tackles, 13 interceptions, 47 passes defended, 11 stops for loss, one sack, five forced fumbles and five fumble recoveries.

Playing in Carolina in 2024, Woods did not miss a defensive snap and led the league in the category with 1,152, according to TruMedia. He set a career best with 119 tackles and tied his career high with three interceptions.

Woods was a sixth-round selection by Dallas in the 2017 NFL Draft. He played four seasons at Louisiana Tech and was named an All-Conference USA selection three times. Woods finished fifth in school history with 14 career interceptions to go along with a school-record 325 interception return yards. Titans cornerback **L'Jarius Sneed** and Woods were teammates with the Bulldogs in 2016.

He is a native of West Monroe, La.

Woods' 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2025	Ten	1	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Woods' Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2017	Dal	16	4	40	0.0	0	1	1	3	0	1
2018	Dal	14	14	56	0.0	0	0	2	9	1	0
2019	Dal	15	15	75	0.0	0	1	2	5	2	1
2020	Dal	15	15	72	0.0	2	2	0	1	0	0
2021	Min	17	17	107	1.0	1	1	3	10	2	0
2022	Car	15	15	86	0.0	3	0	0	6	0	2
2023	Car	14	14	61	0.0	1	4	2	7	0	1
2024	Car	17	17	119	0.0	0	2	3	6	0	0
2025	Ten	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		123	111	616	1.0	7	11	13	47	5	5

Woods' Career Postseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tackle	Sack	QBP	TFL	Int	PD	FF	FR
2019	Dal	2	2	10	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		2	2	10	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Woods' Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

Tackles - 12 at Tampa Bay (12/29/24)

Interceptions - 1 (13 times, last vs. Tampa Bay, 12/1/24)

Passes Defended - 3 (Twice, last vs. Washington, 11/22/18)

Forced Fumble - 1 (Five times, last vs. Dallas, 10/31/21)

Fumble Recovery - 1 (Five times, last vs. Houston, 10/29/23)

Woods' Postseason Single-Game Highs:

Tackles - 8 at L.A. Rams (1/12/19)

TITANS
SPECIALISTS

PUNTERS

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
3	Hekker, Johnny	6-5	225	14	Oregon State

KICKERS

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
6	Slye, Joey	5-11	213	7	Virginia Tech

LONG SNAPPERS

No.	Name	Ht	Wt	Exp	College
46	Cox, Morgan	6-4	233	16	Tennessee

#46 • LS MORGAN COX

6-4, 233, 16th Year/5th with Titans, Tennessee

[Click for complete bio](#)



Long snapper **Morgan Cox** is in his 16th NFL season and his fifth campaign with the Titans in 2025. He was signed by the Titans as an unrestricted free agent on March 19, 2021.

In 2024, Cox handled all of the team's long snapping duties for the fourth consecutive season. With 68 consecutive games played in his first four seasons with the Titans, he finished the 2024 campaign with the longest active streak of games played for the team. It was the 12th time in his career he appeared in every game for his team.

With Cox serving as the team's long snapper, kicker **Nick Folk** led the NFL in field goal percentage for the second consecutive season in 2024. Folk connected on 21 of 22 field goals for an NFL-best rate of 95.5 percent. Meanwhile, punter **Ryan Stonehouse** ranked third in the NFL with an average of 50.6 yards per punt attempt. Also in 2024, Cox was a finalist for the NFL's Bart Starr Award for the second consecutive year.

Cox finished the 2024 season with a career total of 233 games played. He ranked 10th among all active NFL players, and his total also moved him past **Reggie White** (232 games) for the fourth-most NFL games played by a former University of Tennessee Volunteer behind tight end **Jason Witten** (271 NFL games), quarterback **Peyton Manning** (266) and punter **Dustin Colquitt** (255).

In 2023, Cox's efforts helped Folk lead the NFL in field goal accuracy (96.7 percent) and helped Stonehouse lead the NFL for a second consecutive season in gross punting average (53.1).

In 2022, Cox was named to his fifth career Pro Bowl. He has more Pro Bowl appearances than any other player at his position since the league began naming long snappers to the Pro Bowl in 2004.

His steady play in 2022 helped Stonehouse, a rookie, lead the league and set a new NFL record with a 53.1-yard gross punting average. Stonehouse also finished fourth in the NFL and set a rookie record with a 44.0-yard net average. Meanwhile, kicker **Randy Bullock** made 17 of 20 field goals (85.0 percent) and made all 28 extra point attempts.

In 2021, Cox handled all of the team's long snapping duties in 17 regular season games and one postseason game. He helped Bullock finish ninth in franchise history with 120 points in a single season, including three game-winning field goals (Sept. 19 at Seattle, Oct. 31 at Indianapolis and Dec. 23 against San Francisco). He also snapped for punter **Brett Kern**, who had the league's third-best ratio of punts inside the 20 to touchbacks (18:1).

In his first 11 seasons, Cox appeared in 165 regular season games for the Baltimore Ravens, serving as the team's primary long snapper after entering the NFL as an undrafted free agent in 2010. He was selected to four Pro Bowls and was a part of five playoff teams in Baltimore, totaling 10 postseason games played.

In 2020, he earned his fourth career Pro Bowl selection. He helped kicker **Justin Tucker** record his fifth consecutive season with at least 130 points, tying the NFL record of consecutive seasons with 130-plus points. Tucker connected on 26 of 29 field goals (89.7 percent) and was 52 of 53





on extra points (98.1 percent). Cox also snapped on all 51 of **Sam Koch's** 51 punts, as Koch was the NFL's only punter to place at least 20 punts (22) inside in the 20-yard line and have no more than one touchback.

A native of Collierville, Tenn., Cox played 38 games in three seasons (2007-09) as the primary long snapper at the University of Tennessee.

Cox's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	SpT Tackles
2025	Ten	1	1	0

Cox's Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	SpT Tackles
2010	Bal	15	0	1
2011	Bal	16	0	0
2012	Bal	16	0	2
2013	Bal	16	0	2
2014	Bal	7	0	0
2015	Bal	16	0	0
2016	Bal	16	0	2
2017	Bal	16	0	1
2018	Bal	16	0	1
2019	Bal	16	0	0
2020	Bal	15	0	2
2021	Ten	17	0	1
2022	Ten	17	0	1
2023	Ten	17	0	1
2024	Ten	17	0	3
2025	Ten	0	0	0
NFL Totals		233	0	17

Cox's Career Postseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	GS	SpT Tackles
2011	Bal	2	0	0
2012	Bal	4	0	0
2018	Bal	1	0	0
2019	Bal	1	0	0
2020	Bal	2	0	0
2021	Ten	1	0	0
Playoff Totals		11	0	0

MOST GAMES BY ACTIVE NFL PLAYERS

At the conclusion of the 2024 season, Titans long snapper Morgan Cox was ranked 10th on the NFL's list for most career games by active players.

Most career games by active NFL players (through 2024):

Player	Pos	Current Team	Career Games
1. Mercedes Lewis	TE	Chicago Bears	285
2. Calais Campbell	DL	Miami Dolphins	261
3. J.J. Jansen	LS	Carolina Panthers	260
4. Thomas Morstead	P	New York Jets	255
5. Matt Prater	K	Arizona Cardinals	254
6. Aaron Rodgers	QB	New York Jets	248
Jason Peters	OL	Seattle Seahawks	248
8. Jon Weeks	LS	Houston Texans	244
9. Nick Folk	K	Tennessee Titans	242
10. Morgan Cox	LS	Tennessee Titans	233

#3 • P JOHNNY HEKKER

6-5, 225, 14th Year/1st with Titans, Oregon State

[Click for complete bio](#)



Four-time Pro Bowl punter **Johnny Hekker** is in his 14th NFL season and his first campaign with the Titans in 2025. He was signed by the Titans as an unrestricted free agent on March 13, 2025.

In 13 seasons before arriving in Tennessee, Hekker played in 212 games and punted 963 times for a 46.8-yard gross average (45,052 yards) with 378 punts placed inside the 20-yard line and a 42.9 career net punting average. A member of the NFL 2010's All-Decade team, Hekker is a six-time All-Pro with four first-team selections (2013, 2015-17) and two second-team selections (2014, 2018). He was named to the Pro Bowl following the 2013, 2015, 2016 and 2017 seasons.

Hekker has climbed near the top of several all-time NFL leaderboards during his career. In 2016, he established the NFL single-season record with 51 punts inside the 20 (51 in 2016), and in the same season, he established an NFL record (since broken) with a 46.0 net punting average. Hekker ended the 2024 campaign ranked fifth all-time in career net average (42.9) and tied for 11th all-time in gross average (46.8).

Hekker entered the league as a rookie free agent with the St. Louis Rams in 2012. The Oregon State product spent his first 10 NFL campaigns with the club and helped the Rams conclude the 2021 campaign with a win Super Bowl LVI before signing with the Carolina Panthers as a free agent in 2022.

In 2024, his last season with the Panthers, Hekker saw action in all 17 games and punted 73 times for 3,338 yards (45.7 gross avg.) with 24 punts placed inside the 20-yard line and a 41.9 net punt average.

He is a native of Bothell, Wash.

Hekker's 2025 Preseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	No	Yds	Avg	TB	In20	Lg	Blk	Net
2025	Ten	1	4	178	44.5	0	0	53	0	40.3

Hekker's Career Regular Season Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	No	Yds	Avg	TB	In20	Lg	Blk	Net
2012	StL	16	82	3,756	45.8	4	22	68	0	39.9
2013	StL	16	78	3,609	46.3	4	19	64	0	44.2
2014	StL	16	80	3,721	46.5	5	33	61	1	42.3
2015	StL	16	96	4,601	47.9	6	41	68	0	43.7
2016	LA	16	98	4,680	47.8	1	51	78	0	46.0
2017	LAR	16	65	3,113	47.9	4	30	70	0	44.3
2018	LAR	16	43	1,992	46.3	2	21	68	0	43.0
2019	LAR	16	66	3,128	47.4	5	22	71	1	42.4
2020	LAR	16	68	3,099	45.6	5	28	63	1	39.2
2021	LAR	17	51	2,252	44.2	1	23	59	0	42.6
2022	Car	17	81	3,925	48.5	6	39	68	0	44.1
2023	Car	17	82	3,838	46.8	5	25	69	0	43.0
2024	Car	17	73	3,338	45.7	3	24	65	1	41.9
2025	Ten	0	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	-
Totals		212	963	45,052	46.8	51	378	78	4	42.9

Hekker's Career Postseason Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	No	Yds	Avg	TB	In20	Lg	Blk	Net
2017	LAR	1	5	218	43.6	0	5	66	0	42.8
2018	LAR	3	14	629	44.9	0	6	65	0	44.8
2020	LAR	2	11	519	47.2	0	1	64	0	43.3
2021	LAR	4	16	712	44.5	2	9	58	0	39.3
Totals		10	46	2,078	45.2	2	21	66	0	42.3

Hekker's Regular Season Single-Game Highs:

Punts - 11 vs. San Francisco (9/26/13)

Yards - 490 vs. San Francisco (9/26/13)

Gross Avg. - 56.9 vs. Arizona (10/4/12)

Net Avg. - 52.9 at New England (12/4/16)

Long Punt - 78 at N.Y. Jets (11/13/16)

In20 - 6 (Four times, last vs. Atlanta 12/11/16)



Hekker's **Postseason** Single-Game Highs:
Punts - 9 vs. New England (2/3/19)
Yards - 417 vs. New England (2/3/19)
Gross Avg. - 50.5 at Green Bay (1/16/21)
Net Avg. - 46.3 at Green Bay (1/16/21)
Long Punt - 66 vs. Atlanta (1/6/18)
In20 - 5 (Three times, last vs. Arizona 1/17/22)

CAREER NET PUNTING AVERAGE LEADERS

Since he entered the NFL in 2012, Tennessee's **Johnny Hekker** has established himself as one of the league's all-time leaders in net punting average. His 42.9-yard career net average at the conclusion of the 2024 season ranked fifth in NFL history.

NFL all-time net punting leaders (since 1976):

Player	Career Net Punt Avg.
1. Logan Cooke	43.5
2. Jack Fox	43.2
3. Tommy Townsend	43.1
4. Michael Dickson	43.0
5. Johnny Hekker	42.9
6. AJ Cole	42.4
7. Cameron Johnston	42.3
8. Rigoberto Sanchez	41.8
9. Thomas Morstead	41.5
Tress Way	41.5

SINGLE-SEASON NET PUNTING LEADERS

As a member of the Los Angeles Rmas in 2016, **Johnny Hekker** established a single-season NFL record with a 46.0-yard net punting average. The record stood until Detroit's **Jack Fox** (46.2) broke it in 2024.

NFL all-time single-season net punting average leaders (since 1976):

Player	Season	Team	Punt	Gross Yards	Gross Avg	TB	Net Average
1. Jack Fox	2024	Det	45	2,295	51.0	4	46.2
2. Johnny Hekker	2016	LAR	98	4,680	47.8	1	46.0
3. Tommy Townsend	2022	KC	53	2,672	50.4	4	45.6
Jake Bailey	2020	NE	55	2,678	48.7	5	45.6
5. AJ Cole	2023	LV	75	3,783	50.4	6	45.1
6. Bryan Anger	2023	Dal	44	2,262	51.4	2	44.9
7. Logan Cooke	2024	Jax	68	3,359	49.4	3	44.8
Jack Fox	2020	Det	59	2,897	49.1	7	44.8
9. Bryan Anger	2021	Dal	65	3,143	48.4	4	44.6
Brett Kern	2017	Ten	75	3,728	49.7	5	44.6



PUNTS INSIDE THE 20 IN A SEASON

In 2016, **Johnny Hekker** placed 51 punts inside the opponent's 20-yard line to set a new NFL record. Hekker now owns two of the NFL's top single-season totals of punts placed in side the 20. His 41 such punts in 2015 are tied for seventh all-time.

Most punts placed inside the 20 in a season, NFL history:

Player	Season	Team	Tot Punts	Inside the 20
1. Johnny Hekker	2016	LA Rams	98	51
2. Dave Zastudil	2012	Arizona	112	46
3. Dustin Colquitt	2012	Kansas City	83	45
4. Ben Graham	2009	Arizona	86	42
Andy Lee	2007	San Francisco	105	42
Steve Weatherford	2010	NY Jets	84	42
7. Johnny Hekker	2015	St. Louis	96	41
Dustin Colquitt	2009	Kansas City	96	41
Matthew Hayball	2024	New Orleans	75	41
Tress Way	2018	Washington	79	41

#6 • K JOEY SLYE

5-11, 213, 7th Year/1st with Titans, Virginia Tech
[Click for complete bio](#)



Kicker **Joey Slye** is in his seventh NFL season and his first campaign with the Titans in 2025. He was signed as an unrestricted free agent on March 24, 2025.

Prior to arriving in Tennessee, Slye appeared in 95 games over six seasons with the Carolina Panthers (2019-20), Houston Texans (2022), San Francisco 49ers (2022), Washington Commanders (2022-23) and New England Patriots (2024). The Virginia Tech product has also spent time with the N.Y. Giants and Jacksonville Jaguars. From 2019 to 2024, he made 147 field goals on 180 attempts and added 163 extra points on 182 attempts.

In 2024, Slye played in all 17 games for the Patriots and connected on 26 of 33 field goal attempts and 25 of 26 extra point attempts for a total of 103 points. At San Francisco on Sept. 29, 2024, he set a Patriots record and established his career long with a 63-yard field goal at the end of the second quarter. It tied for the fourth-longest field goal in NFL history.

In his final season in Washington (2023), Slye saw action in all 17 games and handled all kickoffs, field goals and extra points for the Commanders. He connected on 19 of 24 field goals and 32 of 35 extra points for 89 points. Also had 64 touchbacks on 69 kickoffs.

The North Stafford, Va., native attended Virginia Tech (2014-17), where he played four seasons and made 78 of 108 field goal attempts (72.2 percent) and 169 of 172 extra point attempts (98.3 percent).

Slye's 2025 **Preseason** Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	FGM	FGA	Pct	Lg	XPM	XPA	Pts
2025	Ten	1	0	0	-	-	1	1	1

Slye's Career **Regular Season** Statistics:

Year	Team	GP	FGM	FGA	Pct	Lg	XPM	XPA	Pts
2019	Car	16	25	32	78.1	55	31	35	106
2020	Car	16	29	36	80.6	56	33	36	120
2021	Hou/SF/Was	12	23	25	92.0	56	18	22	87
2022	Was	17	25	30	83.3	58	24	28	99
2023	Was	17	19	24	79.2	61	32	35	89
2024	NE	17	26	33	78.8	63	25	26	103
2025	Ten	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0
NFL Totals		95	147	180	81.7	63	163	182	604

Slye's Regular Season **Single-Game** Highs:

Field Goals Made - at L.A. Chargers (9/27/20)
Field Goal Attempts - 5 (Four times, last vs. Indianapolis 12/1/24)
Longest Field Goal - 63 at San Francisco (9/29/24)
PATs Made - 5 at Arizona (9/22/19)
PATs Attempted - 5 (Twice, last vs. Jacksonville, 10/6/19)
Points - 15 at L.A. Chargers (9/27/20)

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IMPORTANT DATES

- August 12-13** Joint Titans-Falcons practices in Flowery Branch, Ga.
August 15 Second preseason game at Atlanta Falcons
August 22 Titans host Minnesota Vikings in nationally-televvised preseason finale (7 p.m. CT, CBS)
August 26 Prior to 3 p.m. CT, clubs must reduce rosters to a maximum of 53 players on the active/inactive list
August 27 Clubs may establish practice squads of up to 17 players, including one international player
September 7 Titans open regular season at Denver Broncos
September 14 Titans home opener against Los Angeles Rams

DAILY TRAINING CAMP MEDIA SCHEDULE

The training camp media schedule is subject to change. Practices typically last two hours. Head coach Brian Callahan generally speaks with media before practice, and player availability takes place immediately following practice. All practices take place at Ascension Saint Thomas Sports Park unless otherwise listed. Times listed are central unless otherwise indicated.

**** Practice times are subject to change ****

Tuesday, Aug. 12 - IBM Performance Field (Flowery Branch, Ga.)

10:00 a.m. EDT Joint practice at Atlanta

Wednesday, Aug. 13 - IBM Performance Field (Flowery Branch, Ga.)

10:00 a.m. EDT Joint practice at Atlanta

Thursday, Aug. 14

No media access

Friday, Aug. 15

7:00 p.m. EDT Titans at Atlanta Falcons

Saturday, Aug. 16

Time TBD Press conference with Brian Callahan

Sunday, Aug. 17

No media access

Monday, Aug. 18

No media access

Tuesday, Aug. 19

8:00 a.m. Practice

Wednesday, Aug. 20

8:00 a.m. Practice

Thursday, Aug. 21

No media access

Friday, Aug. 22

7:00 p.m. Titans vs. Minnesota Vikings

Saturday, Aug. 23

Time TBD Press conference with Brian Callahan

Sunday, Aug. 24

No media access

Monday, Aug. 25

No media access

Tuesday, Aug. 26

No media access

Wednesday, Aug. 27

3:00 p.m. Practice

Thursday, Aug. 28

10:30 a.m. Practice

The schedule after Aug. 28 will be announced at a later date.



TITANS RADIO

TITANS RADIO GAMEDAY BROADCAST TEAM

Taylor Zarzour, a nationally recognized broadcaster with over 20 years of experience, joins the Titans Radio Network as the new play-by-play voice of the Tennessee Titans. Known for his energetic style, clarity, and deep football knowledge, Zarzour has called games for ESPN, SEC Network, and SiriusXM. His addition signals a new era of Titans Radio, bringing fans closer than ever to the action.

Returning for his ninth season as color analyst is **Dave McGinnis**, whose four decades of coaching experience—including time as an NFL head coach and longtime Titans assistant—provide invaluable insight and analysis. A fan favorite affectionately known as “Coach Mac,” McGinnis’ passion and expertise make every broadcast a must-listen event.

Joining the game day team as sideline reporter is **Will Boling**, a versatile broadcaster and Nashville native with a growing footprint in Tennessee sports media. Boling has been a familiar voice on 104.5 The Zone, known for his high school football coverage and engaging on-air presence. His energy and local perspective will bring fans the latest developments from field level each game.

Amie Wells also returns to the sidelines for her 13th season with the Titans organization. A trusted voice and seasoned broadcaster, Wells brings unmatched knowledge of the team and contributes across the Titans media network, including hosting Titans All Access, The Official Titans Podcast, and co-hosting Titans Tonight on Titans Radio.

Lucas Panzica steps into the role of host for Titans Countdown and the post-game show, anchoring the pre- and post-game experience for Titans fans. A Nashville native and multi-sport broadcaster, Panzica brings energy, expertise, and a strong connection to the local sports landscape.

Rounding out the team is **Rhett Bryan**, returning for his 27th season with Titans Radio and 12th as executive producer. A cornerstone of the broadcast operation since 1999, Bryan wears many hats—from producer to on-air talent and behind-the-scenes problem solver—and continues to enhance the Titans Radio experience for fans each week.



TITANS RADIO WEEKLY SHOW LINEUP

In addition to gameday coverage, Titans Radio features a lineup of weekly shows throughout the season to keep fans informed and entertained:

The Brian Callahan Show: Mondays | 6-7 PM CT | Titans Radio

Hosted by Amie Wells and Taylor Zarzour, this show features Titans head coach Brian Callahan breaking down the latest game, looking ahead to the next opponent, and providing insight on the entire NFL landscape.

Mac Talk: Tuesdays | 6-7 PM CT | 104.5 The Zone

Coach Dave McGinnis and Rhett Bryan team up to analyze league-wide action and preview upcoming NFL matchups, blending Xs and Os with stories from the locker room and the sidelines.

Titans Tonight: Wednesdays | 6-7 PM CT | Titans Radio

Co-hosted by Amie Wells, Rhett Bryan, and former Titans linebacker Keith Bulluck, this fan-favorite program covers the latest Titans news, headlines around the NFL, and in-depth discussions on team strategy and performance.

TITANS RADIO AFFILIATES

Flagship

Nashville WGFX FM 104.5

Tennessee

Camden WRJB FM 95.9

Chattanooga WGOW FM 102.3

Clarksville WKFN AM 540

Cleveland WCLE FM 104.1

Columbia WKOM FM 101.7

Cookeville WKXD FM 106.9

Franklin WAKM AM 950

Greeneville WIKQ FM 103.1

Jackson WZDQ FM 102.3

Knoxville WOKI FM 98.7

Lebanon WANT FM 98.9

Lebanon WCOR AM 1490

Lewisburg WJJM FM 94.3

Manchester WMSR FM 107.9

Memphis WKIM FM 98.9

Morristown WCRK FM 105.7

Nashville WGFX FM 104.5

Shelbyville WZNG FM 100.9

AM 1400

Tennessee

Tri-Cities WXSM AM 640

Union City WQAK FM 105.7

Waverly WQMV FM 93.5

AM 1060

Winchester WCDT AM 1340

Alabama

Birmingham WJOX FM 94.5

Bridgeport WJTW AM 1480

Florence WQLT FM 107.3

Huntsville WUMP AM 730

FM 103.9

Huntsville WVNN AM 770

FM 92.5

Scottsboro WWIC AM 1050

AM 1050

Kentucky

Benton WCBL AM 1290

Bowling Green WPTQ FM 105.3

Cadiz WKDZ FM 106.5

Columbia WAIN FM 101.9

AM 1270

Henderson WSON AM 860

FM 96.5

TITANS PODCAST - "THE OTP"



The OTP: Official Titans Podcast

Sponsored by Farm Bureau Health Plans

Wednesdays year-round at 8pm at
www.tennesseetitans.com, the Titans YouTube
channel and wherever you get your podcasts.

In 2025, The OTP enters its eighth season. Hosted by Amie Wells, The OTP features appearances by current Titans, Titans legends, members of the front office, national media, local celebrities, Jim Wyatt, and Titans Radio's Rhett Bryan and Dave McGinnis. A new OTP posts every Monday and Thursday at 8 p.m. CT, but special episodes drop frequently, particularly around the NFL Combine, the NFL Draft, the Titans offseason program and training camp.

TITANS ON TV



Titans Football with Brian Callahan *presented by SeatGeek*

Tuesdays | 6:30-7 PM CT | WKRN News 2

It's the deepest dive that you will get anywhere on Tennessee Titans football! Head coach Brian Callahan breaks down Titans game tape, looks at the big plays from the most recent game and examines the most important issues around the NFL. Get to know Titans players, coaches, and staff every week on Titans Football with Brian Callahan presented by SeatGeek!

Beginning Sept. 9 - end of the season



Titans All Access

Fridays | 6-6:30 PM CT | Across the Mid-South

Want to know more about your favorite team? Titans All Access is the place for all things Two Toned Blue. From features to interviews and everything in between, this is the place for all things Titans.

Beginning Sept. 5 - end of the season



Titans Gameday

Sundays | 10:30-11 AM CT | WSMV 4

Chris Harris and the Titans Radio crew team up to bring you live coverage every Sunday morning before kickoff. Get the latest news before the Titans take the field.

Beginning Sept. 7 - end of the season



TENNESSEE TITANS OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STATS, 1999-2024 (REGULAR SEASON)

2012-2024 TITANS - OFFENSE													
OFFENSE	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
GAMES (Won-Lost)	3-14	6-11	7-10	12-5	11-5	9-7	9-7	9-7	9-7	3-13	2-14	7-9	6-10
FIRST DOWNS	309	298	277	362	381	317	289	290	322	298	258	311	260
Rushing	112	103	104	134	142	104	106	97	115	66	75	103	70
Passing	164	158	153	194	203	177	156	157	175	195	159	172	166
Penalty	33	37	20	34	36	36	27	36	32	37	24	36	24
YDS GAINED (tot)	5172	4,913	5,045	5,822	6,343	5,805	4,998	5,024	5,728	4,988	4,859	5,390	5,010
Avg per Game	304.2	289.0	296.8	342.5	396.4	362.8	312.4	314.0	358.0	311.8	303.7	336.9	313.1
RUSHING (net)	1855	1,846	2,131	2,404	2,690	2,223	2,023	1,833	2,187	1,485	1,447	1,894	1,687
Avg per Game	109.1	108.6	125.4	141.4	168.1	138.9	126.4	114.6	136.7	92.8	90.4	118.4	105.4
Rushes	450	444	487	551	521	445	454	443	476	371	356	462	378
Yards per Rush	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.4	5.2	5.0	4.5	4.1	4.6	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.5
PASSING (net)	3317	3,067	2,914	3,418	3,653	3,582	2,975	3,191	3,541	3,503	3,412	3,496	3,323
Avg per Game	195.1	180.4	171.4	201.1	228.3	223.9	185.9	199.4	221.3	218.9	213.3	218.5	207.7
Passes Att.	530	494	456	535	485	448	437	496	504	551	513	533	540
Completed	336	304	285	359	316	297	293	306	307	342	299	328	318
Pct Completed	63.4%	61.5	62.5	67.1	65.2	66.3	67.0	61.7	60.9	62.1	58.3	61.5	58.9
Yards Gained	3621	3,512	3,227	3,745	3,826	3,956	3,255	3,394	3,720	3,893	3,738	3,710	3,577
Sacked	52	64	49	47	25	56	47	35	28	54	50	37	39
Yards Lost	304	445	313	327	173	374	280	203	179	390	326	214	254
Had Intercepted	21	11	11	14	7	8	12	17	11	17	16	16	16
Yards Opp Ret	295	101	179	252	81	204	219	262	203	263	214	132	260
Opp TDs on Int	4	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	3	1	1	4
PUNTS	75	80	90	58	50	78	75	75	77	88	89	79	83
Avg Yards	49.2	50.1	53.1	44.3	45.1	47.1	46.4	49.7	44.2	47.4	46.3	42.9	46.4
PUNT RETURNS	34	42	36	30	23	22	27	36	30	38	30	31	31
Avg Return	7.4	7.9	8.4	9.8	9.0	7.7	8.8	8.5	7.9	8.1	6.9	7.7	15.3
Returned for TD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
KICKOFF RETURNS	40	18	37	40	38	30	23	28	33	33	48	44	63
Avg Return	27.0	20.7	21.4	19.5	20.2	21.3	32.0	22.1	19.1	20.6	23.4	24.9	23.6
Returned for TD	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
PENALTIES	132	110	111	103	86	99	82	85	110	93	111	101	106
Yards Penalized	1030	882	956	973	783	932	727	785	1,012	779	961	900	847
FUMBLES BY	28	19	23	25	15	21	18	10	17	25	23	27	21
Fumbles Lost	13	9	12	11	5	9	6	8	7	16	10	9	12
Opp Fumbles	16	19	19	21	21	16	14	23	12	16	7	24	15
Opp Fum Lost	7	8	6	6	8	9	6	9	6	8	4	12	5
POSS. TIME (avg)	30:44	29:14	29:16	32:40	28:28	28:31	29:28	29:51	30:32	29:25	27:31	30:00	27:18
TOUCHDOWNS	33	31	34	49	62	54	34	33	46	37	28	41	36
Rushing	11	16	16	23	26	21	15	18	16	10	6	16	10
Passing	22	14	16	22	33	29	16	14	29	25	20	22	17
Returns	0	1	2	4	3	4	3	1	1	2	2	3	9
EXTRA-PT KICKS	28/28	28/30	32/33	43/47	51/53	50/52	28/31	31/33	39/41	29/31	27/27	41/41	35/35
2-PT CONVERSIONS	3/4	1/1	1/1	2/2	4/7	1/2	0/1	0/0	0/5	3/5	0/1	0/0	1/1
FIELD GOALS/FGA	25/27	29/30	20/24	26/32	20/28	8/18	26/30	35/42	22/24	14/16	19/22	25/29	25/31
POINTS SCORED	311	305	298	419	491	402	310	334	381	299	254	362	330
TURNOVER DIFF.	-16	-6	-3	-3	+11	+6	-1	-4	0	-14	-10	0	-4

2012-2024 TITANS - DEFENSE													
DEFENSE	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
POINTS ALLOWED	460	367	359	354	439	331	303	356	378	423	438	381	471
OPP FIRST DOWNS	314	334	339	331	391	335	298	323	324	317	357	329	358
Rushing	118	103	93	90	113	95	98	68	70	101	119	108	122
Passing	157	189	215	204	247	213	182	231	227	192	211	191	210
Penalty	39	42	31	37	31	27	18	24	27	24	27	30	26
OPP YARDS GAINED	5291	5,697	5,978	5,607	6,372	5,752	5,334	5,248	5,720	5,475	5,968	5,407	5,999
Avg per Game	311.2	335.1	351.6	329.8	398.3	359.5	333.4	328.0	357.5	342.2	373.0	337.9	374.9
OPP RUSHING(net)	2277	1,831	1,307	1,438	1,933	1,672	1,863	1,420	1,413	1,797	2,195	1,795	2,035
Avg per Game	133.9	107.7	76.9	84.6	120.8	104.5	116.4	88.8	88.3	112.3	137.2	112.2	127.2
Rushes	503	480	390	368	427	415	429	398	356	462	515	446	483
Yards per Rush	4.5	3.8	3.4	3.9	4.5	4.0	4.3	3.6	4.0	3.9	4.3	4.0	4.2
OPP PASSING(net)	3014	3,866	4,671	4,169	4,439	4,080	3,471	3,828	4,307	3,678	3,773	3,612	3,964
Avg per Game	177.3	227.4	274.8	245.2	277.4	255.0	216.9	239.3	269.2	229.9	235.8	225.8	247.8
Passes Att.	473	571	671	628	630	598	533	605	635	502	545	545	564
Completed	314	387	439	395	423	386	337	369	388	319	347	344	374
Pct Completed	66.4%	67.8	65.4	62.9	67.1	64.5	63.2	61.0	61.1	63.5	63.7	63.1	66.3
Sacked	32	45	39	43	19	43	39	43	40	39	39	36	39
Yards Lost	202	315	264	316	154	276	248	272	278	271	222	227	241
INTERCEPTED BY	11	6	14	16	15	14	11	12	12	11	12	13	19
Yards Returned	86	86	149	128	189	158	120	154	68	164	122	113	358
Returned for TD	0	1	1	2	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	4
OPP PUNT RETURNS	47	29	59	22	20	30	33	41	36	47	43	35	39
Avg return	13.9	11.3	10.8	10.1	8.6	9.0	9.0	7.0	9.6	12.9	8.1	6.0	10.4
OPP KICKOFF RET	40	35	32	40	37	37	25	32	21	22	31	45	33
Avg return	28.9	23.3	20.3	20.3	22.2	23.7	27.8	23.4	22.0	27.2	27.6	24.4	26.1
OPP TOUCHDOWNS	39	33	41	38	55	39	32	36	43	51	48	40	55
Rushing	14	10	9	14	18	14	9	5	10	11	17	21	16
Passing	23	20	29	24	36	25	21	27	25	34	28	15	31
Returns	2	3	3	0	1	0	2	4	8	6	3	4	8



TENNESSEE TITANS OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STATS, 1999-2024 (REGULAR SEASON)

1999-2011 TITANS - OFFENSE

OFFENSE	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
GAMES (Won-Lost)	9-7	6-10	8-8	13-3	10-6	8-8	4-12	5-11	12-4	11-5	7-9	13-3	13-3
FIRST DOWNS	281	252	288	268	306	261	279	308	310	312	288	299	294
Rushing	71	73	115	108	118	105	72	85	84	112	87	107	109
Passing	185	155	154	143	171	133	191	200	211	182	179	167	167
Penalty	25	24	19	17	17	23	16	23	15	18	22	25	18
YDS GAINED (tot)	5,361	4,834	5,623	5,018	4,987	4,810	5,122	5,487	5,501	5,272	5,352	5,350	5,296
Avg per Game	335.1	302.1	351.4	313.6	311.7	300.6	320.1	342.9	343.8	329.5	334.5	334.4	331.0
RUSHING (net)	1,438	1,727	2,592	2,199	2,109	2,214	1,525	1,871	1,623	1,952	1,794	2,085	1,811
Avg per Game	89.9	107.9	162.0	137.4	131.8	138.4	95.3	116.9	101.4	122.0	112.1	130.3	113.2
Rushes	376	406	499	508	543	469	397	420	486	511	468	546	459
Yards per Rush	3.8	4.3	5.2	4.3	3.9	4.7	3.8	4.5	3.3	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9
PASSING (net)	3,923	3,107	3,031	2,819	2,878	2,596	3,597	3,616	3,878	3,320	3,558	3,265	3,485
Avg per Game	245.2	194.2	189.4	176.2	179.9	162.3	224.8	226.0	242.4	207.5	222.4	204.1	217.8
Passes Att.	584	474	476	453	464	447	594	589	502	500	515	462	527
Completed	353	273	271	265	288	226	358	356	315	306	307	286	304
Pct Completed	60.4	57.6	56.9	58.5	62.1	50.6	60.3	60.4	62.7	61.2	59.6	61.9	57.7
Yards Gained	4,113	3,278	3,104	2,902	3,077	2,748	3,797	3,933	4,031	3,441	3,867	3,430	3,622
Sacked	24	27	15	12	30	29	31	44	25	21	43	28	25
Yards Lost	190	171	73	83	199	152	200	317	153	121	309	165	137
Had intercepted	14	15	15	9	17	19	14	19	9	15	17	16	13
Yards Opp Ret	167	120	121	88	116	250	293	306	264	179	163	236	227
Opp TDs on Int	3	1	0	0	0	2	4	2	3	2	2	3	2
PUNTS	86	77	69	87	73	88	78	79	71	66	85	76	90
Avg Yards	43.6	42.9	43.4	42.8	41.9	42.7	43.2	42.9	43.9	41.3	42.0	40.8	42.5
PUNT RETURNS	47	27	33	34	42	37	45	40	37	28	36	53	40
Avg Return	10.4	12.2	6.7	9.7	8.7	12.6	9.3	4.3	11.6	7.8	7.8	12.7	9.0
Returned for TD	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
KICKOFF RETURNS	32	64	69	52	52	79	70	79	68	50	71	47	56
Avg Return	26.0	24.3	20.5	25.4	21.1	23.2	24.2	19.7	19.1	19.6	19.9	26.1	18.6
Returned for TD	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
PENALTIES	104	128	98	108	101	94	125	110	110	112	119	107	114
Yards Penalized	960	1,040	821	855	773	803	1,002	923	887	891	1,025	870	1,069
FUMBLES BY	17	22	27	18	32	29	27	33	24	20	18	24	17
Fumbles Lost	8	14	16	8	17	7	12	12	12	10	11	14	9
Opp Fumbles	20	25	20	28	26	19	20	22	21	22	21	39	39
Opp Fum Lost	12	8	7	11	12	11	11	12	13	11	11	13	24
POSS. TIME (avg)	27:52	25:54	28:27	29:09	31:38	27:17	31:13	31:40	32:52	32:47	31:29	33:48	31:30
TOUCHDOWNS	34	40	39	41	28	36	33	41	48	42	39	38	46
Rushing	8	13	19	24	17	15	8	12	11	16	12	14	19
Passing	22	24	16	13	9	13	20	27	30	22	23	18	23
Returns	4	3	4	4	2	8	5	2	7	4	4	6	4
EXTRA-PT KICKS	34/34	38/38	37/37	40/40	28/28	32/32	30/32	39/39	43/44	36/36	34/35	37/38	43/43
2-PT CONVERSIONS	0/0	1/2	1/2	1/1	0/0	3/3	0/1	1/2	3/4	2/6	3/4	0/0	1/3
FIELD GOALS/FGA	29/32	24/26	27/32	29/33	35/39	22/28	23/29	19/27	32/37	25/31	20/28	27/33	21/25
POINTS SCORED	325	356	354	375	301	324	299	344	435	367	336	346	392
TURNOVER DIFF.	+1	-4	-4	+14	0	+2	-6	-1	+13	+4	-4	0	+19

1999-2011 TITANS - DEFENSE

DEFENSE	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
POINTS ALLOWED	317	339	402	234	297	400	421	439	324	324	388	191	324
OPP FIRST DOWNS	324	356	323	276	268	329	294	318	275	297	300	215	300
Rushing	111	107	89	81	80	121	89	99	79	75	79	62	81
Passing	187	214	210	166	165	181	180	189	167	197	192	134	193
Penalty	26	35	24	29	23	27	25	30	29	25	29	19	26
OPP YARDS GAINED	5,682	5,883	5,850	4,698	4,665	5,915	5,110	5,724	4,901	4,964	5,515	3,814	5,245
Avg per Game	355.1	367.7	365.6	293.6	291.6	369.7	319.4	357.8	306.3	310.3	344.7	238.4	327.8
OPP RUSHING(net)	2,053	1,851	1,711	1,502	1,478	2,313	1,894	1,917	1,295	1,424	1,431	1,390	1,550
Avg per Game	128.3	115.7	106.9	93.9	92.4	144.6	118.4	119.8	80.9	89.0	89.4	86.9	96.9
Rushes	461	474	402	403	369	506	449	421	342	372	405	387	383
Yards per Rush	4.5	3.9	4.3	3.7	4.0	4.6	4.2	4.6	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.6	4.0
OPP PASSING(net)	3,629	4,032	4,139	3,196	3,187	3,602	3,216	3,807	3,606	3,540	4,084	2,424	3,695
Avg per Game	226.8	252.0	258.7	199.8	199.2	225.1	201.0	237.9	225.4	221.3	255.3	151.5	230.9
Passes Att.	591	625	604	575	569	530	470	524	546	562	559	466	557
Completed	369	410	404	342	349	335	296	333	332	339	328	242	312
Pct Completed	62.4	65.6	66.9	59.5	61.3	63.2	63.0	63.5	60.8	60.3	58.7	51.9	56.0
Sacked	28	40	32	44	40	26	41	32	38	40	32	55	54
Yards Lost	180	272	224	262	241	148	246	220	223	213	175	337	305
INTERCEPTED BY	11	17	20	20	22	17	9	18	21	18	13	17	16
Yards Returned	179	198	433	351	358	282	129	285	312	198	78	285	257
Returned for TD	1	1	4	3	2	2	2	1	3	3	0	4	1
OPP PUNT RETURNS	36	35	29	32	31	33	32	31	30	28	36	28	45
Avg return	6.1	6.1	7.2	9.1	8.8	8.4	4.5	6.3	9.2	13.9	7.3	5.7	7.4
OPP KICKOFF RET	30	56	71	61	58	58	57	69	81	74	57	76	76
Avg return	22.7	24.8	24.1	25.0	24.2	21.8	22.6	20.1	18.8	20.0	24.9	20.9	21.0
OPP TOUCHDOWNS	34	32	48	25	35	46	51	52	35	40	46	20	39
Rushing	10	7	16	12	11	20	12	18	10	7	17	7	8
Passing	21	23	31	12	21	24	33	29	20	27	27	10	26
Returns	3	2	1	1	3	2	6	5	5	6	2	3	5



2025 TENNESSEE TITANS PRESEASON STATISTICS

TENNESSEE TITANS: WON 0, LOST 1

DATE	RESULT	OPPONENT	TIME/ATTEND
W2- 8/9	L 7-29	at Tampa Bay	60,488
W3- 8/15		at Atlanta	7:00pm ET
W4- 8/22		MINNESOTA	8:00pm ET

TEAM TOTALS	TEAM	OPPONENTS
FIRST DOWNS	11	20
Rushing	3	9
Passing	8	9
Penalty	0	2
3rd Downs	5-13 (38.5%)	7-16 (43.8%)
4th Downs	1-3 (33.3%)	1-1 (100.0%)
AVG. POSSESSION PER 60 MINS	25:01	34:59
TOTAL NET YARDS	201	348
Avg. Per Game	201.0	348.0
Total Plays	56	67
Avg. Per Play	3.6	5.2
NET YARDS RUSHING	66	178
Avg. Per Game	66.0	178.0
Attempts	21	41
NET YARDS PASSING	135	170
Avg. Per Game	135.0	170.0
Sacked/Yards Lost	2/18	1/7
Gross Yards	153	177
Att-Comp	15-33 (45.5%)	18-25 (72.0%)
Had Intercepted	3	0
PUNTS/AVERAGE	4/44.5	3/49.0
PUNTS/NET AVERAGE	4/40.3	3/42.0
PENALTIES/YARDS	7/61	5/45
FUMBLES/LOST	0/0	2/1
TOUCHDOWNS	1	3
Rushing	1	2
Passing	0	0
Returns	0	1

SCORE BY PERIOD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	OT	TOT
TEAM	0	7	0	0	0	7
OPPONENTS	3	10	0	16	0	29

SCORING	TOT	RU	PA	RT	XPK	XP2	FG	SAF	PTS
Pollard	1	1	0	0	0/0	0	0/0	0	6
Slye	0	0	0	0	1/1	0	0/0	0	1
Defensive 2-Pt Runback:	TM- 0; OPP- 0								
Safety On Try After TD:	TM- 0; OPP- 0								
TEAM	1	1	0	0	1/1	0-0	0/0	0	7
OPPONENTS	3	2	0	1	2/3	0-0	3/3	0	29

SACKS	
J. Ward- 1.0; TM- 1.0; OPP- 2.0	

FUMBLES/LOST	
TM- 0/0; OPP- 2/1	

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	COMP%	YDS/ATT	TD	TD%
C. Ward	8	5	67	62.5	8.38	0	0.0
Allen	12	6	62	50.0	5.17	0	0.0
Boyle	13	4	24	30.8	1.85	0	0.0
TEAM	33	15	153	45.5	4.64	0	0.0
OPPONENTS	25	18	177	72.0	7.08	0	0.0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Mullings	7	33	4.7	12	0
Chestnut	3	18	6.0	8	0
Pollard	4	9	2.3	5	1
Mims	3	8	2.7	7	0
Allen	1	-1	-1.0	-1	0
Spears	3	-1	-0.3	3	0
TEAM	21	66	3.1	12	1
OPPONENTS	41	178	4.3	23	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Ridley	3	50	16.7	27	0
Helm	1	16	16.0	16	0
Spears	1	13	13.0	13	0
Sheffield	1	12	12.0	12	0
Oliver	1	11	11.0	11	0
Okonkwo	1	10	10.0	10	0
Chestnut	1	8	8.0	8	0
Martin-Robinson	1	8	8.0	8	0
Lockett	1	7	7.0	7	0
Whyle	1	7	7.0	7	0
Dike	1	6	6.0	6	0
Mims	2	5	2.5	6	0
TEAM	15	153	10.2	27	0
OPPONENTS	18	177	9.8	25	0

INTERCEPTIONS	INT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
TEAM	0	0	0	0	0
OPPONENTS	3	45	15.0	39t	1

PUNTING	TOT	YDS	AVG	NET	TB	IN20	LONG	BLK
Hekker	4	178	44.5	40.3	0	0	53	0
TEAM	4	178	44.5	40.3	0	0	53	0
OPPONENTS	3	147	49	42	1	1	57	0

PUNT RETURNS	RET	FC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Proche	1	0	1	1.0	1	0
Jackson	0	1	0	---	0	0
TEAM	1	1	1	1.0	1	0
OPPONENTS	1	0	17	17.0	17	0

KICKOFF RETURNS	RET	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Sheffield	2	54	27.0	29	0
Dike	1	32	32.0	32	0
Jackson	1	23	23.0	23	0
Landers	1	22	22.0	22	0
Proche	1	21	21.0	21	0
TEAM	6	152	25.3	32	0
OPPONENTS	1	19	19.0	19	0

FIELD GOALS	<20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	TOT
TEAM	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
OPPONENTS	0/0	1/1	1/1	1/1	0/0	3/3

FIELD GOAL ATTEMPTS	
TEAM: W2-; W3-; W4-	
OPPONENTS: W2-45G,23G,36G; W3-; W4-	

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	COMP%	YDS/ATT	TD	TD%	INT	INT%	LONG	SAC/LST	RATING
C. Ward	8	5	67	62.5	8.38	0	0.0	0	0.0	27	0/0	89.1
Allen	12	6	62	50.0	5.17	0	0.0	1	8.3	16	1/8	30.6
Boyle	13	4	24	30.8	1.85	0	0.0	2	15.4	12	1/10	0.6
TEAM	33	15	153	45.5	4.64	0	0.0	3	9.1	27	2/18	21.4
OPPONENTS	25	18	177	72.0	7.08	0	0.0	0	0.0	25	1/7	91.6

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2025 TENNESSEE TITANS PRESEASON DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

PLAYER	TACKLES			SACKS		TFL	INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES		
	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds		No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
Horne, Timmy	7	3	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gray, Cedric	7	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Williams, James	6	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wood, Julius	6	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bledsoe, Joshua	5	1	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Raikes, Isaiah	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Jeudy-Lally, Gabe	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brown, Mike	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Brooke, Kendell	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oladejo, Olawufemi	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ross, Davion	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Harrell, Jaylen	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lewis, Clarence	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Hooker, Amani	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Harris, Marcus	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Horsley, Cam	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gaye, Ali	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blidi, Philip	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ward, Jihad	1	1	0	1	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Baker, Darrell	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Harris, Jermari	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jacobs, Curtis	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barton, Cody	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Key, Arden	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lynch, James	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oruwariye, Amani	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Evans, Desmond	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Burney, Amari	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brownlee, Jarvis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	52	33	19	2	25	3	1	0	29	0	4	1	0	0

TITANS SPECIAL TEAMS STATISTICS

PLAYER	TACKLES			FUMBLES		BLOCKS		
	Tot	Solo	Asst	FF	FR	PAT	FG	PUNT
Williams, James	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jacobs, Curtis	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEAM TOTALS:	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

MISCELLANEOUS STATISTICS

PLAYER	TACKLES			FUMBLES	
	Tot	Solo	Asst	FF	FR
Mullings, Kalel	1	1	0	0	0
Proche, James	1	1	0	0	0
TEAM TOTALS:	0	0	0	0	0

Legend:	
Tot	Total Tackles
Solo	Unassisted Tackles
Asst	Assisted Tackles
Sk	Quarterback Sacks
Yds	Yards Lost on Sack
QBP	Quarterback Pressure
TFL	Tackle for Loss
Int	Interceptions
Yds	Interception Return Yards
TD	Interceptions Return Touchdowns
PD	Passes Defensed
FF	Forced Fumble
FR	Fumble Recoveries
Yds	Yards on Fumble Returns

2024 TENNESSEE TITANS REGULAR SEASON STATISTICS

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ROSTERS

TENNESSEE TITANS: WON 3, LOST 14

DATE	RESULT	OPPONENT	TIME/ATTEND
W1- 9/8	L 17-24	at Chicago	59,403
W2- 9/15	L 17-24	NEW YORK JETS	65,509
W3- 9/22	L 14-30	GREEN BAY	67,322
W4- 9/30	W 31-12	at Miami	65,291
W6- 10/13	L 17-20	INDIANAPOLIS	64,302
W7- 10/20	L 10-34	at Buffalo	70,842
W8- 10/27	L 14-52	at Detroit	64,316
W9- 11/3	W 20-17 (OT)	NEW ENGLAND	66,533
W10- 11/10	L 17-27	at Los Angeles Chargers	68,796
W11- 11/17	L 13-23	MINNESOTA	67,686
W12- 11/24	W 32-27	at Houston	71,055
W13- 12/1	L 19-42	at Washington	63,144
W14- 12/8	L 6-10	JACKSONVILLE	61,644
W15- 12/15	L 27-37	CINCINNATI	63,745
W16- 12/22	L 30-38	at Indianapolis	65,322
W17- 12/29	L 13-20	at Jacksonville	61,995
W18- 1/5	L 14-23	HOUSTON	61,815

TEAM TOTALS	TEAM	OPPONENTS
FIRST DOWNS	309	314
Rushing	112	118
Passing	164	157
Penalty	33	39
3rd Downs	81-215 (37.7%)	88-213 (41.3%)
4th Downs	9-23 (39.1%)	10-13 (76.9%)
AVG. POSSESSION PER 60 MINS	30:44	29:16
TOTAL NET YARDS	5,172	5,291
Avg. Per Game	304.2	311.2
Total Plays	1,032	1,008
Avg. Per Play	5.0	5.2
NET YARDS RUSHING	1,855	2,277
Avg. Per Game	109.1	133.9
Attempts	450	503
NET YARDS PASSING	3,317	3,014
Avg. Per Game	195.1	177.3
Sacked/Yards Lost	52/304	32/202
Gross Yards	3,621	3,216
Att-Comp	336-530 (63.4%)	314-473 (66.4%)
Had Intercepted	21	11
PUNTS/AVERAGE	75/49.2	71/47.5
PUNTS/NET AVERAGE	75/38.6	71/41.9
PENALTIES/YARDS	132/1030	120/988
FUMBLES/LOST	28/13	16/7
TOUCHDOWNS	33	55
Rushing	11	21
Passing	22	27
Returns	0	7

SCORE BY PERIOD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	OT	TOT
TEAM	89	62	74	83	3	311
OPPONENTS	93	146	103	118	0	460

SCORING	TOT	RU	PA	RT	XP	XP2	FG	SAF	PTS
Folk	0	0	0	0	25/25	0	21/22	0	88
Narveson (LG)	0	0	0	0	18/18	0	12/18	0	54
Narveson (TM)	0	0	0	0	2/2	0	0/1	0	2
Westbrook-Ikhine	9	0	9	0	0/0	0	0/0	0	54
Wright (LG)	0	0	0	0	6/6	0	15/16	0	51
Wright (TM)	0	0	0	0	1/1	0	4/4	0	13
Pollard	5	5	0	0	0/0	1	0/0	0	32
Ridley	5	1	4	0	0/0	0	0/0	1	32
Spears	5	4	1	0	0/0	0	0/0	0	30
Vannett	3	0	3	0	0/0	0	0/0	0	18
Okonkwo	2	0	2	0	0/0	1	0/0	0	14
Whyte	1	0	1	0	0/0	1	0/0	0	8
Hopkins (TM)	1	0	1	0	0/0	0	0/0	0	6
Martin	1	0	1	0	0/0	0	0/0	0	6
Rudolph	1	1	0	0	0/0	0	0/0	0	6
Landry	0	0	0	0	0/0	0	0/0	1	2

Defensive 2-Pt Runback:	TM- 0; OPP- 0
Safety On Try After TD:	TM- 0; OPP- 0
TEAM	33 11 22 0 28/28 3-4 25/27 2 311
OPPONENTS	55 21 27 7 50/53 1-2 26/31 0 460

SACKS	Landry- 9.0; Key- 6.5; Simmons- 5.0; Murray- 3.5; Joseph-Day- 2.5; J. Baker (LG)- 2.0; J. Baker (TM)- 1.0; Gaye- 1.0; Lynch- 1.0; McCreary- 1.0; Sweat- 1.0; Gibbens- 0.5; TM- 32.0; OPP- 52.0

FUMBLES/LOST	Levis- 10/6; Jackson- 5/2; Rudolph- 5/1; Pollard- 2/2; Okonkwo- 2/1; Ridley- 1/1; Brunskill- 1/0; Hopkins (TM)- 1/0; Spears- 1/0; TM- 28/13; OPP- 16/7

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	COMP%	YDS/ATT	TD	TD%	INT	INT%	LONG	SAC/LST	RATING
Levis	301	190	2,091	63.1	6.95	13	4.3	12	4.0	98t	41/233	81.4
Rudolph	228	146	1,530	64.0	6.71	9	3.9	9	3.9	47	11/71	80.1
Boyd	1	0	0	0.0	0.00	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0/0	39.6
TEAM	530	336	3,621	63.4	6.83	22	4.2	21	4.0	98t	52/304	80.7
OPPONENTS	473	314	3,216	66.4	6.80	27	5.7	11	2.3	57	32/202	95.1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Pollard	260	1,079	4.2	41	5
Spears	84	312	3.7	23	4
Levis	45	183	4.1	21	0
Rudolph	25	106	4.2	14	1
Chestnut	22	102	4.6	12	0
Ridley	8	55	6.9	19	1
Okonkwo	1	17	17.0	17	0
Boyd	1	3	3.0	3	0
Kelley	1	2	2.0	2	0
Burks	2	1	0.5	6	0
Jackson	1	-5	-5.0	-5	0
TEAM	450	1,855	4.1	41	11
OPPONENTS	503	2,277	4.5	92t	21

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Ridley	64	1,017	15.9	63	4
Westbrook-Ikhine	32	497	15.5	98t	9
Okonkwo	52	479	9.2	70t	2
Boyd	39	390	10.0	40	0
Whyte	28	248	8.9	33	1
Pollard	41	238	5.8	30	0
Spears	30	224	7.5	43	1
Hopkins (TM)	15	173	11.5	23	1
Vannett	17	135	7.9	24	3
Oliver	6	95	15.8	33	0
Martin	1	49	49.0	49t	1
Burks	4	34	8.5	13	0
Kinsey	2	17	8.5	11	0
Chestnut	2	11	5.5	9	0
Jackson	1	8	8.0	8	0
Martin-Robinson	1	6	6.0	6	0
Latham	1	0	0.0	0	0
TEAM	336	3,621	10.8	98t	22
OPPONENTS	314	3,216	10.2	57	27

INTERCEPTIONS	INT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Hooker	5	68	13.6	30	0
Awuzie	1	8	8.0	8	0
Murray	1	6	6.0	6	0
Brownlee	1	2	2.0	2	0
Reese	1	2	2.0	2	0
Gifford	1	0	0.0	0	0
Worley	1	0	0.0	0	0
TEAM	11	86	7.8	30	0
OPPONENTS	21	295	14.0	65t	4

PUNTING	TOT	YDS	AVG	NET	TB	IN20	LONG	BLK
Stonehouse	73	3,691	50.6	38.6	7	22	75	2
TEAM	75	3,691	49.2	38.6	7	22	75	2
OPPONENTS	71	3,370	47.5	41.9	7	27	67	0

PUNT RETURNS	RET	FC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Jackson	28	7	215	7.7	20	0
Kinsey	6	5	38	6.3	9	0
TEAM	34	12	253	7.4	20	0
OPPONENTS	47	9	655	13.9	90t	1
KICKOFF RETURNS	RET	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD	
Jackson	16	412	25.8	34	0	
Chestnut	13	337	25.9	39	0	
Spears	7	198	28.3	42	0	
Oliver	3	113	37.7	54	0	
Burks	1	21	21.0	21	0	
TEAM	40	1,081	27.0	54	0	
OPPONENTS	28	899	32.1	80	0	

FIELD GOALS	<20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	TOT
Folk	0/0	5/5	2/2	8/9	6/6	21/22
Wright (LG)	0/0	3/3	8/8	3/3	1/2	15/16
Wright (TM)	0/0	1/1	3/3	0/0	0/0	4/4
Narveson (LG)	0/0	4/4	3/4	5/9	0/1	12/18
Narveson (TM)	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/1	0/1
TEAM	0/0	6/6	5/5	8/9	6/7	25/27
OPPONENTS	0/0	11/12	4/4	6/7	5/8	26/31

FIELD GOAL ATTEMPTS	Folk: W1-40G; W2-41G; W4-53G,52G,47G,51G,29G; W6-44G; W7-25G; W9-21G,25G; W10-49N,27G; W11-30G,43G; W12-51G,56G,51G; W13-41G,44G; W14-46G,39G Wright (LG): W6-25G,41G,35G; W13-25G,59N,42G,35G,32G; W14-47G,33G,50G,31G; W17-39G,28G; W18-35G,38G Wright (TM): W17-39G,28G; W18-35G,38G Narveson (LG): W1-31G,23G,43N,26G; W2-46G,42G,34G,45N; W3-21G,26G,47G; W4-37N,49N; W5-46G; W6-36G,44N,41G; W16-53N Narveson (TM): W16-53N TEAM: W1-40G; W2-41G; W3-; W4-53G,52G,47G,51G,29G; W6-44G; W7-25G; W8-; W9-21G,25G; W10-49N,27G; W11-30G,43G; W12-51G,56G,51G; W13-41G,44G; W14-46G,39G; W15-; W16-53N; W17-39G,28G; W18-35G,38G OPPONENTS: W1-24G,50G,48G; W2-33G; W3-21G,26G,47G; W4-44G,56G; W6-26G,22G; W7-28G,30G; W8-51G; W9-56N,52G; W10-21G,37G; W11-40G; W12-28G,54G,28N; W13-46N,52N; W14-23G; W15-21G; W16-31G,55N; W17-48G,44G; W18-27G

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	COMP%	YDS/ATT	TD	TD%	INT	INT%	LONG	SAC/LST	RATING
Levis	301	190	2,091	63.1	6.95	13	4.3	12	4.0	98t	41/233	81.4
Rudolph	228	146	1,530	64.0	6.71	9	3.9	9	3.9	47	11/71	80.1
Boyd	1	0	0	0.0	0.00	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0/0	39.6
TEAM	530	336	3,621	63.4	6.83	22	4.2	21	4.0	98t	52/304	80.7
OPPONENTS	473	314	3,216	66.4	6.80	27	5.7	11	2.3	57	32/202	95.1



2024 TENNESSEE TITANS REGULAR SEASON DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

PLAYER	TACKLES			SACKS		QB		INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES		
	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds			No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds
Murray Jr., Kenneth	95	57	38	3.5	13.0	16	8	1	6	6	0	2	1	0	0
Simmons, Jeffery	76	41	35	5.0	35.0	42	11	0	0	0	0	4	2	2	0
Brownlee Jr., Jarvis	74	45	29	0.0	0.0	2	7	1	2	2	0	9	0	1	0
Landry III, Harold	71	42	29	9.0	48.0	41	15	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
Hooker, Amani	70	46	24	0.0	0.0	7	4	5	68	30	0	9	2	0	0
Worley, Daryl	52	28	24	0.0	0.0	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
Sweat, T'Vondre	51	22	29	1.0	9.0	23	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	30
McCreary, Roger	50	43	7	1.0	13.0	4	12	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Jones IV, Ernest	44	28	16	0.0	0.0	5	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Joseph-Day, Sebastian	44	18	26	2.5	32.0	14	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Diggs, Quandre	42	35	7	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Key, Arden	42	24	18	6.5	38.0	38	11	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0
Gibbens, Jack	41	20	21	0.5	3.0	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brown, Mike	38	20	18	0.0	0.0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Baker, Darrell Jr.	36	28	8	0.0	0.0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0
Gifford, Luke	35	21	14	0.0	0.0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Awuzie, Chidobe	26	17	9	0.0	0.0	1	0	1	8	8	0	4	1	0	0
Baker, Jerome	24	13	11	1.0	0.0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Sneed, L'Jarius	23	19	4	0.0	0.0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lynch, James	20	6	14	1.0	1.0	4	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Williams, James	19	13	6	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coburn, Keondre	14	8	6	0.0	0.0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gray, Cedric	14	6	8	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Harrell, Jaylen	9	5	4	0.0	0.0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reese IV, Otis	10	5	5	0.0	0.0	2	1	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	0
Gaye, Ali	8	7	1	1.0	10.0	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adams, Jamal	4	2	2	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Duke, Khalid	1	1	0	0.0	0.0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Murphy, Caleb	1	1	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wood, Julius	1	0	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1,035	621	414	32.0	202.0	221	92	11	86	30	0	53	10	5	30

TITANS SPECIAL TEAMS STATISTICS

PLAYER	TACKLES			FUMBLES		BLOCKS		
	Tot	Solo	Asst	FF	FR	PAT	FG	PUNT
Gifford, Luke	14	10	4	0	0	0	0	0
Brown, Mike	11	6	5	0	0	0	0	0
Gray, Cedric	8	7	1	0	0	0	0	0
Reese, Otis IV	7	3	4	0	0	0	0	0
Williams, James	7	4	3	0	1	0	0	0
Oliver, Bryce	5	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Baker, Darrell	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Harrell, Jaylen	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Okonkwo, Chig	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Whyte, Josh	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Avery, Tre	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cox, Morgan	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Gibbens, Jack	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Hardee, Justin	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Martin-Robinson, David	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Westbrook-Ikhine, Nick	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brooks, Kendell	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Brownlee, Jarvis	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chestnut, Julius	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Folk, Nick	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hooker, Amani	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
McMillan, Raekwon	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Wood, Julius	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jackson, Jha'Quan	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
TEAM TOTALS:	92	62	30	0	4	0	0	0

MISCELLANEOUS STATISTICS

PLAYER	TACKLES			FUMBLES	
	Tot	Solo	Asst	FF	FR
Ridley, Calvin	2	2	0	0	1
Spears, Treyton	2	2	0	0	0
Westbrook-Ikhine, Nick	2	2	0	0	0
Boyd, Tyler	1	1	0	0	0
Burks, Treyton	1	1	0	0	0
Chestnut, Julius	1	1	0	0	0
Hopkins, DeAndre	1	1	0	0	0
Okonkwo, Chig	1	1	0	0	0
Pollard, Tony	1	1	0	0	1
Radunz, Dillon	1	1	0	0	0
Skorosnki, Peter	1	1	0	0	0
Whyte, Josh	1	1	0	0	0
Cushenberry, Lloyd	0	0	0	0	1
Latham, JC	0	0	0	0	3
Levis, Will	0	0	0	0	3
Martin-Robinson, David	0	0	0	0	1
Rudolph, Mason	0	0	0	0	2
TEAM TOTALS:	15	15	0	0	12

Legend:

Tot Total Tackles
Solo Unassisted Tackles
Asst Assisted Tackles
Sk Quarterback Sacks
Yds Yards Lost on Sack
QB Quarterback Pressure
TFL Tackle for Loss
Int Interceptions
Yds Interception Return Yards
TD Interceptions Return Touchdowns
PD Passes Defensed
FF Forced Fumble
FR Fumble Recoveries
Yds Yards on Fumble Returns



2025 ATLANTA FALCONS PRESEASON STATISTICS

ATLANTA FALCONS: WON 0, LOST 1

DATE	RESULT	OPPONENT	TIME/ATTEND			
W2- 8/8	L 10-17	DETROIT	67,523			
W3- 8/15		TENNESSEE	7:00pm ET			
W4- 8/22		at Dallas	8:00pm ET			
TEAM TOTALS		TEAM	OPPONENTS			
FIRST DOWNS		9	14			
Rushing		0	4			
Passing		8	9			
Penalty		1	1			
3rd Downs		1-7 (14.3%)	3-9 (33.3%)			
4th Downs		0-1 (0.0%)	2-2 (100.0%)			
AVG. POSSESSION PER 60 MINS		27:01	32:59			
TOTAL NET YARDS		207	246			
Avg. Per Game		207.0	246.0			
Total Plays		36	46			
Avg. Per Play		5.8	5.3			
NET YARDS RUSHING		22	100			
Avg. Per Game		22.0	100.0			
Attempts		11	25			
NET YARDS PASSING		185	146			
Avg. Per Game		185.0	146.0			
Sacked/Yards Lost		2/13	3/12			
Gross Yards		198	158			
Att-Comp		19-23 (82.6%)	14-18 (77.8%)			
Had Intercepted		0	0			
PUNTS/AVERAGE		3/42.7	2/41.0			
PUNTS/NET AVERAGE		3/35.0	2/41.0			
PENALTIES/YARDS		4/43	5/50			
FUMBLES/LOST		1/0	3/2			
TOUCHDOWNS		1	2			
Rushing		0	0			
Passing		1	2			
Returns		0	0			
SCORE BY PERIOD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	OT	TOT
TEAM	3	7	0	0	0	10
OPPONENTS	0	7	10	0	0	17

TOUCHDOWNS									
SCORING	TOT	RU	PA	RT	XPB	XP2	FG	SAF	PTS
Blair	1	0	1	0	0/0	0	0/0	0	6
Krieg	0	0	0	0	1/1	0	1/2	0	4
Defensive 2-Pt Runback:	TM- 0; OPP- 0								
Safety On Try After TD:	TM- 0; OPP- 0								
TEAM	1	0	1	0	1/1	0-0	1/2	0	10
OPPONENTS	2	0	2	0	2/2	0-0	1/1	0	17

SACKS
Dorlus- 1.0; Ebiketie- 1.0; Kareem- 1.0; TM- 3.0; OPP- 2.0

FUMBLES/LOST

Jones- 1/0; TM- 1/0; OPP- 3/2

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	COMP%	YDS/ATT	TD	TD%	INT	INT%	LONG	SAC/LST	RATING
Stick	18	15	149	83.3	8.28	1	5.6	0	0.0	29	1/2	119.7
Jones	5	4	49	80.0	9.80	0	0.0	0	0.0	14	1/11	107.5
TEAM	23	19	198	82.6	8.61	1	4.3	0	0.0	29	2/13	117.0
OPPONENTS	18	14	158	77.8	8.78	2	11.1	0	0.0	68	3/12	140.3

RUSHING		ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD		
Carter		3	12	4.0	8	0		
Jones		2	9	4.5	9	0		
Corbin		1	1	1.0	1	0		
Dotson		5	0	0.0	3	0		
TEAM		11	22	2.0	9	0		
OPPONENTS		25	100	4.0	23	0		
RECEIVING		REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD		
Drummond		8	63	7.9	25	0		
Blair		3	54	18.0	29	1		
Nash		3	35	11.7	14	0		
Sills		1	15	15.0	15	0		
Skinner		1	14	14.0	14	0		
Simon		2	9	4.5	5	0		
Dotson		1	8	8.0	8	0		
TEAM		19	198	10.4	29	1		
OPPONENTS		14	158	11.3	68	2		
INTERCEPTIONS		INT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD		
TEAM		0	0	0	0	0		
OPPONENTS		0	0	0	0	0		
PUNTING	TOT	YDS	AVG	NET	TB	IN20	LONG	BLK
Pinion	3	128	42.7	35	1	0	47	0
TEAM	3	128	42.7	35	1	0	47	0
OPPONENTS	2	82	41	41	0	1	41	0
PUNT RETURNS	RET	FC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD		
Alford	1	1	0	0.0	0	0		
TEAM	1	1	0	0.0	0	0		
OPPONENTS	2	0	3	1.5	3	0		
KICKOFF RETURNS	RET	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD			
Brooks	2	39	19.5	21	0			
Je. Matthews	1	22	22.0	22	0			
TEAM	3	61	20.3	22	0			
OPPONENTS	3	46	15.3	18	0			
FIELD GOALS	<20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+	TOT		
Krieg	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/2	1/2		
TEAM	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/2	1/2		
OPPONENTS	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/1	1/1		

FIELD GOAL ATTEMPTS
Krieg: W2-57G,53N
TEAM: W2-57G,53N; W3-; W4-
OPPONENTS: W2-57G; W3-; W4-

GAME PREVIEW

TEAM NOTES

PLAYER NOTES

MEDIA

STATISTICS

ROSTERS



2024 ATLANTA FALCONS REGULAR SEASON STATISTICS



ATLANTA FALCONS: WON 8, LOST 9

DATE	RESULT	OPPONENT	TIME/ATTEND
W1- 9/8	L 10-18	PITTSBURGH	72,291
W2- 9/16	W 22-21	at Philadelphia	69,879
W3- 9/22	L 17-22	KANSAS CITY	72,441
W4- 9/29	W 26-24	NEW ORLEANS	72,204
W5- 10/3	W 36-30 (OT)	TAMPA BAY	70,016
W6- 10/13	W 38-20	at Carolina	70,884
W7- 10/20	L 14-34	SEATTLE	70,691
W8- 10/27	W 31-26	at Tampa Bay	62,787
W9- 11/3	W 27-21	DALLAS	72,665
W10- 11/10	L 17-20	at New Orleans	70,005
W11- 11/17	L 6-38	at Denver	76,545
W13- 12/1	L 13-17	LOS ANGELES CHARGERS	72,139
W14- 12/8	L 21-42	at Minnesota	67,008
W15- 12/16	W 15-9	at Las Vegas	62,364
W16- 12/22	W 34-7	NEW YORK GIANTS	70,404
W17- 12/29	L 24-30 (OT)	at Washington	63,480
W18- 1/5	L 38-44 (OT)	CAROLINA	69,581

TEAM TOTALS	TEAM	OPPONENTS
FIRST DOWNS	359	347
Rushing	133	131
Passing	198	200
Penalty	28	16
3rd Downs	82-209 (39.2%)	96-212 (45.3%)
4th Downs	21-31 (67.7%)	14-26 (53.8%)
AVG. POSSESSION PER 60 MINS	29:32	30:28
TOTAL NET YARDS	6287	5868
Avg. Per Game	369.8	345.2
Total Plays	1086	1067
Avg. Per Play	5.8	5.5
NET YARDS RUSHING	2219	2051
Avg. Per Game	130.5	120.6
Attempts	495	458
NET YARDS PASSING	4068	3817
Avg. Per Game	239.3	224.5
Sacked/Yards Lost	32/215	31/187
Gross Yards	4283	4004
Att-Comp	364-559 (65.1%)	404-578 (69.9%)
Had Intercepted	19	12
PUNTS/AVERAGE	47/47.0	53/44.0
PUNTS/NET AVERAGE	47/38.8	53/39.5
PENALTIES/YARDS	99/828	122/964
FUMBLES/LOST	21/5	18/6
TOUCHDOWNS	43	47
Rushing	18	11
Passing	21	34
Returns	4	2

SCORE BY PERIOD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	OT	TOT
TEAM	79	149	86	69	6	389
OPPONENTS	67	156	83	105	12	423

SCORING	TOT	RU	PA	RT	XPK	XP2	FG	SAF	PTS
Koo	0	0	0	0	26/26	0	25/34	0	101
Robinson	15	14	1	0	0/0	1	0/0	0	92
D. London	9	0	9	0	0/0	0	0/0	0	54
Mooney	5	0	5	0	0/0	0	0/0	0	30
Patterson (LG)	0	0	0	0	16/16	0	4/7	0	28
Patterson (TM)	0	0	0	0	12/12	0	4/7	0	24
Pitts	4	0	4	0	0/0	0	0/0	0	20
Allgeier	3	3	0	0	0/0	1	0/0	0	20
Hodge	2	0	1	1	0/0	0	0/0	0	12
Andersen	1	0	0	1	0/0	0	0/0	0	6
Bates	1	0	0	1	0/0	0	0/0	0	6
Judon	1	0	0	1	0/0	0	0/0	0	6
McCloud	1	0	1	0	0/0	0	0/0	0	6
Penix	1	1	0	0	0/0	0	0/0	0	6
Harrison	0	0	0	0	0/0	0	0/0	1	2

Defensive 2-Pt Runback:	TM- 0; OPP- 0
Safety On Try After TD:	TM- 0; OPP- 0

TEAM	43	18	21	4	38/38	2-4	29/41	1	389
OPPONENTS	47	11	34	2	40/42	3-3	31/32	1	423

SACKS

Ebiketie- 6.0; Judon- 5.5; Elliis- 5.0; Onyemata- 3.0; Jarrett- 2.5; Malone- 2.0; Alford- 1.0; Bates- 1.0; Bertrand- 1.0; Goldman- 1.0; Harrison- 1.0; Smith-Williams- 1.0; Street- 1.0; TM- 31.0; OPP- 32.0

FUMBLES/LOST

Cousins- 13/2; McCloud- 4/2; Penix- 2/0; Dalman- 1/1; Robinson- 1/0; TM- 21/5; OPP- 18/6

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	COMP%	YDS/ATT	TD	TD%	INT	INT%	LONG	SAC/LST	RATING
Cousins	453	303	3508	66.9	7.74	18	4.0	16	3.5	60	28/201	88.6
Penix	105	61	775	58.1	7.38	3	2.9	3	2.9	42	4/14	78.9
Mooney	1	0	0	0.0	0.00	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0/0	39.6
TEAM	559	364	4283	65.1	7.66	21	3.8	19	3.4	60	32/215	86.6
OPPONENTS	578	404	4004	69.9	6.93	34	5.9	12	2.1	67	31/187	100.2

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Robinson	304	1456	4.8	37t	14
Allgeier	137	644	4.7	25	3
McCloud	10	79	7.9	20	0
McClellan	13	32	2.5	8	0
Penix	7	11	1.6	5t	1
Cousins	23	0	0.0	13	0
D. London	1	-3	-3.0	-3	0
TEAM	495	2219	4.5	37t	18
OPPONENTS	458	2051	4.5	56	11

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
D. London	100	1271	12.7	39	9
Mooney	64	992	15.5	49	5
McCloud	62	686	11.1	60	1
Pitts	47	602	12.8	52	4
Robinson	61	431	7.1	29	1
Hodge	7	131	18.7	45t	1
Allgeier	13	88	6.8	13	0
Woerner	7	46	6.6	13	0
Blair	1	17	17.0	17	0
Cas. Washington	1	14	14.0	14	0
Dwellely	1	5	5.0	5	0
TEAM	364	4283	11.8	60	21
OPPONENTS	404	4004	9.9	67	34

INTERCEPTIONS	INT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Bates	4	55	13.8	55t	1
Terrell	2	1	0.5	1	0
Simmons	2	0	0.0	0	0
Andersen	1	47	47.0	47t	1
Phillips	1	45	45.0	45	0
Judon	1	27	27.0	27t	1
Elliis	1	12	12.0	12	0
TEAM	12	187	15.6	55t	3
OPPONENTS	19	274	14.4	61t	1

INTERCEPTIONS	INT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Bates	4	55	13.8	55t	0
Terrell	2	1	0.5	1	0
Simmons	2	0	0.0	0	0
Andersen	1	47	47.0	47t	1
Phillips	1	45	45.0	45	0
Judon	1	27	27.0	27t	1
Elliss	1	12	12.0	12	0
TEAM	12	187	15.6	55t	3
OPPONENTS	19	274	14.4	61t	1

PUNTING	TOT	YDS	AVG	NET	TB	IN20	LONG	BLK
Pinion	47	2209	47	38.8	4	14	65	0
TEAM	47	2209	47	38.8	4	14	65	0
OPPONENTS	53	2332	44	39.5	2	28	61	1
PUNT RETURNS	RET	FC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD		
Williams	20	18	185	9.3	28	0		
Phillips	1	0	15	15.0	15	0		
TEAM	21	18	200	9.5	28	0		
OPPONENTS	22	14	305	13.9	37	0		

FIELD GOAL ATTEMPTS
Koo: W1-24G; W2-39G,22G,34G; W3-54G; W4-53G,44G,42G,58G; W5-41N,54G,48G,54B,52G; W6-21G,31G,35G; W7-54N; W8-39G,46N; W10-53N,35B,27G,46N; W11-41G,51G; W13-35N,41G,26G; W14-20G,29G; W15-40G,48G,42N
Patterson (LG): W16-43N,52G,37G; W17-39G,56N; W18-31G,52N
Patterson (TM): W16-43N,52G,37G; W17-39G,56N; W18-31G,52N
TEAM: W1-24G; W2-39G,22G,34G; W3-54G; W4-53G,44G,42G,58G; W5-41N,54G,48G,54B,52G; W6-21G,31G,35G; W7-54N; W8-39G,46N; W9-; W10-53N,35B,27G,46N; W11-41G,51G; W13-35N,41G,26G; W14-20G,29G; W15-40G,48G,42N; W16-43N,52G,37G; W17-39G,56N; W18-31G,52N
OPPONENTS: W1-57G,51G,44G,56G,40G,25G; W2-29G,28G; W3-53G,44G,21G; W4-43G; W5-53G,32G,53G; W6-24G,40G; W7-38G,59G; W8-52G; W9-34G,57G; W10-38G,26G; W11-45G; W13-45G,51G,34G; W14-47N; W15-52G; W16-; W17-31G; W18-35G



REGULAR SEASON: THE LAST TIME THE TENNESSEE TITANS ...

GAMES WON

WON BY SCORING IN THE LAST TWO MINUTES OF REGULATION

By Titans—Derrick Henry 3-yard run and Nick Folk PAT (1:49 remaining) at Miami, 12/11/23 (W)

By Opponents—Colby Parkinson 5-yard reception (0:57 remaining), vs. Seattle, 12/24/23 (L)

WON OVERTIME GAME

By Titans—at Tennessee 20, New England 17, 11/3/24 (W)

By Opponents—Houston 19, at Tennessee 16, 12/17/23 (L)

WON BY 20 OR MORE POINTS

By Titans—at Tennessee 27, Cincinnati 3, 10/1/23 (W)

By Opponents—Tennessee 19, at Washington 42, 12/1/24 (L)

WON BY SHUTOUT

By Titans—at Tennessee 20, Jacksonville 0, 12/12/21 (W)

By Opponents—at Denver 16, Tennessee 0, 10/13/19 (L)

TEAM SCORING

SCORED 50 POINTS

By Titans—*Never in Titans era (since 1999)*

By Oilers—Houston 58, vs. Cleveland 14, 12/9/90 (W)

By Opponents—Tennessee 14, at Detroit 52, 10/27/24 (L)

SCORED 40 POINTS

By Titans—at Houston 38, Tennessee 41, 1/3/21 (W)

By Opponents—Tennessee 19, at Washington 42, 12/1/24 (L)

SCORED 20 POINTS IN A QUARTER

By Titans—21 points in second quarter, vs. Cincinnati, 10/1/23 (W)

By Opponents—24 points in second quarter, at Indianapolis, 12/22/24 (L)

SCORED 30 POINTS IN A HALF

By Titans—35 points in first half, at Indianapolis, 11/29/20 (W)

By Opponents—35 points in first half, at Detroit, 10/27/24 (L)

SCORED TOUCHDOWNS ON OFFENSE, DEFENSE AND SPECIAL TEAMS

By Titans—One rushing, two interception returns, two punt returns, vs. Jacksonville, 12/30/12 (W)

By Opponents—Four passing, one interception return, two punt returns, at Oakland, 9/29/02 (L)

SCORED A TOUCHDOWN ON FIRST OFFENSIVE POSSESSION

By Titans—Tony Pollard 3-yard run vs. Cincinnati, 12/15/24 (L)

By Opponents—C.J. Stroud 2-yard pass to Nico Collins vs. Houston, 1/5/25 (L)

TEAM YARDAGE TOTALS

500 TOTAL NET YARDS

By Titans—at Seattle (532 yards), 9/19/21 (W)

By Opponents—vs. Kansas City (530 yards), 11/10/19 (W)

400 TOTAL NET YARDS

By Titans—vs. New England (400 yards), 11/3/24 (W)

By Opponents—at Indianapolis (458 yards), 12/22/24 (L)

TEAM DEFENSE

HELD OPPONENT WITHOUT A TOUCHDOWN

By Titans—at Tennessee 27, Cincinnati 3, 10/1/23 (W)

By Opponents—Jaguars 10, at Tennessee 6, 12/8/24 (L)

HELD OPPONENT TO 200 OR FEWER NET YARDS OF OFFENSE

By Titans—at Miami (184 yards), 9/30/24 (W)

By Opponents—at Houston (187 net yards), 12/31/23 (L)

HELD OPPONENT TO 50 OR FEWER YARDS RUSHING

By Titans—at Houston (40 yards), 11/24/24 (W)

By Opponents—at Washington (35 yards), 12/1/24 (L)

HELD OPPONENT TO 100 OR FEWER NET YARDS PASSING

By Titans—at Detroit (61 net yards), 10/27/24 (L)

By Opponents—vs. Indianapolis (95 net yards), 10/13/24 (L)

SEVEN OR MORE SACKS BY TEAM (DEFENSE)

By Titans—at Arizona (8 sacks), 12/10/17 (L)

By Opponents—at Houston (8 sacks), 11/24/24 (W)

SIX OR MORE SACKS BY TEAM (DEFENSE)

By Titans—vs. Atlanta (6 sacks), 10/29/23 (W)

By Opponents—at Houston (8 sacks), 11/24/24 (W)

FIVE OR MORE SACKS BY TEAM (DEFENSE)

By Titans—at Miami (5 sacks), 12/11/23 (W)

By Opponents—at Houston (8 sacks), 11/24/24 (W)

FORCED FIVE OR MORE OPPONENT TURNOVERS

By Titans—vs. N.Y. Jets (4 interceptions, 1 fumble), 12/17/12 (W)

By Opponents—vs. Cincinnati (4 interceptions, 2 fumbles), 12/15/24 (L)

FORCED FOUR OR MORE OPPONENT TURNOVERS

By Titans—vs. Cincinnati (2 interceptions, 2 fumbles), 12/15/24 (L)

By Opponents—vs. Cincinnati (4 interceptions, 2 fumbles), 12/15/24 (L)

SPECIAL TEAMS

KICKOFF RETURNED FOR TOUCHDOWN

By Titans—A.J. Brown (42 yards) at Indianapolis, 11/29/20 (W)

By Opponents—Jakeem Grant (102 yards) at Miami, 9/9/18 (L)

OPENING KICKOFF RETURNED FOR TOUCHDOWN

By Titans—Derrick Mason (101 yards) at Cincinnati, 11/18/01 (W)

By Opponents—Josh Huff (107 yards) at Philadelphia, 11/23/14 (L)

PUNT RETURNED FOR TOUCHDOWN

By Titans—Darius Reynaud (twice—69 yards and 81 yards) vs. Jacksonville, 12/30/12 (W)

By Opponents—Kalif Raymond (90 yards) at Detroit, 10/27/24 (L)

FIELD GOAL BLOCKED

By Titans—Denico Autry at Miami (Jason Sanders), 12/11/23 (W)

By Opponents—Justin Reid, vs. Houston (Stephen Gostkowski), 10/18/20 (W)

FIELD GOAL BLOCKED, RETURNED FOR TD

By Titans—Tye Smith (63 yards) at Indianapolis (Adam Vinatieri's FG blocked by Dane Cruikshank), 12/1/19 (W)

By Opponents—Rob Morris (68 yards) at Indianapolis (Gary Anderson's FG blocked by Montae Reagor), 12/5/04 (L)

PUNT BLOCKED

By Titans—Tim Shaw vs. Pittsburgh (Drew Butler), 10/11/12 (W)

By Opponents—Irvin Charles, vs. N.Y. Jets (Ryan Stonehouse), 9/15/24 (L)

PUNT BLOCKED AND RETURNED FOR TD

By Titans—Jason McCourty vs. Indianapolis (Pat McAfee's punt blocked by Patrick Bailey and recovered in end zone by McCourty), 10/30/11 (W)

By Opponents—Jonathan Owens (21 yards), at Chicago (Ryan Stonehouse's punt blocked by Daniel Hardy), 9/8/24 (L)

FIVE FIELD GOALS

By Titans—Nick Folk (5) at Miami, 9/30/24 (W)

By Opponents—Justin Tucker (6), vs. Baltimore, 10/15/23 (L)

FOUR FIELD GOALS

By Titans—Nick Folk (5) at Miami, 9/30/24 (W)

By Opponents—Ka'imi Fairbairn (4), at Houston, 12/31/23 (L)

THREE FIELD GOALS

By Titans—Nick Folk (3) at Houston, 11/24/24 (W)



REGULAR SEASON: THE LAST TIME THE TENNESSEE TITANS ...

By Opponents—Brayden Narveson (3), vs. Green Bay, 9/22/24 (L)

SUCCESSFUL ONSIDE KICK

By Titans—Rob Bironas kicks and Daimion Stafford recovers, vs. Arizona, 12/15/13 (L)

By Opponents—Connor Barth kicks and Adrian Amos recovers, at Chicago, 11/27/16 (W)

MISSED PAT

By Titans—Nick Folk vs. Houston, 12/17/23 (L)

By Opponents—Ka'imi Fairbairn (wide left), vs. Houston, 1/5/25 (L)

TWO-POINT CONVERSIONS

TWO-POINT CONVERSION MADE

By Titans—Josh Whyte (pass from Will Levis) vs. Houston, 1/5/25 (L)

By Opponents—D'Andre Swift (pass from Caleb Williams), at Chicago (9/8/24)

TWO-POINT CONVERSION FAILED

By Titans—at Washington (pass failed), 12/1/24 (L)

By Opponents—at Miami (pass failed), 9/30/24 (W)

DEFENSIVE TWO-POINT CONVERSION

By Titans—Amani Hooker vs. Indianapolis, 12/3/23 (L)

INDIVIDUAL OFFENSIVE PERFORMANCES

INDIVIDUAL WITH 200 SCRIMMAGE YARDS

By Titans—Derrick Henry (228 yards) at Houston, 10/30/22 (W)

By Opponents—Jonathan Taylor (218 yards), at Indianapolis, 12/22/24 (L)

RUSHING TOUCHDOWN AND RECEIVING TOUCHDOWN

By Titans—Tyjae Spears (1 rushing, 1 receiving) vs. Cincinnati, 12/15/24 (L)

By Opponents—Chase Brown (1 rushing, 1 receiving), vs. Cincinnati, 12/15/24 (L)

RUSHING TOUCHDOWN AND PASSING TOUCHDOWN

By Titans—Mason Rudolph (1 passing, 1 rushing) at Detroit, 10/27/24 (L)

By Opponents—Anthony Richardson (1 passing, 1 rushing), at Indianapolis, 12/22/24 (L)

INDIVIDUAL RUSHING

200 YARDS RUSHING

By Titans—Derrick Henry (219 yards) at Houston, 10/30/22 (W)

By Opponents—Jonathan Taylor (218 yards), at Indianapolis, 12/22/24 (L)

150 YARDS RUSHING

By Titans—Derrick Henry (153 yards) vs. Jacksonville, 1/7/24 (W)

By Opponents—Dameon Pierce (176 yards), vs. Houston, 1/5/25 (L)

100 YARDS RUSHING

By Titans—Tony Pollard (102 yards) vs. Jacksonville, 12/8/24 (L)

By Opponents—Dameon Pierce (176 yards), vs. Houston, 1/5/25 (L)

CONSECUTIVE 100-YARD RUSHING GAMES

By Titans—Derrick Henry vs. Jacksonville, 12/11/22 (L); at Los Angeles Chargers, 12/18/22 (L); vs. Houston, 12/24/22 (L)

30 OR MORE CARRIES

By Titans—Derrick Henry (30 carries) at Jacksonville, 1/7/23 (L)

By Opponents—Melvin Gordon (32 carries) at San Diego, 11/6/16 (L)

RUSHING PLAY OF 80 OR MORE YARDS

By Titans—Derrick Henry (94 yards) vs. Houston, 10/18/20 (W)

By Opponents—Dameon Pierce (92 yards), vs. Houston, 1/5/25 (L)

RUSHING PLAY OF 50 OR MORE YARDS

By Titans—Derrick Henry (69 yards) vs. Jacksonville, 1/7/24 (W)

By Opponents—Dameon Pierce (92 yards), vs. Houston, 1/5/25 (L)

THREE TOUCHDOWNS RUSHING

By Titans—Derrick Henry (3) vs. Buffalo, 10/18/21 (W)

By Opponents—Jonathan Taylor (3), at Indianapolis, 12/22/24 (L)

TWO TOUCHDOWNS RUSHING

By Titans—Tyjae Spears (2) at Indianapolis, 12/22/24 (L)

By Opponents—Jonathan Taylor (3), at Indianapolis, 12/22/24 (L)

INDIVIDUAL PASSING

400 YARDS PASSING

By Titans—Ryan Fitzpatrick (402 yards) vs. Arizona, 12/15/13 (L)

By Opponents—Patrick Mahomes (446 yards), at Kansas City, 11/6/22 (L)

300 YARDS PASSING

By Titans—Will Levis (327 yards) at Miami, 12/11/23 (W)

By Opponents—Josh Allen (323 yards), at Buffalo, 10/20/24 (L)

CONSECUTIVE 300-YARD PASSING GAMES

By Titans—Matt Hasselbeck vs. Baltimore (358 yards), 9/18/11 (W), vs. Denver (311 yards), 9/25/11 (W)

FIVE TOUCHDOWN PASSES

By Titans—Steve McNair vs. Jacksonville, 12/26/99 (W)

By Opponents—Blake Bortles vs. Jacksonville, 12/6/15 (W)

FOUR TOUCHDOWN PASSES

By Titans—Will Levis vs. Atlanta, 10/29/23 (W)

By Opponents—Josh Allen, at Buffalo, 9/19/22 (L)

50 OR MORE PASS ATTEMPTS

By Titans—Ryan Tannehill (52 att) vs. Houston, 11/21/21 (L)

By Opponents—Patrick Mahomes (68), at Kansas City, 11/6/22 (L)

40 OR MORE PASS ATTEMPTS

By Titans—Mason Rudolph (40 att) at Buffalo, 10/20/24 (L)

By Opponents—Drake Maye (41), vs. New England, 11/3/24 (W)

30 OR MORE COMPLETIONS

By Titans—Ryan Tannehill (35 comp) vs. Houston, 11/21/21 (L)

By Opponents—Trevor Lawrence (30 comp), vs. Jacksonville, 12/11/22 (L)

NO SACKS ALLOWED

By Titans—vs. Indianapolis, 10/13/24 (L)

By Opponents—at L.A. Chargers, 11/10/24 (L)

COMPLETION OF 80 OR MORE YARDS

By Titans—Will Levis (98 yards) vs. Minnesota, 11/17/24 (L)

By Opponents—Jared Goff (80 yards), vs. Los Angeles Rams, 12/24/17 (L)

COMPLETION OF 50 OR MORE YARDS

By Titans—Will Levis (70 and 63 yards) at Houston, 11/24/24 (W)

By Opponents—C.J. Stroud (56 yards), at Houston, 11/24/24 (W)

INDIVIDUAL RECEIVING

200 YARDS RECEIVING

By Titans—Kenny Britt (225 yards) vs. Philadelphia, 10/24/10 (W)

By Opponents—DeAndre Hopkins (238 yards) at Houston, 11/30/14 (L)

150 YARDS RECEIVING

By Titans—A.J. Brown (155 yards) at Indianapolis, 10/31/21 (W)

By Opponents—Evan Engram (162 yards), vs. Jacksonville, 12/11/22 (L)

100 YARDS RECEIVING

By Titans—Nick Westbrook-Ikhine (117 yards) vs. Minnesota, 11/17/24 (L)

By Opponents—Keon Coleman (125 yards), at Buffalo, 10/20/24 (L)

CONSECUTIVE 100-YARD RECEIVING GAMES

By Titans—A.J. Brown vs. Kansas City (133 yards), 10/24/21 (W), at Indianapolis (155 yards), 10/31/21 (W)

10 OR MORE RECEPTIONS

By Titans—Calvin Ridley (10 rec.) at Detroit, 10/27/24 (L)



REGULAR SEASON: THE LAST TIME THE TENNESSEE TITANS ...

By Opponents—Evan Engram (10 rec.), vs. Jacksonville, 1/7/24 (W)

RECEPTION OF 80 OR MORE YARDS

By Titans—Nick Westbrook-Ikhine (98 yards) vs. Minnesota, 11/17/24 (L)

By Opponents—Todd Gurley (80 yards), vs. Los Angeles Rams, 12/24/17 (L)

RECEPTION OF 50 OR MORE YARDS

By Titans—Calvin Ridley (63 yards) and Chig Okonkwo (70 yards) at Houston, 11/24/24 (W)

By Opponents—Nico Collins (56 yards), at Houston, 11/24/24 (W)

THREE TOUCHDOWN RECEPTIONS

By Titans—DeAndre Hopkins vs. Atlanta, 10/29/23 (W)

By Opponents—Stefon Diggs, at Buffalo, 9/19/22 (L)

TWO TOUCHDOWN RECEPTIONS

By Titans—Nick Westbrook-Ikhine (2) at Washington, 12/1/24 (L)

By Opponents—Terry McLaurin (2), at Washington, 12/1/24 (L)

COMBINED OFFENSIVE PERFORMANCES BY TEAMMATES

100-YARD RUSHER AND 100-YARD RECEIVER IN A GAME

By Titans—Derrick Henry (101 rush.) and DeAndre Hopkins (128 rec.) vs. Atlanta, 10/29/23 (W)

By Opponents—AJ Dillon (124 rush.) and Davante Adams (142 rec.), at Green Bay, 12/27/20 (L)

By One Player (Opponent)—Todd Gurley (118 rush. and 158 receiving), vs. Los Angeles Rams, 12/24/17 (L)

100-YARD RUSHER, 100-YARD RECEIVER AND 300-YARD PASSER IN A GAME

By Titans—Derrick Henry (182 rush.), Julio Jones (128 rec.) and Ryan Tannehill (347 pass.) at Seattle, 9/19/21 (W)

By Opponents—Todd Gurley (118 rush. and 158 rec.) and Jared Goff (301 pass.), vs. Los Angeles Rams, 12/24/17 (L)

300-YARD PASSER AND 100-YARD RECEIVER IN A GAME

By Titans—Will Levis (327 pass.) and DeAndre Hopkins (124 rec.) at Miami, 12/11/23 (W)

By Opponents—Josh Allen (323 pass.) and Keon Coleman (125 rec.), at Buffalo, 10/20/24 (L)

100-YARD RUSHER AND 300-YARD PASSER IN A GAME

By Titans—Derrick Henry (182 rush.) and Ryan Tannehill (347 pass.) at Seattle, 9/19/21 (W)

By Opponents—Gardner Minshew II (339 pass.) and James Robinson (102 rush.), vs. Jacksonville, 9/20/20 (W)

TWO 100-YARD RUSHERS IN A GAME

By Titans—Dontrell Hilliard (131 yards) and D'Onta Foreman (109), at New England, 11/28/21 (L)

By Opponents—Arian Foster (115 yards) and Ben Tate (104 yards) vs. Houston, 10/23/11 (L)

TWO 100-YARD RECEIVERS IN A GAME

By Titans—Justin Hunter (109 yards) and Kendall Wright (103 yards) at Oakland, 11/24/13 (W)

By Opponents—Michael Pittman Jr. (105 rec.) and Alec Pierce (100 rec.), vs. Indianapolis, 12/3/23 (L)

INDIVIDUAL DEFENSE

INTERCEPTION RETURNED FOR TOUCHDOWN

By Titans—Elijah Molden (44 yards) vs. Houston, 12/17/23 (L)

By Opponents—Geno Stone (39 yards), vs. Cincinnati, 12/15/24 (L)

FUMBLE RETURNED FOR TOUCHDOWN

By Titans—Kevin Byard (30 yards) at Jacksonville, 10/10/21 (W)

By Opponents—Derek Barnett (36 yards), vs. Houston, 1/5/25 (L)

SAFETY SCORED

By Titans—Texans quarterback C.J. Stroud sacked in end zone by Harold Landry III, at Houston, 11/24/24 (W)

By Opponents—Ryan Tannehill sacked in end zone by Romeo Okwara vs. Detroit, 12/20/20 (W)

THREE INTERCEPTIONS

By Titans—Kevin Byard (3) at Cleveland, 10/22/17 (W)

By Opponents—Glover Quin (3) at Houston, 11/28/10 (L)

TWO INTERCEPTIONS

By Titans—Amani Hooker (2) vs. New England, 11/3/24 (W)

By Opponents—Kenny Moore II (2), at Indianapolis, 12/22/24 (L)

THREE SACKS

By Titans—Harold Landry III (3.0) at Miami, 12/11/23 (W)

By Opponents—Danielle Hunter (3.0), at Houston, 11/24/24 (W)

POSTSEASON: THE LAST TIME THE TENNESSEE TITANS ...

GAMES WON (PLAYOFFS)

WON BY SCORING IN THE LAST TWO MINUTES OF REGULATION

By Titans—Gary Anderson 46-yard field goal with 0:29 remaining, at Baltimore, 1/3/04 (W)

By Opponents—Evan McPherson 52-yard field goal with 0:00 remaining, vs. Cincinnati, 1/22/22 (L)

WON OVERTIME GAME

By Titans—Tennessee 34, vs. Pittsburgh 31, 1/11/03 (W)

By Opponents—at Buffalo 41, Houston 38, 1/3/93 (L)

WON BY 20 OR MORE POINTS

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—at New England 35, Tennessee 14, 1/13/18 (L)

WON BY SHUTOUT

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Never Happened

TEAM SCORING (PLAYOFFS)

SCORED 50 POINTS

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—at Oakland 56, Houston 7, 12/21/69 (L)

SCORED 40 POINTS

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—at Oakland 41, Tennessee 24, 1/19/03 (L)

SCORED 20 POINTS IN A QUARTER

By Titans—Never in Titans era (since 1999)

By Oilers—21 points in second quarter, at Buffalo, 1/3/93 (L)

By Opponents—21 points in second quarter, at New England, 1/13/18 (L)

SCORED 30 POINTS IN A HALF

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—35 points in second half, at Buffalo, 1/3/93 (L)

SCORED TOUCHDOWNS ON OFFENSE, DEFENSE AND SPECIAL TEAMS

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Never Happened

SCORED A TOUCHDOWN ON FIRST OFFENSIVE POSSESSION

By Titans—Anthony Firkser 12-yard pass from Ryan Tannehill, at New England, 1/4/20 (W)

By Opponents—Bethel Johnson 41-yard pass from Tom Brady, at New England, 1/10/04 (L)

TEAM YARDAGE TOTALS (PLAYOFFS)

500 TOTAL NET YARDS



POSTSEASON: THE LAST TIME THE TENNESSEE TITANS ...

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—at Baltimore (530 yards), 1/11/20 (W)

400 TOTAL NET YARDS

By Titans—vs. Pittsburgh (430 yards), 1/11/03 (W)

By Opponents—vs Baltimore (401 yards), 1/10/21 (L)

TEAM DEFENSE (PLAYOFFS)**HELD OPPONENT WITHOUT A TOUCHDOWN**

By Titans—Never in Titans era (since 1999)

By Oilers—Houston 10, at San Diego 3, 12/24/61 (W)

By Opponents—at San Diego 17, Tennessee 6, 1/6/08 (L)

HELD OPPONENT TO 200 OR FEWER NET YARDS OF OFFENSE

By Titans—vs. Baltimore (134 net yards), 1/7/01 (L)

By Opponents—vs. Buffalo (194 net yards), 1/8/00 (W)

HELD OPPONENT TO 50 OR FEWER YARDS RUSHING

By Titans—vs. Baltimore (50 yards), 1/10/09 (L)

By Opponents—vs. Kansas City (39 yards), 1/16/94 (L)

HELD OPPONENT TO 100 OR FEWER NET YARDS PASSING

By Titans—vs. Buffalo (97 net yards), 1/8/00 (W)

By Opponents—at Baltimore (83 net yards), 1/11/20 (W)

SEVEN OR MORE SACKS BY TEAM

By Titans/Oilers—vs. Cincinnati (9 sacks), 1/22/22 (L)

By Opponents—at New England (8 sacks), 1/13/18 (L)

SPECIAL TEAMS (PLAYOFFS)**KICKOFF RETURNED FOR TOUCHDOWN**

By Titans—Derrick Mason (80 yards) at Jacksonville, 1/23/00 (W)

By Opponents—Never Happened

RETURNED OPENING KICKOFF FOR TOUCHDOWN

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Never Happened

PUNT RETURNED FOR TOUCHDOWN

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Never Happened

FIELD GOAL BLOCKED

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Richard Seymour at New England (Gary Anderson), 1/10/04 (L)

FIELD GOAL BLOCKED, RETURNED FOR TD

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Anthony Mitchell (90 yards) vs. Baltimore (Al Del Greco's FG blocked by Keith Washington), 1/7/01 (L)

PUNT BLOCKED

By Titans—Chris Coleman vs. Baltimore (Kyle Richardson, twice), 1/7/01 (L)

By Opponents—Jerry Olsavsky vs. Pittsburgh (Greg Montgomery), 12/31/89 (L)

PUNT BLOCKED AND RETURNED FOR TD

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Never Happened

FIVE FIELD GOALS

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Never Happened

FOUR FIELD GOALS

By Titans—Al Del Greco at Indianapolis, 1/16/00 (W)

By Opponents—Evan McPherson, vs. Cincinnati, 1/22/22 (L)

THREE FIELD GOALS

By Titans—Al Del Greco (4) at Indianapolis, 1/16/00 (W)

By Opponents—Evan McPherson (4), vs. Cincinnati, 1/22/22 (L)

MISSED PAT (KICK)

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—David Treadwell (Wide Left) at Denver, 1/4/92 (L)

TWO-POINT CONVERSIONS (PLAYOFFS)**TWO-POINT CONVERSION MADE**

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Plaxico Burress (pass from Hines Ward) vs. Pittsburgh, 1/11/03 (W)

TWO-POINT CONVERSION FAILED

By Titans—vs. Cincinnati (run failed), 1/22/22 (L)

By Opponents—at Baltimore (pass failed), 1/11/20 (W)

INDIVIDUAL OFFENSIVE PERFORMANCES (PLAYOFFS)**INDIVIDUAL WITH 200 SCRIMMAGE YARDS**

By Titans—Derrick Henry (202 yards) at Baltimore, 1/11/20 (W)

By Opponents—Never Happened

RUSHING TOUCHDOWN AND RECEIVING TOUCHDOWN

By Titans—Never in Titans era (since 1999)

By Oilers—Allen Pinkett at Cleveland, 12/24/88 (W)

By Opponents—James White at New England, 1/13/18 (L)

RUSHING TOUCHDOWN AND PASSING TOUCHDOWN

By Titans—Ryan Tannehill at Baltimore, 1/11/20 (W)

By Opponents—Patrick Mahomes at Kansas City, 1/19/20 (L)

INDIVIDUAL RUSHING (PLAYOFFS)**200 YARDS RUSHING**

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Never Happened

150 YARDS RUSHING

By Titans—Derrick Henry (195 yards) at Baltimore, 1/11/20 (W)

By Opponents—Paul Lowe (165 yards) vs. Los Angeles Chargers, 1/1/61 (W)

100 YARDS RUSHING

By Titans—Derrick Henry (195 yards) at Baltimore, 1/11/20 (W)

By Opponents—Lamar Jackson (136 yards), vs. Baltimore, 1/10/21 (L)

CONSECUTIVE 100-YARD RUSHING GAMES

By Titans—Derrick Henry at New England (182 yards), 1/4/20 (W), at Baltimore (195 yards), 1/11/20 (W)

30 OR MORE CARRIES

By Titans—Derrick Henry (30) at Baltimore, 1/11/20 (W)

By Opponents—Never Happened

RUSHING PLAY OF 80 OR MORE YARDS

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Never Happened

RUSHING PLAY OF 50 OR MORE YARDS

By Titans—Derrick Henry (66 yards) at Baltimore, 1/11/20 (W)

By Opponents—Never Happened

THREE TOUCHDOWNS RUSHING

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Never Happened

TWO TOUCHDOWNS RUSHING

By Titans—Steve McNair at Oakland, 1/19/03 (L)

By Opponents—Antowain Smith vs. Buffalo, 1/8/00 (W)

INDIVIDUAL PASSING (PLAYOFFS)**400 YARDS PASSING**

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Kurt Warner (414 yards) vs. St. Louis, 1/30/00 (L)



300 YARDS PASSING

By Titans—Steve McNair (338 yards) vs. Pittsburgh, 1/11/03 (W)

By Opponents—Joe Burrow (348 yards), vs. Cincinnati, 1/22/22 (L)

CONSECUTIVE 300-YARD PASSING GAMES

Playoffs:

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

FIVE TOUCHDOWN PASSES

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Daryle Lamonica (6) at Oakland, 12/21/69 (L)

FOUR TOUCHDOWN PASSES

By Titans—Never in Titans era (since 1999)

By Oilers—Warren Moon at Buffalo, 1/3/93 (L)

By Opponents—Frank Reich at Buffalo, 1/3/93 (L)

50 OR MORE PASS ATTEMPTS

By Titans—Never in Titans era (since 1999)

By Oilers—Warren Moon (50 att) at Buffalo, 1/3/93 (L)

By Opponents—Lamar Jackson (59 att), at Baltimore, 1/11/20 (W)

40 OR MORE PASS ATTEMPTS

By Titans—Kerry Collins (42 att) vs. Baltimore, 1/10/09 (L)

By Opponents—Lamar Jackson (59 att), at Baltimore, 1/11/20 (W)

30 OR MORE COMPLETIONS

By Titans—Never in Titans era (since 1999)

By Oilers—Warren Moon (32 comp) vs. Kansas City, 1/16/94 (L)

By Opponents—Lamar Jackson (31 comp), at Baltimore, 1/11/20 (W)

NO SACKS ALLOWED

By Titans—at Baltimore, 1/3/04 (W)

By Opponents—at New England, 1/4/20 (W)

COMPLETION OF 80 OR MORE YARDS

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Never Happened

COMPLETION OF 50 OR MORE YARDS

By Titans—Never in Titans era (since 1999)

By Oilers—Dan Pastorini (71 yards) at New England, 12/31/78 (L)

By Opponents—Joe Burrow (57 yards), vs. Cincinnati, 1/22/22 (L)

INDIVIDUAL RECEIVING (PLAYOFFS)

200 YARDS RECEIVING

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Never Happened

150 YARDS RECEIVING

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Isaac Bruce (162 yards) vs. St. Louis, 1/30/00 (L)

100 YARDS RECEIVING

By Titans—A.J. Brown (142 yards) vs. Cincinnati, 1/22/22 (L)

By Opponents—Ja'Marr Chase (109 yards), vs. Cincinnati, 1/22/22 (L)

CONSECUTIVE 100-YARD RECEIVING GAMES

By Titans—Never in Titans era (since 1999)

By Oilers—Ernest Givins at Denver (111 yards), 1/4/92 (L), at Buffalo (117 yards), 1/3/93 (L)

10 OR MORE RECEPTIONS

By Titans—Justin Gage (11 rec.) vs. Baltimore, 1/10/09 (L)

By Opponents—Danny Amendola (11 rec.) at New England, 1/13/18 (L)

RECEPTION OF 80 OR MORE YARDS

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Never Happened

RECEPTION OF 50 OR MORE YARDS

By Titans—Never in Titans era (since 1999)

By Oilers—Ken Burrough (71 yards) at New England, 12/31/78 (L)

By Opponents—Ja'Marr Chase (57 yards), vs. Cincinnati, 1/22/22 (L)

THREE TOUCHDOWN RECEPTIONS

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Andre Reed at Buffalo, 1/3/93 (L)

TWO TOUCHDOWN RECEPTIONS

By Titans/Oilers—Corey Davis at New England, 1/13/18 (L)

By Opponents—Tyreek Hill, at Kansas City, 1/19/20 (L)

COMBINED OFFENSIVE PERFORMANCES BY TEAMMATES (PLAYOFFS)

100-YARD RUSHER AND 100-YARD RECEIVER IN A GAME

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Lamar Jackson (136 rush.) and Marquise Brown (109 rec.), vs. Baltimore, 1/10/21 (L)

100-YARD RUSHER, 100-YARD RECEIVER AND 300-YARD PASSER IN A GAME

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Lamar Jackson (143 rush.), Lamar Jackson (365 pass.) and Marquis Brown (126 rec.), at Baltimore, 1/11/20 (W)

300-YARD PASSER AND 100-YARD RECEIVER IN A GAME

By Titans—Steve McNair (338 pass.) and Frank Wycheck (123 rec.) vs. Pittsburgh, 1/11/03 (W)

By Opponents—Joe Burrow (348 pass.) and Ja'Marr Chase (109 rec.), vs. Cincinnati, 1/22/22 (L)

100-YARD RUSHER AND 300-YARD PASSER IN A GAME

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Lamar Jackson (143 rush. and 365 pass.), at Baltimore, 1/11/20 (W)

TWO 100-YARD RUSHERS IN A GAME

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Hewitt Dixon (144 yards) and Pete Banaszak (116 yards) at Oakland, 12/31/67 (L)

TWO 100-YARD RECEIVERS IN A GAME

By Titans—Never in Titans era (since 1999)

By Oilers—Mike Barber (112 yards) and Ken Burrough (103 yards) at Miami, 12/24/78 (W)

By Opponents—Chris Chambers (121 yards) and Vincent Jackson (114 yards) at San Diego, 1/6/08 (L)

INDIVIDUAL DEFENSE (PLAYOFFS)

INTERCEPTION RETURNED FOR TOUCHDOWN

By Titans—Logan Ryan (9 yards) at New England, 1/4/20 (W)

By Opponents—Will Demps (56 yards), at Baltimore, 1/3/04 (W)

FUMBLE RETURNED FOR TOUCHDOWN

By Titans/Oilers—Never Happened

By Opponents—Never Happened

SAFETY SCORED

By Titans—Josh Evans and Jason Fisk (sacked Mark Brunell), at Jacksonville, 1/23/00 (W)

By Opponents—Dan Pastorini ran out of the End Zone, at Miami, 12/24/78 (W)

THREE INTERCEPTIONS

By Titans—Never in Titans era (since 1999)

By Oilers—Vernon Perry (4*) at San Diego, 12/29/79 (W)

By Opponents—Never Happened

TWO INTERCEPTIONS

By Titans—Never in Titans era (since 1999)

By Oilers—Bubba McDowell vs. N.Y. Jets, 12/29/91 (W)

By Opponents—Johnny Robinson vs. Dallas Texans, 12/23/62 (L)

THREE SACKS

By Titans—Jeffery Simmons vs. Cincinnati, 1/22/22 (L)

By Opponents—Willie McGinest at New England, 1/10/04 (L)



LAST TIME IN A SEASON THE TITANS ...

TEAM OFFENSE

Ranked 1st in Overall Offense — 1990
 Ranked 1st in Rushing Offense — 1967 (AFL)
 Ranked 1st in Passing Offense — 1992

TEAM DEFENSE

Ranked 1st in Overall Defense — 2000
 Ranked 1st in Rushing Defense — 2022
 Ranked 1st in Passing Defense — 2000

GAMES WON (REGULAR SEASON)

10 Wins — 2021 (12-5)
 11 Wins — 2021 (12-5)
 12 Wins — 2021 (12-5)
 13 Wins — 2008 (13-3)

ADVANCED IN PLAYOFFS

Wild Card Round — 2021
 Divisional Round — 2021
 Conference Championship — 2019
 Super Bowl — 1999

RUSHING

1,000 Yards — Tony Pollard (1,079), 2024
 1,500 Yards — Derrick Henry (1,538), 2022
 2,000 Yards — Derrick Henry (2,027), 2020
 300 Attempts — Derrick Henry (349), 2022
 400 Attempts — Eddie George (403), 2000
 10 Touchdowns — Derrick Henry (12), 2023
 15 Touchdowns — Derrick Henry (17), 2020

PASSING

3,000 Yards — Ryan Tannehill (3,734), 2021
 3,500 Yards — Ryan Tannehill (3,734), 2021
 4,000 Yards — Warren Moon (4,690), 1991
 400 Attempts — Ryan Tannehill (531), 2021
 500 Attempts — Ryan Tannehill (531), 2021
 600 Attempts — Warren Moon (655), 1991
 20 Touchdowns — Ryan Tannehill (21), 2021
 30 Touchdowns — Ryan Tannehill (33), 2020
 90.0 Passer Rating — Ryan Tannehill (94.6), 2022
 100.0 Passer Rating — Ryan Tannehill (106.5), 2020

RECEIVING

80 Receptions — Delanie Walker (94), 2015
 90 Receptions — Delanie Walker (94), 2015
 100 Receptions — Haywood Jeffries (100), 1991
 1,000 Yards — Calvin Ridley (1,017), 2024
 1,500 Yards — Charlie Hennigan (1,546), 1964
 10 Touchdowns — A.J. Brown (11), 2020
 15 Touchdowns — Bill Groman (17), 1961

SCORING

100 Points — Nick Folk (115), 2023
 110 Points — Nick Folk (115), 2023
 120 Points — Randy Bullock (120), 2021
 130 Points — Ryan Succop (136), 2017
 30 Field Goals — Ryan Succop (35), 2017
 35 Field Goals — Ryan Succop (35), 2017
 10 Touchdowns — Derrick Henry (12), 2023
 15 Touchdowns — Derrick Henry (17), 2020

DEFENSE

7 Interceptions — Kevin Byard (8), 2017
 8 Interceptions — Kevin Byard (8), 2017
 9 Interceptions — Mike Reinfeldt (12), 1979
 10 Interceptions — Mike Reinfeldt (12), 1979
 10 Sacks — Denico Autry (11.5), Harold Landry III (10.5), 2023
 12 Sacks — Harold Landry III (12), 2021
 14 Sacks — Jevon Kearse (14.5), 1999
 150 Tackles — Azeez Al-Shaair (163), 2023
 175 Tackles — Keith Bulluck (180), 2002
 200 Tackles — Gregg Bingham (212), 1980

TITANS RECORDS AT A GLANCE

Team record holders in major statistical categories

SCORING

Points (Game) — 30 by Billy Cannon (5 TDs) at N.Y. Titans, 12/10/61
 Points (Season) — 136 by Al Del Greco, 1998; by Ryan Succop, 2017
 Points (Career) — 1,060 by Al Del Greco, 1991-00
 Touchdowns (Game) — 5 by Billy Cannon at N.Y. Titans, 12/10/61
 Touchdowns (Season) — 19 by Earl Campbell, 1979
 Touchdowns (Career) — 93 by Derrick Henry, 2016-23
 Field Goals (Game) — 8 by Rob Bironas at Hou., 10/21/07
 Field Goals (Season) — 36 by Al Del Greco, 1998
 Field Goals (Career) — 246 by Al Del Greco, 1991-00

RUSHING

Rushing Yards (Game) — 250 by Derrick Henry at Hou., 1/3/21
 Rushing Yards (Season) — 2,027 by Derrick Henry, 2020
 Rushing Yards (Career) — 10,009 by Eddie George, 1996-03
 Rushing Touchdowns (Game) — 4 by Earl Campbell vs. Mia., 11/20/78; Lorenzo White vs. Cle., 12/9/90; Derrick Henry vs. Jax, 12/6/18
 Rushing Touchdowns (Season) — 19 by Earl Campbell, 1979
 Rushing Touchdowns (Career) — 90 by Derrick Henry, 2016-23

PASSING

Passing Yards (Game) — 527 by Warren Moon at K.C., 12/16/90
 Passing Yards (Season) — 4,690 by Warren Moon, 1991
 Passing Yards (Career) — 33,685 by Warren Moon, 1984-93
 Passing Touchdowns (Game) — 7 by George Blanda vs. N.Y. Titans, 11/19/61
 Passing Touchdowns (Season) — 36 by George Blanda, 1961
 Passing Touchdowns (Career) — 196 by Warren Moon, 1984-93
 Passer Rating (Game) — 158.3 by Chris Chandler at Cin., 9/24/95
 Passer Rating (Season) — 117.5 by Ryan Tannehill, 2019
 Passer Rating (Career) — 97.8 by Ryan Tannehill, 2019-23

RECEIVING

Receptions (Game) — 13 (three times, last by Drew Bennett at Oak., 12/19/04)
 Receptions (Season) — 101 by Charlie Hennigan, 1964
 Receptions (Career) — 542 by Ernest Givins, 1986-94
 Receiving Yards (Game) — 272 by Charlie Hennigan at Bos., 10/13/61
 Receiving Yards (Season) — 1,746 by Charlie Hennigan, 1961
 Receiving Yards (Career) — 7,935 by Ernest Givins, 1986-94
 Receiving Touchdowns (Game) — 3 (18 times, last by DeAndre Hopkins vs. Atl., 10/29/23)
 Receiving Touchdowns (Season) — 17 by Bill Groman, 1961
 Receiving Touchdowns (Career) — 51 by Charlie Hennigan, 1960-66

PUNTING

Punts (Game) — 11 (twice by Rich Camarillo, last at Pit., 12/3/95)
 Punts (Season) — 96 by Rich Camarillo, 1994
 Punts (Career) — 923 by Brett Kern, 2009-21

PUNT RETURNS

Punt Return Yards (Game) — 160 by Darius Reynaud vs. Jax., 12/30/12
 Punt Return Average (Season) — 15.4 by Billy Johnson, 1977
 Punt Return Average (Career) — 13.2 by Billy Johnson, 1974-80

KICKOFF RETURNS

Kickoff Return Yards (Game) — 240 by Bobby Jancik at Oak., 12/22/63
 Kickoff Return Average (Season) — 31.7 by Darius Jennings, 2018
 Kickoff Return Average (Career) — 26.5 by Bobby Jancik, 1962-67

INTERCEPTIONS

Interceptions (Game) — 3 (nine times, last by Kevin Byard at Cle., 10/22/17)
 Interceptions (Season) — 12 by Freddy Glick, 1963; by Mike Reinfeldt, 1979
 Interceptions (Career) — 45 by Jim Norton, 1960-68

SACKS

Sacks (Game) — 4 (five times, last by William Fuller vs. Pit., 11/28/93)
 Sacks (Season) — 17 by Elvin Bethea, 1973
 Sacks (Career) — 105 by Elvin Bethea, 1968-83



TENNESSEE TITANS 2024 PARTICIPATION CHART

Player	9/8 @Chi	9/15 NYJ	9/22 GB	9/30 @Mia	10/13 Ind	10/20 @Buf	10/27 @Det	11/3 NE	11/10 @LAC	11/17 Min	11/24 @Hou	12/1 @Was	12/8 Jax	12/15 Cin	12/22 @Ind	12/29 @Jax	1/5 Hou	Season Totals			
																		GP	GS	DNP	IA
Adams, Jamal	IA	P	S	P	NFI	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	3	1	0	1
Anderson, Abdullah	PS	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	4	0	0	0
Agim, McTelvin	X	X	X	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	0	0	0	0
Avery, Tre	PS	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	IA	P	P	P	P	P	IA	IA	X	X	9	0	0	3
Awuzie, Chidobe	CB	CB	CB	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	CB	CB	CB	P	CB	8	7	0	0
Baker Jr, Darrell	P	P	P	P	P	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	P	P	CB	P	17	9	0	0
Baker, Jerome	X	X	X	X	X	X	IA	DNP	DNP	P	ILB	ILB	IA	IA	IA	LB	P	5	3	2	4
Bolton, Curtis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	PS	PS	PS	PS	0	0	0	0
Boyd, Tyler	WR	WR	P	WR	WR	P	P	P	WR	WR	WR	WR	P	P	P	P	IA	16	8	0	1
Brewer, Chandler	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	P	PS	1	0	0	0
Brown, Mike	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S	S	S	P	P	P	P	P	S	17	4	0	0
Brooks, Kendell	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	5	0	0	0
Brownlee Jr, Jarvis	P	P	P	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	17	14	0	0
Brunskill, Daniel	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	RG	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	RG	C	17	10	0	0
Bruss, Logan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	P	P	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	3	0	0	0
Burks, Treyton	P	P	WR	WR	P	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	5	2	0	0
Campbell, Chance	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	0	0	0	0
Chestnut, Julius	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	17	0	0	0
Coburn, Keondre	P	P	P	DL	IA	IA	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	15	1	0	2
Cox, Morgan	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	17	0	0	0
Cushenberry III, Lloyd	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	8	8	0	0
Davidson, Marlon	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	0	0	0	0
Diesch, Kellen	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	PS	PS	X	X	0	0	0	0
Diggs, Quandre	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	8	8	0	0
Dowell, Colton	PUP	PUP	PUP	PUP	PUP	PUP	PUP	PUP	PUP	PUP	PUP	PUP	PUP	PUP	PUP	PUP	PUP	0	0	0	0
Duke, Khalid	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	P	PS	P	2	0	0	0
Duncan, Jaelyn	P	P	TE	IA	IA	RT	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	RT	IA	5	3	0	3
Edwards, Mike	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	IA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	0	0	1
Folk, Nick	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	IA	IA	IA	14	0	0	3
Gaye, Ali	IA	P	P	IA	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	15	0	0	2
Gibbens, Jack	ILB	P	P	P	P	P	LB	LB	LB	LB	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	10	5	0	0
Gifford, Luke	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	LB	LB	IA	LB	LB	16	4	0	1
Gray, Cedric	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IA	IA	IA	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	7	0	0	3
Hardee Sr., Justin	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	P	IA	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	9	0	0	1
Hambright, Arlington	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	5	0	0	0
Harrell, Jaylen	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	17	0	0	0
Hooker, Amani	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	DNP	S	S	S	S	IA	IA	14	14	1	2
Hopkins, DeAndre	WR	WR	P	P	P	WR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	3	0	0
Iton, Isaiah	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	0	0	0	0
Jackson, Jha'Quan	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	IA	IA	IA	IA	IA	12	0	0	5
Jeudy-Lally, Gabe	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	P	P	P	IA	DNP	IA	IA	IA	P	IA	X	PS	4	0	1	5
Johnson, Kyron	X	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	0	0	0	0
Jones IV, Ernest	P	LB	LB	ILB	ILB	ILB	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	5	0	0
Joseph-Day, Sebastian	DE	DE	P	DE	P	DE	DE	DE	P	DE	DE	P	P	DE	DE	DE	DE	17	12	0	0
Kendall, Anthony	PS	PS	PS	PS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	0	0	0
Kelley, Joshua	X	X	X	X	X	PS	DNP	P	IA	IA	P	IA	IA	IA	IA	DNP	P	3	0	2	6
Key, Arden	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	P	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	IA	16	15	0	1
Kinsey, Mason	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	P	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	6	0	0	0
Landry III, Harold	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	OLB	17	17	0	0
Latham, JC	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	LT	17	17	0	0
Levin, Corey	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	C	P	10	1	0	0
Levis, Will	QB	QB	QB	QB	QB	IA	IA	IA	QB	QB	QB	QB	QB	QB	DNP	DNP	QB	12	12	2	3
Lynch, James	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	17	0	0	0
Martin, Tay	X	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	P	1	0	0	0
Martin-Robinson, David	IA	IA	IA	IA	IA	IA	IA	IA	IA	IA	IA	IA	P	P	P	TE	TE	5	2	0	12

GAME PREVIEW

TEAM NOTES

PLAYER NOTES

MEDIA

STATISTICS

ROSTERS



TENNESSEE TITANS 2024 PARTICIPATION CHART

Player	9/8	9/15	9/22	9/30	10/13	10/20	10/27	11/3	11/10	11/17	11/24	12/1	12/8	12/15	12/22	12/29	1/5	Season Totals			
	@Chi	NYJ	GB	@Mia	Ind	@Buf	@Det	NE	@LAC	Min	@Hou	@Was	Jax	Cin	@Ind	@Jax	Hou	GP	GS	DNP	IA
McCreary, Roger	P	P	P	P	CB	CB	P	CB	CB	P	P	CB	IA	IA	P	CB	CB	15	7	0	2
McLendon Jr., TK	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	0	0	0	0
McMillan, Raekwon	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	P	2	0	0	0
Morgan, Stanley	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	0	0	0	0
Murphy, Caleb	P	IA	IA	P	IA	IA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	2	0	0	4
Murray Jr, Kenneth	ILB	ILB	ILB	ILB	ILB	ILB	ILB	ILB	ILB	ILB	ILB	ILB	IA	ILB	ILB	IR	IR	14	14	0	1
Narveson, Brayden	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	PS	P	X	X	1	0	0	0
Oliver, Bryce	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	WR	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	10	1	0	0
Odukoya, Thomas	IA	IA	IA	IA	IA	P	IA	X	PS	PS	PS	PS	P	P	PS	PS	PS	3	0	0	6
Ojukwu, John	IA	IA	IA	P	PS	PS	P	P	P	IA	P	P	TE	TE	TE	P	RT	11	4	0	4
Okonkwo, Chig	TE	TE	P	TE	P	P	P	TE	P	TE	TE	P	TE	TE	TE	TE	TE	17	11	0	0
Owens, Gervarrius	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	P	P	2	0	0	0
Petit-Frere, Nicholas	RT	RT	RT	RT	P	P	IA	P	P	RT	RT	RT	RT	RT	RT	IA	P	15	10	0	2
Prince, Isaiah	X	X	X	X	X	X	PS	PS	PS	P	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	1	0	0	0
Pollard, Tony	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	RB	IA	RB	16	16	0	1
Radunz, Dillon	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG	IA	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG	RG	IA	RG	15	15	0	2
Reese IV, Otis	IA	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	LB	IA	LB	IA	IR	13	2	0	3
Ridley, Calvin	WR	WR	P	WR	WR	WR	WR	WR	WR	WR	WR	WR	P	P	WR	WR	WR	17	14	0	0
Rudolph, Mason	DNP	DNP	DNP	P	DNP	QB	QB	QB	DNP	DNP	DNP	DNP	DNP	P	QB	QB	P	8	5	9	0
Rupcich, Andrew	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	7	0	0	0
Siemian, Trevor	X	X	X	X	PS	DNP	DNP	DNP	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	0	0	3	0
Simmons, Jeffery	DT	DT	DT	IA	DT	DT	DT	DT	DT	DT	DT	DT	DT	DT	DT	DT	DT	16	16	0	1
Skoronski, Peter	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	LG	17	17	0	0
Small, Jabari	PS	PS	IA	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	0	0	0	1
Sneed, L'Jarius	CB	CB	CB	CB	CB	IA	IA	IA	IA	IA	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	5	5	0	5
Spears, Tyjae	P	P	P	P	P	IA	IA	IA	P	P	IA	P	P	P	P	RB	IA	12	1	0	5
Spencer, Cole	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	PS	X	PS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	0	0	0
Stonehouse, Ryan	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	17	0	0	0
Sweat, T'Vondre	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	P	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	17	16	0	0
Vannett, Nick	P	P	TE	P	TE	TE	TE	P	TE	TE	P	TE	TE	TE	TE	P	P	17	10	0	0
Wallow, Garret	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	IR	0	0	0	0
Waston IV, Leroy	PS	PS	PS	PS	RT	IA	RT	RT	RT	IA	IA	IA	IA	X	X	X	X	4	4	0	5
Westbrook-Ikhine, Nick	P	P	P	P	P	P	WR	WR	WR	P	WR	WR	WR	WR	P	WR	WR	17	9	0	0
Whyle, Josh	P	P	TE	P	TE	TE	TE	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	17	4	0	0
Williams, James	P	IA	IA	IA	IA	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	LB	13	1	0	4
Wood, Julius	P	IA	IA	IA	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	SUS	SUS	SUS	SUS	SUS	9	0	0	3
Worley, Daryl	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	9	7	0	0
Wright, Matthew	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	P	2	0	0	0

Starters indicated by position (QB, RB, ILB, etc.); P = played but did not start; DNP = active but did not play; IA = inactive for game; PS = practice squad; PS-I = practice squad injured; P/SUS = practice squad/suspended; X = not on roster; IR = injured reserve; SUS = reserve/suspended; NFI = non-football illness; PUP = physically unable to perform; EX = exempt



2025 TENNESSEE TITANS TRANSACTIONS

January 1

Signed to the practice squad – **K MATTHEW WRIGHT**

January 4

Placed on injured reserve – **LB OTIS REESE IV**

Signed to the active roster from the practice squad – **OLB KHALID DUKE, WR TAY MARTIN**

Activated from the practice squad to the active roster standard elevation – **S GERVARRIUS OWENS, K MATTHEW WRIGHT**

January 6

Signed to future contracts – **DL McTELVIN AGIM, DL ABDULLAH ANDERSON, LB CURTIS BOLTON III, OL CHANDLER BREWER, DL ISAIAH ITON, CB GABE JEUDY-LALLY, LB KYRON JOHNSON, WR STANLEY MORGAN JR., TE THOMAS ODUKOYA, S GERVARRIUS OWENS, T ISAIAH PRINCE, RB JABARI SMALL**

January 7

Relieved of his duties – **EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/GENERAL MANAGER RAN CARTHON**

January 17

Hired – **MIKE BORGONZI** as the franchise's 15th general manager

January 27

Relieved of his duties – special teams coordinator **COLT ANDERSON**

Hired as special teams coordinator – **JOHN FASSEL**

Hired as defensive passing game coordinator/cornerbacks – **TONY ODEN**

Hired as assistant special teams coach – **RAYNA STEWART**

Promoted – **LUKE STOCKER** to tight ends coach

February 4

Hired as defensive run game coordinator – **TRAVIS SMITH**

Promoted – **LORI LOCUST** to defensive assistant

Promoted – **PAYTON McCOLLUM** to assistant quarterbacks coach

March 6

Hired as senior offensive assistant – **MIKE McCOY**

Hired as defensive assistant – **DYLAN AUTENRIETH**

March 7

Terminated vested veteran – **OLB HAROLD LANDRY III**

March 12

Terminated vested veteran from reserve/retired list – **OL SAAHDIQ CHARLES**

March 13

Signed as unrestricted free agents – **LB CODY BARTON, OL BLAKE HANCE, P JOHNNY HEKKER, DE SEBASTIAN JOSEPH-DAY, T DAN MOORE JR. and G KEVIN ZEITLER**

March 14

Traded – **LB KENNETH MURRAY JR.** and a 2025 seven-round pick to the Dallas Cowboys for a 2025 sixth-round pick

Signed as unrestricted free agents – **QB BRANDON ALLEN, WR VAN JEFFERSON, C/G COREY LEVIN and S XAVIER WOODS**

Signed free agent – **OLB DRE'MONT JONES**

March 15

Terminated vested veteran – **CB CHIDOBIE AWUZIE**

March 19

Signed free agent – **RB JULIUS CHESTNUT**

March 21

Signed as unrestricted free agent – **OLB LORENZO CARTER**

March 24

Signed as unrestricted free agent – **K JOEY SLYE**

Claimed – **LB CURTIS JACOBS** off waivers from the New England Patriots

March 26

Signed as unrestricted free agents – **QB TIM BOYLE, WR JAMES PROCHE II**

April 1

Signed as unrestricted free agent – **DB JUSTIN HARDEE SR.**

April 16

Terminated vested veterans – **LB CURTIS BOLTON III, WR STANLEY MORGAN JR.**

Waived – **DL McTELVIN AGIM, DL ISAIAH ITON, S GERVARRIUS OWENS**

Waived failed physical – **G LOGAN BRUSS**

April 17

Waived – **T NICHOLAS PETIT-FRERE**

Signed as unrestricted free agents – **OL BRENDEN JAIMES, OL SAM MUSTIPHER, OL OLISAEMEKA UDOH**

April 18

Terminated vested veteran non-football injury – **DB JUSTIN HARDEE SR.**

Waived non-football injury – **OLB KHALID DUKE**

April 24

Drafted – **QB CAMERON WARD** (first round, 1st overall)

April 25

Traded - a 2025 second-round pick (35th overall) to the Seattle Seahawks for their 2025 second-round pick (52nd overall) and their 2025 third-round pick (82nd overall)

Drafted – **OLB OLUWAFEMI OLADEJO** (second round, 52nd overall), **S KEVIN WINSTON JR.** (third round, 82nd overall)

April 26

Traded - a 2025 fifth-round pick (141st overall) and a 2025 sixth-round pick (178th overall) to the Baltimore Ravens for their 2025 fourth-round pick (136th overall) and their 2025 sixth-round pick (183rd overall)

Drafted – **WR CHIMERE DIKE** (fourth round, 103rd overall), **TE GUNNAR HELM** (fourth round, 120th overall), **WR ELIC AYOMANOR** (fourth round, 136th overall), **G JACKSON SLATER** (fifth round, 167th overall), **CB MARCUS HARRIS** (sixth round, 183rd overall), **RB KALEL MULLINGS** (sixth round, 188th overall)

April 28

Signed free agent – **WR TYLER LOCKETT**

April 29

Terminated vested veterans – **G ARLINGTON HAMBRIGHT, T ISAIAH PRINCE**

Claimed – **OLB TITUS LEO** off waivers from the New England Patriots

Claimed – **S MARK PERRY** off waivers from the New England Patriots

May 7

Waived injured – **LB KYRON JOHNSON, WR TAY MARTIN**

Signed free agent – **DL JAMES LYNCH**

May 9

Signed - third-round choice **S KEVIN WINSTON JR.**, fourth-round choice **WR ELIC AYOMANOR**, fifth-round choice **G JACKSON SLATER**, sixth-round choice **CB MARCUS HARRIS** and sixth-round choice **RB KALEL MULLINGS**

Signed undrafted free agents – **RB MICAH BERNARD, DT PHILIP BLIDI, T BRANDON CRENSHAW-DICKSON, OLB DESMOND EVANS, LB DAVID GBENDA, CB JERMARI HARRIS, CB GARNETT HOLLIS JR., DT CAM HORSLEY, CB JALEN KIMBER, CB VIRGIL LEMONS, CB CLARENCE LEWIS, DT DEVONTE O'MALLEY, NT ISAIAH RAIKES, WR XAVIER RESTREPO, CB DAVION ROSS, S JERRIN THOMPSON**

May 12

Signed – fourth-round choice **TE GUNNAR HELM**

Waived – **CB VIRGIL LEMONS, S JERRIN THOMPSON**



2025 TENNESSEE TITANS TRANSACTIONS

Signed free agents – **TE DRAKE DABNEY**, **WR TJ SHEFFIELD**

Waived with an injury settlement – **LB KYRON JOHNSON**, **WR TAY MARTIN**

May 13

Terminated vested veteran – **DL ABDULLAH ANDERSON**

Waived – **CB GARNETT HOLLIS JR.**

Signed free agents – **CB AMANI ORUWARIYE**, **DL CARLOS WATKINS**

Claimed – **LB AMARI BURNEY** off waivers from the Las Vegas Raiders

May 14

Waived – **RB JABARI SMALL**

Claimed – **LB ANFERNEE ORJI** off waivers from the New Orleans Saints

May 21

Signed – first-round choice **QB CAMERON WARD**

June 2

Waived – **RB MICAH BERNARD**

Signed free agent – **RB TYRION DAVIS-PRICE**

June 6

Signed – fourth-round choice **WR CHIMERE DIKE**

July 17

Waived – **RB TYRION DAVIS-PRICE**

Signed free agent – **RB JORDAN MIMS**

July 22

Signed – second-round choice **OLB OLUWAFEMI OLADEJO**

Declared physically unable to perform – **C LLOYD CUSHENBERRY III**, **CB L'JARIUS SNEED**

Placed on reserve/retired – **OLB LORENZO CARTER**

July 23

Placed on injured reserve – **QB WILL LEVIS**

Signed free agents – **DT TIMMY HORNE**, **RB JERMAR JEFFERSON**

July 24

Waived – **DL KEONDRE COBURN**

Signed free agent – **OLB JIHAD WARD**

July 25

Waived – **WR COLTON DOWELL**

Signed free agent – **WR MATT LANDERS**

July 28

Waived injured – **WR TREYLON BURKS**

Signed free agent – **WR RAMEL KEYTON**

August 3

Waived – **WR RAMEL KEYTON**, **DT DEVONTE O'MALLEY**

Signed free agents – **DT JOSIAH BRONSON**, **G ARLINGTON HAMBRIGHT**

August 5

Waived – **OLB TITUS LEO**, **S MARK PERRY**

Signed free agents – **DB JOSHUAH BLEDSOE**, **S QUANDRE DIGGS**

August 7

Placed on injured reserve – **OL CHANDLER BREWER**

Signed free agents – **DE JOE GAZIANO**

August 11

Terminated vested veteran – **QB TIM BOYLE**

Signed free agent – **QB TREVOR SIEMIAN**

TITANS PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

ELIC AYOMANOR (EL-ick EYE-oh-man-er); **CHIMERE DIKE** (CHEE-may-RAY DEE-kay); **ALI Gaye** (AHH-lee); **David GBENDA** (BEN-da); **Johnny HEKKER** (HECK-er); **Brenden JAIMES** (HIGH-miss); **Thomas ODUKOYA** (OH-due-COY-ah); **John OJUKWU** (oh-JEW-koo); **Chig OKONKWO** (oh-KAHN-kwoh); **OLUWAFEMI OLADEJO** (OH-loo-WAH-feh-me ole-uh-DAY-jo); **Anfernee ORJI** (OR-jee); **Amani ORUWARIYE** (OH-roo-WAR-ee-yay); **XAVIER RESTREPO** (zay-VEE-er ress-TREH-poe); **Andrew RUPCICH** (RUP-sitch); **Peter SKORONSKI** (skuh-RON-ski); **TYJAE Spears** (TAH-zhay); **OLISAEMEKA UDOH** (OH-lee-suh-MEE-kah OO-doe); **Josh WHYLE** (WHY-lee); **Kevin ZEITLER** (ZITE-ler)



TENNESSEE TITANS UNOFFICIAL DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	0	Calvin Ridley	80	Bryce Oliver	19	Jha'Quan Jackson
TE	85	Chig Okonkwo	<u>84</u>	<u>Gunnar Helm</u>	83	Matt Landers
			88	David Martin Robinson	81	Josh Whyte
LT	75	Dan Moore Jr.	61	John Ojukwu	89	Thomas Odukoya
LG	77	Peter Skoronski	76	Andrew Rucpich	<u>86</u>	<u>Drake Dabney</u>
C	79	Lloyd Cushenberry III	62	Corey Levin	72	Olisaemeka Udoh
RG	70	Kevin Zeitler	73	Blake Hance	66	Brenden Jaimes
					60	Sam Mustipher
RT	55	JC Latham	71	Jaelyn Duncan	<u>64</u>	<u>Jackson Slater</u>
WR	4	Tyler Lockett	<u>17</u>	<u>Chimere Dike</u>	68	Arlington Hambright
					<u>78</u>	<u>Brandon Crenshaw-Dickson</u>
WR	11	Van Jefferson	<u>5</u>	<u>Elic Ayomanor</u>	12	Mason Kinsey
QB	<u>1</u>	<u>Cameron Ward</u>			<u>87</u>	<u>Xavier Restrepo</u>
RB	20	Tony Pollard	10	Brandon Allen	13	James Proche II
			2	Tyjae Spears	<u>82</u>	<u>TJ Sheffield</u>
			<u>28</u>	<u>Kalel Mullings</u>	15	Trevor Siemian
					36	Julius Chestnut
					24	Jordan Mims
					32	Jermar Jefferson

DEFENSE

DE	69	Sebastian Joseph-Day	96	Carlos Watkins	<u>95</u>	<u>Philip Blidi</u>
NT	93	T'Vondre Sweat	94	Timmy Horne	90	Joe Gaziano
DT	98	Jeffery Simmons	97	James Lynch	<u>76</u>	<u>Isaiah Raikes</u>
OLB	49	Arden Key	<u>7</u>	<u>Oluwafemi Oladejo</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>Cam Horsley</u>
ILB	52	James Williams Sr.	51	Cedric Gray	73	Josiah Bronson
ILB	50	Cody Barton	41	Otis Reese IV	92	Jaylen Harrell
OLB	45	Dre'Mont Jones	53	Jihad Ward	58	Amari Burney
CB	29	Jarvis Brownlee Jr.	<u>26</u>	<u>Marcus Harris</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>David Gbenda</u>
NCB	21	Roger McCreary	32	Gabe Jeudy-Lally	59	Anfernee Orji
S	37	Amani Hooker	28	Quandre Diggs	57	Curtis Jacobs
S	25	Xavier Woods	<u>23</u>	<u>Kevin Winston Jr.</u>	99	Ali Gaye
CB	39	Darrell Baker Jr.	32	Gabe Jeudy-Lally	<u>56</u>	<u>Desmond Evans</u>
			<u>35</u>	<u>Jalen Kimber</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>Jermari Harris</u>
					<u>36</u>	<u>Clarence Lewis</u>
					<u>40</u>	<u>Davion Ross</u>
					44	Mike Brown
					33	Kendell Brooks
					24	Julius Wood
					42	Joshuah Bledsoe
					31	Amani Oruwariye
					(38)	L'Jarius Sneed)

SPECIAL TEAMS

K	6	Joey Slye	3	Johnny Hekker		
KO	6	Joey Slye	3	Johnny Hekker		
P	3	Johnny Hekker	6	Joey Slye		
H	3	Johnny Hekker	10	Brandon Allen		
PR	13	James Proche II	<u>17</u>	<u>Chimere Dike</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>Xavier Restrepo</u>
KOR	19	Jha'Quan Jackson	<u>17</u>	<u>Chimere Dike</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>TJ Sheffield</u>
LS	46	Morgan Cox	81	Josh Whyte		

Rookies are underlined
As of August 11, 2025



TENNESSEE TITANS ROSTER BY EXPERIENCE

16TH YEAR		6TH YEAR		2ND YEAR		1ST YEAR	
Morgan Cox	LS	Joey Slye	K	Otis Reese IV	LB	Kendell Brooks	DB
				Peter Skoronski	OL	Matt Landers	WR
14TH YEAR		5TH YEAR		1ST YEAR		ROOKIE DRAFT PICKS	
Johnny Hekker	P	Lloyd Cushenberry III	C	Josiah Bronson	DT	Elic Ayomanor	WR
Kevin Zeitler	G	Van Jefferson	WR	Jarvis Brownlee Jr.	CB	Chimere Dike	WR
11TH YEAR		James Lynch	DL	Ali Gaye	OLB	Marcus Harris	CB
		Sam Mustipher	OL	Cedric Gray	LB	Gunnar Helm	TE
Tyler Lockett	WR	Amani Oruwariye	CB	Jaylen Harrell	OLB	Kalel Mullings	RB
10TH YEAR		James Proche II	WR	Jha'Quan Jackson	WR	Oluwafemi Oladejo	OLB
		L'Jarius Sneed (PUP)	CB	Curtis Jacobs	LB	Jackson Slater	G
Jihad Ward	OLB	Blake Hance	OL	Jermar Jefferson	RB	Cameron Ward	QB
9TH YEAR		Brenden Jaimes	OL	Gabe Jeudy-Lally	CB	Kevin Winston Jr.	S
Brandon Allen	QB	Dan Moore Jr.	T	JC Latham	T	ROOKIE FREE AGENTS	
Trevor Siemian	QB	4TH YEAR		Titus Leo	OLB	Philip Bliidi	DT
Carlos Watkins	DL	Treyton Burks (IR)	WR	David Martin-Robinson	TE	Brandon Crenshaw-Dickson	T
Xavier Woods	S	Julius Chestnut	RB	Jordan Mims	RB	Drake Dabney	TE
8TH YEAR		Timmy Horne	DT	Thomas Odukoya	TE	Desmond Evans	OLB
Arden Key	OLB	Roger McCreary	CB	John Ojukwu	OL	David Gbenda	LB
7TH YEAR		Chig Okonkwo	TE	Bryce Oliver	WR	Jarmari Harris	CB
Cody Barton	LB	3RD YEAR		Anfernee Orji	LB	Cam Horsley	DT
Amani Hooker	S	Darrell Baker Jr.	CB	Andrew Rupcich	OL	Jalen Kimber	CB
Dre'Mont Jones	OLB	Chandler Brewer	OL	T'Vondre Sweat	NT	Clarence Lewis	CB
Sebastian Joseph-Day	DE	Mike Brown	S	James Williams	LB	Isaiah Raikes	NT
Corey Levin	C/G	Amari Burney	LB	Julius Wood	DB	Xavier Restrepo	WR
Olisaemeka Udoh	OL	Jaelyn Duncan	OL			Davion Ross	CB
Tony Pollard	RB	Arlington Hambricht	G			TJ Sheffield	WR
Calvin Ridley	WR	Mason Kinsey	WR				
Jeffery Simmons	DT	Will Levis (IR)	QB				

As of Aug. 11, 2025

TENNESSEE TITANS ROSTER BY DRAFT ROUND

ROUND 1			ROUND 5			ROUND 7		
Player	Pos.	Year	Player	Pos.	Year	Player	Pos.	Year
Cameron Ward	QB	2025	Jackson Slater	G	2025	Jaylen Harrell	OLB	2024
JC Latham	T	2024	Jarvis Brownlee Jr.	CB	2024	James Williams	LB	2024
Peter Skoronski	OL	2023	Josh Whyte	TE	2023	Jermar Jefferson	RB	2021 (Det)
Treyton Burks (IR)	WR	2022	Brenden Jaimes	OL	2021 (LAC)	Arlington Hambricht	G	2020 (Chi)
Jeffery Simmons	DT	2019	Amani Oruwariye	CB	2019 (Det)	Trevor Siemian	QB	2015 (Den)
Calvin Ridley	WR	2018 (Atl)	ROUND 6			UNDRAFTED		
Kevin Zeitler	G	2012 (Cin)	Player	Pos.	Year	Player	Pos.	Year
ROUND 2			Marcus Harris	CB	2025	Philip Bliidi	DT	2025
Player	Pos.	Year	Kalel Mullings	RB	2025	Brandon Crenshaw-Dickson	T	2025
Oluwafemi Oladejo	OLB	2025	Jha'Quan Jackson	WR	2024	Drake Dabney	TE	2025
T'Vondre Sweat	NT	2024	Amari Burney	LB	2023 (LV)	Desmond Evans	OLB	2025
Will Levis (IR)	QB	2023	Jaelyn Duncan	OL	2023			
Roger McCreary	CB	2022	Titus Leo	OLB	2023 (Ind)			
Van Jefferson	WR	2020 (LAR)	James Proche II	WR	2020 (Bal)			
ROUND 3			Olisaemeka Udoh	OL	2019 (Min)			
Player	Pos.	Year	Sebastian Joseph-Day	DL	2018 (LAR)			
Kevin Winston Jr.	S	2025	Corey Levin	G	2017			
Tyjae Spears	RB	2023	Xavier Woods	S	2017 (Dal)			
Lloyd Cushenberry III	C	2020 (Den)	Brandon Allen	QB	2016 (Jax)			
Cody Barton	LB	2019 (Sea)	ROUND 4					
Dre'Mont Jones	OLB	2019 (Den)	Player	Pos.	Year			
Arden Key	OLB	2018 (Oak)	Elic Ayomanor	WR	2025			
Jihad Ward	OLB	2016 (Oak)	Chimere Dike	WR	2025			
Tyler Lockett	WR	2015 (Sea)	Gunnar Helm	TE	2025			
ROUND 4			Cedric Gray	LB	2024			
Player	Pos.	Year	Chig Okonkwo	TE	2022			
Elic Ayomanor	WR	2025	Dan Moore Jr.	T	2021 (Pit)			
Chimere Dike	WR	2025	James Lynch	DL	2020 (Min)			
Gunnar Helm	TE	2025	L'Jarius Sneed (PUP)	CB	2020 (KC)			
Cedric Gray	LB	2024	Amani Hooker	S	2019			
Chig Okonkwo	TE	2022						
Dan Moore Jr.	T	2021 (Pit)						
James Lynch	DL	2020 (Min)						
L'Jarius Sneed (PUP)	CB	2020 (KC)						
Amani Hooker	S	2019						

As of Aug. 11, 2025



HOW THE TENNESSEE TITANS WERE BUILT

YEAR	DRAFTEES (24)	FREE AGENTS (59)	TRADES/WAIVERS (8)
2025	QB Cameron Ward (1) OLB Oluwafemi Oladejo (2) S Kevin Winston Jr. (3) WR Chimere Dike (4a) TE Gunnar Helm (4b) WR Elic Ayomanor (4c) G Jackson Slater (5) CB Marcus Harris (6a) RB Kalel Mullings (6b)	LB Cody Barton (UFA-DEN) OL Blake Hance (UFA-JAX) P Johnny Hekker (UFA-CAR) T Dan Moore Jr. (UFA-PIT) G Kevin Zeitler (UFA-DET) QB Brandon Allen (UFA-SF) WR Van Jefferson (UFA-PIT) OLB Dre'Mont Jones (FA) S Xavier Woods (UFA-CAR) K Joey Slye (UFA-NE) WR James Proche II (UFA-CLE) OL Brenden Jaimes (UFA-LAC) OL Sam Mustipher (UFA-LAC) OL Olisaemeka Udoh (UFA-NO) WR Tyler Lockett (FA) DT Philip Blidi (FA) T Brandon Crenshaw-Dickson (FA) OLB Desmond Evans (FA) LB David Gbenda (FA) CB Jermari Harris (FA) DT Cam Horsley (FA) CB Jalen Kimber (FA) CB Clarence Lewis (FA) NT Isaiah Raikes (FA) WR Xavier Restrepo (FA) CB Davion Ross (FA) TE Drake Dabney (FA) WR TJ Sheffield (FA) CB Amani Oruwariye (FA) DL Carlos Watkins (FA) RB Jordan Mims (FA) DT Timmy Horne (FA) RB Jermar Jefferson (FA) OLB Jihad Ward (FA) WR Matt Landers (FA) DT Josiah Bronson (FA) DB Joshua Bledsoe (FA) DE Joe Gaziano (FA)	LB Curtis Jacobs (W-NE) LB Amari Burney (W-LV) LB Anfernee Orji (W-NO)
2024	T JC Latham (1) NT T'Vondre Sweat (2) LB Cedric Gray (4) CB Jarvis Brownlee Jr. (5) WR Jha'Quan Jackson (6) LB James Williams (7a) OLB Jaylen Harrell (7b)	C Lloyd Cushenberry III (UFA-DEN) RB Tony Pollard (UFA-DAL) WR Calvin Ridley (UFA-JAX) DE Sebastian Joseph-Day (UFA-SF) CB Gabe Judy-Lally (FA) TE David Martin-Robinson (FA) WR Bryce Oliver (FA) S Quandre Diggs (FA) DL James Lynch (FA) DB Kendell Brooks (FA) QB Trevor Siemian (FA) G Arlington Hambricht (FA)	CB L'Jarius Sneed (T-KC) OLB Ali Gaye (W-HOU) DB Julius Wood (W-DAL) CB Darrell Baker Jr. (W-IND)
2023	OL Peter Skoronski (1) RB Tyjae Spears (3) TE Josh Whyle (5) OL Jaelyn Duncan (6)	OLB Arden Key (UFA-JAX) OL John Ojukwu (FA) LB Otis Reese IV (FA)	
2022	CB Roger McCreary (2) TE Chig Okonkwo (4b)	RB Julius Chestnut (FA) TE Thomas Odukoya (FA) OL Andrew Rucpich (FA) S Mike Brown (FA)	
2021		LS Morgan Cox (UFA-BAL) WR Mason Kinsey (FA)	C/G Corey Levin (W-NYJ)
2019	DT Jeffery Simmons (1) S Amani Hooker (4)		

As of Aug. 11, 2025



TENNESSEE TITANS POSITIONAL ROSTER - OFFENSE

QUARTERBACKS (3)

10	Allen, Brandon	QB	6-2	209	9/5/92	9	Arkansas	Fayetteville, Ark.	UFA (SF)-'25
15	Siemian, Trevor	QB	6-3	220	12/26/91	9	Northwestern	Windermere, Fla.	FA-'24
1	Ward, Cameron	QB	6-2	219	5/25/02	R	Miami (Fla.)	West Columbia, Texas	D1-'25

RUNNING BACKS (6)

36	Chestnut, Julius	RB	5-11	228	10/26/00	4	Sacred Heart	Bowie, Md.	FA-'22
32	Jefferson, Jermar	RB	5-10	215	4/15/00	2	Oregon State	Harbor City, Calif.	FA-'25
24	Mims, Jordan	RB	6-0	205	6/16/99	2	Fresno State	East Palo Alto, Calif.	FA-'25
28	Mullings, Kalel	RB	6-2	226	10/4/02	R	Michigan	Boston, Mass.	D6b-'25
20	Pollard, Tony	RB	6-0	209	4/30/97	7	Memphis	Memphis, Tenn.	UFA (DAL)-'24
2	Spears, Tyjae	RB	5-11	195	6/15/01	3	Tulane	Ponchatoula, La.	D3-'23

WIDE RECEIVERS (12)

5	Ayomanor, Elic	WR	6-2	206	6/3/03	R	Stanford	Medicine Hat, Alberta, Can.	D4c-'25
17	Dike, Chimere	WR	6-1	196	12/14/01	R	Florida	Waukesha, Wis.	D4a-'25
19	Jackson, Jha'Quan	WR	5-9	188	5/15/00	2	Tulane	Luling, La.	D6-'24
11	Jefferson, Van	WR	6-1	200	7/26/96	6	Florida	Brentwood, Tenn.	UFA (PIT)-'25
12	Kinsey, Mason	WR	5-11	200	8/29/98	3	Berry College	Demorest, Ga.	FA-'21
83	Landers, Matt	WR	6-4	200	6/16/99	1	Arkansas	St. Petersburg, Fla.	FA-'25
4	Lockett, Tyler	WR	5-10	182	9/28/92	11	Kansas State	Tulsa, Okla.	FA-'25
80	Oliver, Bryce	WR	6-1	214	5/19/00	2	Youngstown State	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	FA-'24
13	Proche II, James	WR	5-11	193	9/21/96	6	Southern Methodist	Dallas, Texas	UFA (CLE)-'25
87	Restrepo, Xavier	WR	5-10	202	4/12/02	R	Miami (Fla.)	Coconut Creek, Fla.	FA-'25
0	Ridley, Calvin	WR	6-1	190	12/20/94	7	Alabama	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	UFA (JAX)-'24
82	Sheffield, TJ	WR	5-10	188	12/14/00	R	Connecticut	Thompson's Station, Tenn.	FA-'25

TIGHT ENDS (6)

86	Dabney, Drake	TE	6-5	246	5/14/02	R	Texas Christian	Cypress, Texas	FA-'25
84	Helm, Gunnar	TE	6-5	241	9/6/02	R	Texas	Englewood, Colo.	D4b-'25
88	Martin-Robinson, David	TE	6-3	247	12/26/99	2	Temple	Landisville, Pa.	FA-'24
89	Odukoya, Thomas	TE	6-6	253	5/5/97	2	Eastern Michigan	Almere, Netherlands	FA-'22
85	Okonkwo, Chig	TE	6-3	238	9/8/99	4	Maryland	Powder Springs, Ga.	D4b-'22
81	Whyte, Josh	TE	6-7	248	9/8/99	3	Cincinnati	Cincinnati, Ohio	D5-'23

CENTERS (3)

79	Cushenberry III, Lloyd	C	6-4	315	11/22/97	6	Louisiana State	Carville, La.	UFA (DEN)-'24
62	Levin, Corey	C/G	6-4	307	8/12/94	7	Chattanooga	Dacula, Ga.	W (NYJ)-'21
60	Mustipher, Sam	OL	6-3	306	8/13/96	6	Notre Dame	Owings Mills, Md.	UFA (LAC)-'25

GUARDS (7)

68	Arlington Hambright	G	6-5	300	29	3	Colorado	Ypsilanti, Mich.	FA-'24
73	Hance, Blake	OL	6-5	310	1/11/96	5	Northwestern	Jacksonville, Ill.	UFA (JAX)-'25
66	Jaimes, Brenden	OL	6-5	300	5/28/99	5	Nebraska	Austin, Texas	UFA (LAC)-'25
76	Rupcich, Andrew	OL	6-6	318	4/1/99	2	Culver-Stockton	Wonder Lake, Ill.	FA-'22
77	Skoronski, Peter	OL	6-4	313	7/31/01	3	Northwestern	Park Ridge, Ill.	D1-'23
64	Slater, Jackson	G	6-3	311	5/30/03	R	Sacramento State	Bellevue, Wash.	D5-'25
70	Zeitler, Kevin	G	6-4	332	3/8/90	14	Wisconsin	Waukesha, Wisc.	UFA (DET)-'25

TACKLES (6)

78	Crenshaw-Dickson, Brandon T		6-7	316	2/22/01	R	Florida	Inglewood, Calif.	FA-'25
71	Duncan, Jaelyn	OL	6-6	306	7/8/00	3	Maryland	New Carrollton, Md.	D6-'23
55	Latham, JC	T	6-6	342	2/8/03	2	Alabama	Oak Creek, Wis.	D1-'24
75	Moore Jr., Dan	T	6-5	315	9/28/98	5	Texas A&M	Beaumont, Texas	UFA (PIT)-'25
61	Ojukwu, John	OL	6-5	309	1/9/99	2	Boise State	Boise, Idaho	FA-'23
72	Udoh, Olisaemeka	OL	6-6	320	2/14/97	7	Elon	Fayetteville, N.C.	UFA (NO)-'25

LONG SNAPPER (1)

46	Cox, Morgan	LS	6-4	233	4/26/86	16	Tennessee	Collierville, Tenn.	UFA (BAL)-'21

PLACEKICKERS (1)

6	Slye, Joey	K	5-11	213	4/10/96	7	Virginia Tech	North Stafford, Va.	UFA (NE)-'25

As of Aug. 11, 2025



TENNESSEE TITANS POSITIONAL ROSTER - DEFENSE

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN (11)

95	Blidi, Philip	DT	6-3	284	5/12/02	R	Auburn	Trenton, N.J.	FA-'25
73	Bronson, Josiah	DT	6-3	295	7/3/97	2	Washington	Kent, Wash.	FA-'25
90	Gaziano, Joe	DE	6-4	280	9/27/96	4	Northwestern	Scituate, Mass.	FA-'25
94	Horne, Timmy	DT	6-4	323	10/25/97	4	Kansas State	Wadesboro, N.C.	FA-'25
72	Horsley, Cam	DT	6-3	312	2/6/02	R	Boston College	Cinnaminson, N.J.	FA-'25
69	Joseph-Day, Sebastian	DE	6-4	310	3/21/95	7	Rutgers	Stroudsburg, Pa.	UFA (SF)-'24
97	Lynch, James	DL	6-4	295	1/20/99	6	Baylor	Round Rock, Texas	FA-'24
76	Raikes, Isaiah	NT	6-1	310	5/15/01	R	Auburn	Woodbury, N.J.	FA-'25
98	Simmons, Jeffery	DT	6-4	305	7/28/97	7	Mississippi State	Macon, Miss.	D1-'19
93	Sweat, T'Vondre	NT	6-4	366	7/11/01	2	Texas	Huntsville, Texas	D2-'24
96	Watkins, Carlos	DL	6-3	305	12/5/93	9	Clemson	Mooresboro, N.C.	FA-'25

LINEBACKERS (15)

50	Barton, Cody	LB	6-2	237	11/13/96	7	Utah	Cottonwood Heights, Utah	UFA (DEN)-'25
58	Burney, Amari	LB	6-2	228	6/19/00	3	Florida	St. Petersburg, Fla.	W (LV)-'25
56	Evans, Desmond	OLB	6-6	252	8/26/02	R	North Carolina	Sanford, N.C.	FA-'25
99	Gaye, Ali	OLB	6-6	265	11/29/97	2	Louisiana State	Lynnwood, Wash.	W (HOU)-'24
48	Gbenda, David	LB	6-0	236	12/12/00	R	Texas	Katy, Texas	FA-'25
51	Gray, Cedric	LB	6-2	234	10/30/02	2	North Carolina	Charlotte, N.C.	D4-'24
92	Harrell, Jaylen	OLB	6-4	247	5/1/02	2	Michigan	Tampa, Fla.	D7b-'24
57	Jacobs, Curtis	LB	6-1	241	2/18/02	2	Penn State	Glen Burnie, Md.	W (NE)-'25
45	Jones, Dre'Mont	OLB	6-3	281	1/5/97	7	Ohio State	Cleveland, Ohio	FA-'25
49	Key, Arden	OLB	6-5	240	5/3/96	8	Louisiana State	Atlanta, Ga.	UFA (JAX)-'23
7	Oladejo, Oluwafemi	OLB	6-3	259	9/20/03	R	UCLA	Sacramento, Calif.	D2-'25
59	Orji, Anfernee	LB	6-2	230	10/6/00	2	Vanderbilt	Rockwell, Texas	W (NO)-'25
41	Reese IV, Otis	LB	6-3	214	7/2/98	3	Mississippi	Leesburg, Ga.	FA-'23
53	Ward, Jihad	OLB	6-5	285	5/11/94	10	Illinois	Philadelphia, Pa.	FA-'25
52	Williams Sr., James	LB	6-4	232	2/15/03	2	Miami (Fla.)	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	D7a-'24

CORNERBACKS (11)

39	Baker Jr., Darrell	CB	6-1	190	3/27/98	3	Georgia Southern	Hephzibah, Ga.	W (IND)-'24
29	Brownlee Jr., Jarvis	CB	5-10	194	7/13/01	2	Louisville	Miami Gardens, Fla.	D5-'24
30	Harris, Jermari	CB	6-1	191	9/19/00	R	Iowa	Chicago, Ill.	FA-'25
26	Harris, Marcus	CB	5-11	188	3/6/01	R	California	Portland, Ore.	D6a-'25
32	Jeady-Lally, Gabe	CB	6-1	189	2/16/01	2	Tennessee	Austin, Texas	FA-'24
35	Kimber, Jalen	CB	6-0	190	2/13/01	R	Penn State	Merrillville, Ind.	FA-'25
36	Lewis, Clarence	CB	5-11	200	12/8/00	R	Syracuse	Edison, N.J.	FA-'25
21	McCreary, Roger	CB	5-11	190	2/10/00	4	Auburn	Mobile, Ala.	D2-'22
31	Oruwariye, Amani	CB	6-2	205	2/9/96	6	Penn State	St. Petersburg, Fla.	FA-'25
40	Ross, Davion	CB	5-10	177	2/5/01	R	Memphis	Warner Robins, Ga.	FA-'25
38	Sneed, L'Jarius	CB	6-1	192	1/21/97	6	Louisiana Tech	Minden, La.	T (KC)-'24

SAFETIES (9)

42	Bledsoe, Joshua	DB	5-11	207	2/28/97	3	Missouri	Houston, Texas	FA-'25
33	Brooks, Kendell	DB	6-0	206	3/3/00	1	Michigan State	Swansea, S.C.	FA-'24
44	Brown, Mike	S	6-1	218	4/7/99	3	Miami (Ohio)	Grand Rapids, Mich.	FA-'22
28	Diggs, Quandre	S	5-9	197	1/22/93	11	Texas	Houston, Texas	FA-'24
37	Hooker, Amani	S	5-11	210	6/14/98	7	Iowa	Minneapolis, Minn.	D4-'19
23	Winston Jr., Kevin	S	6-2	213	12/2/03	R	Penn State	Columbia, Md.	D3-'25
24	Wood, Julius	DB	6-1	193	5/2/01	2	East Carolina	Columbus, Ohio	W (DAL)-'24
25	Woods, Xavier	S	5-11	200	7/26/95	9	Louisiana Tech	West Monroe, La.	UFA (CAR)-'25

PUNTERS (1)

3	Hekker, Johnny	P	6-5	225	2/8/90	14	Oregon State	Bothell, Wash.	UFA (CAR)-'25

As of Aug. 11, 2025



2025 TENNESSEE TITANS ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	BIRTHDATE	EXP.	COLLEGE	HOMETOWN	ACQUIRED
10	Allen, Brandon	QB	6-2	209	9/5/92	9	Arkansas	Fayetteville, Ark.	UFA (SF)-'25
5	Ayomanor, Elic	WR	6-2	206	6/3/03	R	Stanford	Medicine Hat, Alberta, Can.	D4c-'25
39	Baker Jr., Darrell	CB	6-1	190	3/27/98	3	Georgia Southern	Hephzibah, Ga.	W (IND)-'24
50	Barton, Cody	LB	6-2	237	11/13/96	7	Utah	Cottonwood Heights, Utah	UFA (DEN)-'25
42	Bledsoe, Joshua	DB	5-11	207	2/28/97	3	Missouri	Houston, Texas	FA-'25
95	Bliidi, Philip	DT	6-3	284	5/12/02	R	Auburn	Trenton, N.J.	FA-'25
73d	Bronson, Josiah	DT	6-3	295	7/3/97	2	Washington	Kent, Wash.	FA-'25
33	Brooks, Kendall	DB	6-0	206	3/3/00	1	Michigan State	Swansea, S.C.	FA-'24
44	Brown, Mike	S	6-1	218	4/7/99	3	Miami (Ohio)	Grand Rapids, Mich.	FA-'22
29	Brownlee Jr., Jarvis	CB	5-10	194	7/13/01	2	Louisville	Miami Gardens, Fla.	D5-'24
58	Burney, Amari	LB	6-2	228	6/19/00	3	Florida	St. Petersburg, Fla.	W (LV)-'25
36o	Chestnut, Julius	RB	5-11	228	10/26/00	4	Sacred Heart	Bowie, Md.	FA-'22
46	Cox, Morgan	LS	6-4	233	4/26/86	16	Tennessee	Collierville, Tenn.	UFA (BAL)-'21
78	Crenshaw-Dickson, Brandon	T	6-7	316	2/22/01	R	Florida	Inglewood, Calif.	FA-'25
79	Cushenberry III, Lloyd	C	6-4	315	11/22/97	6	Louisiana State	Carville, La.	UFA (DEN)-'24
86	Dabney, Drake	TE	6-5	246	5/14/02	R	Texas Christian	Cypress, Texas	FA-'25
28d	Diggs, Quandre	S	5-9	197	1/22/93	11	Texas	Houston, Texas	FA-'24
17	Dike, Chimere	WR	6-1	196	12/14/01	R	Florida	Waukesha, Wis.	D4a-'25
71	Duncan, Jaelyn	OL	6-6	306	7/8/00	3	Maryland	New Carrollton, Md.	D6-'23
56	Evans, Desmond	OLB	6-6	252	8/26/02	R	North Carolina	Sanford, N.C.	FA-'25
99	Gaye, Ali	OLB	6-6	265	11/29/97	2	Louisiana State	Lynnwood, Wash.	W (HOU)-'24
90	Gaziano, Joe	DE	6-4	280	9/27/96	4	Northwestern	Scituate, Mass.	FA-'25
48	Gbenda, David	LB	6-0	236	12/12/00	R	Texas	Katy, Texas	FA-'25
51	Gray, Cedric	LB	6-2	234	10/30/02	2	North Carolina	Charlotte, N.C.	D4-'24
68	Hambright, Arlington	G	6-5	300	1/30/96	3	Colorado	Ypsilanti, Mich.	FA-'24
73o	Hance, Blake	OL	6-5	310	1/11/96	5	Northwestern	Jacksonville, Ill.	UFA (JAX)-'25
92	Harrell, Jaylen	OLB	6-4	247	5/1/02	2	Michigan	Tampa, Fla.	D7b-'24
30	Harris, Jermari	CB	6-1	191	9/19/00	R	Iowa	Chicago, Ill.	FA-'25
26	Harris, Marcus	CB	5-11	188	3/6/01	R	California	Portland, Ore.	D6a-'25
3	Hekker, Johnny	P	6-5	225	2/8/90	14	Oregon State	Bothell, Wash.	UFA (CAR)-'25
84	Helm, Gunnar	TE	6-5	241	9/6/02	R	Texas	Englewood, Colo.	D4b-'25
37	Hooker, Amani	S	5-11	210	6/14/98	7	Iowa	Minneapolis, Minn.	D4-'19
94	Horne, Timmy	DT	6-4	323	10/25/97	4	Kansas State	Wadesboro, N.C.	FA-'25
72d	Horsley, Cam	DT	6-3	312	2/6/02	R	Boston College	Cinnaminson, N.J.	FA-'25
19	Jackson, Jha'Quan	WR	5-9	188	5/15/00	2	Tulane	Luling, La.	D6-'24
57	Jacobs, Curtis	LB	6-1	241	2/18/02	2	Penn State	Glen Burnie, Md.	W (NE)-'25
66	Jaimes, Brenden	OL	6-5	300	5/28/99	5	Nebraska	Austin, Texas	UFA (LAC)-'25
32o	Jefferson, Jermar	RB	5-10	215	4/15/00	2	Oregon State	Harbor City, Calif.	FA-'25
11	Jefferson, Van	WR	6-1	200	7/26/96	6	Florida	Brentwood, Tenn.	UFA (PIT)-'25
32d	Jeudy-Lally, Gabe	CB	6-1	189	2/16/01	2	Tennessee	Austin, Texas	FA-'24
45	Jones, Dre'Mont	OLB	6-3	281	1/5/97	7	Ohio State	Cleveland, Ohio	FA-'25
69	Joseph-Day, Sebastian	DE	6-4	310	3/21/95	7	Rutgers	Stroudsburg, Pa.	UFA (SF)-'24
49	Key, Arden	OLB	6-5	240	5/3/96	8	Louisiana State	Atlanta, Ga.	UFA (JAX)-'23
35	Kimber, Jalen	CB	6-0	190	2/13/01	R	Penn State	Merrillville, Ind.	FA-'25
12	Kinsey, Mason	WR	5-11	200	8/29/98	3	Berry College	Demorest, Ga.	FA-'21
83	Landers, Matt	WR	6-4	200	6/16/99	1	Arkansas	St. Petersburg, Fla.	FA-'25
55	Latham, JC	T	6-6	342	2/8/03	2	Alabama	Oak Creek, Wis.	D1-'24
62	Levin, Corey	C/G	6-4	307	8/12/94	7	Chattanooga	Dacula, Ga.	W (NYJ)-'21
36d	Lewis, Clarence	CB	5-11	200	12/8/00	R	Syracuse	Edison, N.J.	FA-'25
4	Lockett, Tyler	WR	5-10	182	9/28/92	11	Kansas State	Tulsa, Okla.	FA-'25
97	Lynch, James	DL	6-4	295	1/20/99	6	Baylor	Round Rock, Texas	FA-'24
88	Martin-Robinson, David	TE	6-3	247	12/26/99	2	Temple	Landisville, Pa.	FA-'24
21	McCreary, Roger	CB	5-11	190	2/10/00	4	Auburn	Mobile, Ala.	D2-'22
24o	Mims, Jordan	RB	6-0	205	6/16/99	2	Fresno State	East Palo Alto, Calif.	FA-'25
75	Moore Jr., Dan	T	6-5	315	9/28/98	5	Texas A&M	Beaumont, Texas	UFA (PIT)-'25
28o	Mullings, Kael	RB	6-2	226	10/4/02	R	Michigan	Boston, Mass.	D6b-'25
60	Mustipher, Sam	OL	6-3	306	8/13/96	6	Notre Dame	Owings Mills, Md.	UFA (LAC)-'25
89	Odukoya, Thomas	TE	6-6	253	5/5/97	2	Eastern Michigan	Almere, Netherlands	FA-'22
61	Ojukwu, John	OL	6-5	309	1/9/99	2	Boise State	Boise, Idaho	FA-'23
85	Okonkwo, Chig	TE	6-3	238	9/8/99	4	Maryland	Powder Springs, Ga.	D4b-'22
7	Oladejo, Oluwafemi	OLB	6-3	259	9/20/03	R	UCLA	Sacramento, Calif.	D2-'25
80	Oliver, Bryce	WR	6-1	214	5/19/00	2	Youngstown State	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	FA-'24
59	Orji, Anfernee	LB	6-2	230	10/6/00	2	Vanderbilt	Rockwell, Texas	W (NO)-'25
31	Oruwariye, Amani	CB	6-2	205	2/9/96	6	Penn State	St. Petersburg, Fla.	FA-'25
20	Pollard, Tony	RB	6-0	209	4/30/97	7	Memphis	Memphis, Tenn.	UFA (DAL)-'24
13	Proche II, James	WR	5-11	193	9/21/96	6	Southern Methodist	Dallas, Texas	UFA (CLE)-'25
76d	Raikes, Isaiah	NT	6-1	310	5/15/01	R	Auburn	Woodbury, N.J.	FA-'25
41	Reese IV, Otis	LB	6-3	214	7/2/98	3	Mississippi	Leesburg, Ga.	FA-'23
87	Restrepo, Xavier	WR	5-10	202	4/12/02	R	Miami (Fla.)	Coconut Creek, Fla.	FA-'25
0	Ridley, Calvin	WR	6-1	190	12/20/94	7	Alabama	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	UFA (JAX)-'24
40	Ross, Davion	CB	5-10	177	2/5/01	R	Memphis	Warner Robins, Ga.	FA-'25
76o	Rupcich, Andrew	OL	6-6	318	4/1/99	2	Culver-Stockton	Wonder Lake, Ill.	FA-'22
82	Sheffield, TJ	WR	5-10	188	12/14/00	R	Connecticut	Thompson's Station, Tenn.	FA-'25
15	Siemian, Trevor	QB	6-3	220	12/26/91	9	Northwestern	Windermere, Fla.	FA-'24
98	Simmons, Jeffery	DT	6-4	305	7/28/97	7	Mississippi State	Macon, Miss.	D1-'19
77	Skoronski, Peter	OL	6-4	313	7/31/01	3	Northwestern	Park Ridge, Ill.	D1-'23
64	Slater, Jackson	G	6-3	311	5/30/03	R	Sacramento State	Bellevue, Wash.	D5-'25
6	Slye, Joey	K	5-11	213	4/10/96	7	Virginia Tech	North Stafford, Va.	UFA (NE)-'25
2	Spears, Tyjae	RB	5-11	195	6/15/01	3	Tulane	Ponchatoula, La.	D3-'23
93	Sweat, T'Vondre	NT	6-4	366	7/11/01	2	Texas	Huntsville, Texas	D2-'24
72o	Udoh, Oluisaemeka	OL	6-6	320	2/14/97	7	Elon	Fayetteville, N.C.	UFA (NO)-'25
1	Ward, Cameron	QB	6-2	219	5/25/02	R	Miami (Fla.)	West Columbia, Texas	D1-'25
53	Ward, Jihad	OLB	6-5	285	5/11/94	10	Illinois	Philadelphia, Pa.	FA-'25
96	Watkins, Carlos	DL	6-3	305	12/5/93	9	Clemson	Mooresboro, N.C.	FA-'25
81	Whyte, Josh	TE	6-7	248	9/8/99	3	Cincinnati	Cincinnati, Ohio	D5-'23
52	Williams Sr., James	LB	6-4	232	2/15/03	2	Miami (Fla.)	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	D7a-'24
23	Winston Jr., Kevin	S	6-2	213	12/2/03	R	Penn State	Columbia, Md.	D3-'25
24	Wood, Julius	DB	6-1	193	5/2/01	2	East Carolina	Columbus, Ohio	W (DAL)-'24
25	Woods, Xavier	S	5-11	200	7/26/95	9	Louisiana Tech	West Monroe, La.	UFA (CAR)-'25
70	Zettler, Kevin	G	6-4	332	3/8/90	14	Wisconsin	Waukesha, Wis.	UFA (DET)-'25
PHYSICALLY UNABLE TO PERFORM (1) :									
38	Sneed, L'Jarius	CB	6-1	192	1/21/97	6	Louisiana Tech	Minden, La.	T (KC)-'24
RESERVE/INJURED (3) :									
67	Brewer, Chandler	OL	6-6	320	6/12/97	3	Middle Tennessee State	Florence, Ala.	FA-'24
16	Burks, Treyton	WR	6-2	225	3/23/00	4	Arkansas	Warren, Ark.	D1-'22
8	Levis, Will	QB	6-4	229	6/27/99	3	Kentucky	Madison, Conn.	D2-'23

Active Roster Count: 91

As of Aug. 11, 2025

HEAD COACH: BRIAN CALLAHAN

ASSISTANT COACHES: JOHN FASSEL (special teams coordinator), NICK HOLZ (offensive coordinator), DENNARD WILSON (defensive coordinator), DYLAN AUTENRIETH (defensive quality control), BRIAN BELL (assistant director of sports performance), BEN BLOOM (outside linebackers), TREVOR BROWDER (offensive assistant), FRANK BUSH (linebackers), KYLAN BUTLER (offensive assistant), BILL CALLAHAN (offensive line), STEVE DONATELL (defensive assistant), SCOTT FUCHS (assistant offensive line), BO HARDEGREE (quarterbacks), STEVE JACKSON (secondary/safeties), MATT JONES (offensive assistant), TOM JONES (assistant to the head coach), RANDY JORDAN (running backs), LORI LOCUST (defensive assistant), MARK LOVAT (assistant strength and conditioning), PAYTON MCCOLLUM (assistant quarterbacks), MIKE MCCOY (senior offensive assistant), TONY ODEN (defensive passing game coordinator/cornerbacks), TRACY ROCKER (defensive line), JOHN SHAW (assistant sports performance - speed training), TRAVIS SMITH (defensive run game coordinator), RAYNA STEWART (assistant special teams), LUKE STOCKER (tight ends), GRANT THORNE (assistant strength and conditioning), TYKE TOLBERT (wide receivers), ZAC WOODFIN (director of sports performance).



2025 TENNESSEE TITANS NUMERICAL ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	AGE	EXP.	COLLEGE	HOMETOWN	ACQUIRED
0	Calvin Ridley	WR	6-1	190	30	7	Alabama	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	UFA (JAX)-'24
1	Cameron Ward	QB	6-2	219	23	R	Miami (Fla.)	West Columbia, Texas	D1-'25
2	Tyjae Spears	RB	5-11	195	24	3	Tulane	Ponchatoula, La.	D3-'25
3	Johnny Hekker	P	6-5	225	35	14	Oregon State	Bothell, Wash.	UFA (CAR)-'25
4	Tyler Lockett	WR	5-10	182	32	11	Kansas State	Tulsa, Okla.	FA-'25
5	Elic Ayomanor	WR	6-2	206	22	R	Stanford	Medicine Hat, Alberta, Can.	D4c-'25
6	Joey Slye	K	5-11	213	29	7	Virginia Tech	North Stafford, Va.	UFA (NE)-'25
7	Oluwafemi Oladejo	OLB	6-3	259	21	R	UCLA	Sacramento, Calif.	D2-'25
10	Brandon Allen	QB	6-2	209	32	9	Arkansas	Fayetteville, Ark.	UFA (SF)-'25
11	Van Jefferson	WR	6-1	200	29	6	Florida	Brentwood, Tenn.	UFA (PIT)-'25
12	Mason Kinsey	WR	5-11	200	26	3	Berry College	Demorest, Ga.	FA-'21
13	James Proche II	WR	5-11	193	28	6	Southern Methodist	Dallas, Texas	UFA (CLE)-'25
15	Trevor Siemian	QB	6-3	220	33	9	Northwestern	Windermere, Fla.	FA-'24
17	Chimere Dike	WR	6-1	196	23	R	Florida	Waukesha, Wis.	D4a-'25
19	Jha'Quan Jackson	WR	5-9	188	25	2	Tulane	Luling, La.	D6-'24
20	Tony Pollard	RB	6-0	209	28	7	Memphis	Memphis, Tenn.	UFA (DAL)-'24
21	Roger McCreary	CB	5-11	190	25	4	Auburn	Mobile, Ala.	D2-'22
23	Kevin Winston Jr.	S	6-2	213	21	R	Penn State	Columbia, Md.	D3-'25
24o	Jordan Mims	RB	6-0	205	26	2	Fresno State	East Palo Alto, Calif.	FA-'25
24d	Julius Wood	DB	6-1	193	24	2	East Carolina	Columbus, Ohio	W (DAL)-'24
25	Xavier Woods	S	5-11	200	30	9	Louisiana Tech	West Monroe, La.	UFA (CAR)-'25
26	Marcus Harris	CB	5-11	188	24	R	California	Portland, Ore.	D6a-'25
28d	Quandre Diggs	S	5-9	197	32	11	Texas	Houston, Texas	FA-'24
28o	Kalel Mullings	RB	6-2	226	22	R	Michigan	Boston, Mass.	D6b-'25
29	Jarvis Brownlee Jr.	CB	5-10	194	24	2	Louisville	Miami Gardens, Fla.	D5-'24
30	Jermari Harris	CB	6-1	191	24	R	Iowa	Chicago, Ill.	FA-'25
31	Amani Oruwariye	CB	6-2	205	29	6	Penn State	St. Petersburg, Fla.	FA-'25
32o	Jermar Jefferson	RB	5-10	215	25	2	Oregon State	Harbor City, Calif.	FA-'25
32d	Gabe Judy-Lally	CB	6-1	189	24	2	Tennessee	Austin, Texas	FA-'24
33	Kendell Brooks	DB	6-0	206	25	1	Michigan State	Swansea, S.C.	FA-'24
35	Jalen Kimber	CB	6-0	190	24	R	Penn State	Merrillville, Ind.	FA-'25
36o	Julius Chestnut	RB	5-11	228	24	4	Sacred Heart	Bowie, Md.	FA-'22
36d	Clarence Lewis	CB	5-11	200	24	R	Syracuse	Edison, N.J.	FA-'25
37	Amani Hooker	S	5-11	210	27	7	Iowa	Minneapolis, Minn.	D4-'19
39	Darrell Baker Jr.	CB	6-1	190	27	3	Georgia Southern	Hephzibah, Ga.	W (IND)-'24
40	Davion Ross	CB	5-10	177	24	R	Memphis	Warner Robins, Ga.	FA-'25
41	Otis Reese IV	LB	6-3	214	27	3	Mississippi	Leesburg, Ga.	FA-'23
42	Joshuah Bledsoe	DB	5-11	207	28	3	Missouri	Houston, Texas	FA-'25
44	Mike Brown	S	6-1	218	26	3	Miami (Ohio)	Grand Rapids, Mich.	FA-'22
45	Dre'Mont Jones	OLB	6-3	281	28	7	Ohio State	Cleveland, Ohio	FA-'25
46	Morgan Cox	LS	6-4	233	39	16	Tennessee	Collierville, Tenn.	UFA (BAL)-'21
48	David Gbenda	LB	6-0	236	24	R	Texas	Katy, Texas	FA-'25
49	Arden Key	OLB	6-5	240	29	8	Louisiana State	Atlanta, Ga.	UFA (JAX)-'23
50	Cody Barton	LB	6-2	237	28	7	Utah	Cottonwood Heights, Utah	UFA (DEN)-'25
51	Cedric Gray	LB	6-2	234	22	2	North Carolina	Charlotte, N.C.	D4-'24
52	James Williams Sr.	LB	6-4	232	22	2	Miami (Fla.)	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	D7a-'24
53	Jihad Ward	OLB	6-5	285	31	10	Illinois	Philadelphia, Pa.	FA-'25
55	JC Latham	T	6-6	342	22	2	Alabama	Oak Creek, Wis.	D1-'24
56	Desmond Evans	OLB	6-6	252	22	R	North Carolina	Sanford, N.C.	FA-'25
57	Curtis Jacobs	LB	6-1	241	23	2	Penn State	Glen Burnie, Md.	W (NE)-'25
58	Amari Burney	LB	6-2	228	25	3	Florida	St. Petersburg, Fla.	W (LV)-'25
59	Anfernee Orji	LB	6-2	230	24	2	Vanderbilt	Rockwell, Texas	W (NO)-'25
60	Sam Mustipher	OL	6-3	306	28	6	Notre Dame	Owings Mills, Md.	UFA (LAC)-'25
61	John Ojukwu	OL	6-5	309	26	2	Boise State	Boise, Idaho	FA-'23
62	Corey Levin	C/G	6-4	307	30	7	Chattanooga	Dacula, Ga.	W (NYJ)-'21
64	Jackson Slater	G	6-3	311	22	R	Sacramento State	Bellevue, Wash.	D5-'25
66	Brenden Jaimes	OL	6-5	300	26	5	Nebraska	Austin, Texas	UFA (LAC)-'25
68	Arlington Hambricht	G	6-5	300	29	3	Colorado	Ypsilanti, Mich.	FA-'24
69	Sebastian Joseph-Day	DE	6-4	310	30	7	Rutgers	Stroudsburg, Pa.	UFA (SF)-'24
70	Kevin Zeitler	G	6-4	332	35	14	Wisconsin	Waukesha, Wis.	UFA (DET)-'25
71	Jaelyn Duncan	OL	6-6	306	25	3	Maryland	New Carrollton, Md.	D6-'23
72d	Cam Horsley	DT	6-3	312	23	R	Boston College	Cinnaminson, N.J.	FA-'25
72o	Olisaemeka Udoh	OL	6-6	320	28	7	Elon	Fayetteville, N.C.	UFA (NO)-'25
73d	Josiah Bronson	DT	6-3	295	28	2	Washington	Kent, Wash.	FA-'25
73o	Blake Hance	OL	6-5	310	29	5	Northwestern	Jacksonville, Ill.	UFA (JAX)-'25
75	Dan Moore Jr.	T	6-5	315	26	5	Texas A&M	Beaumont, Texas	UFA (PIT)-'25
76d	Isaiah Raikes	NT	6-1	310	24	R	Auburn	Woodbury, N.J.	FA-'25
76o	Andrew Rucpich	OL	6-6	318	26	2	Culver-Stockton	Wonder Lake, Ill.	FA-'22
77	Peter Skoronski	OL	6-4	313	24	3	Northwestern	Park Ridge, Ill.	D1-'23
78	Brandon Crenshaw-Dickson	T	6-7	316	24	R	Florida	Inglewood, Calif.	FA-'25
79	Lloyd Cushenberry III	C	6-4	315	27	6	Louisiana State	Carville, La.	UFA (DEN)-'24
80	Bryce Oliver	WR	6-1	214	25	2	Youngstown State	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	FA-'24
81	Josh Whyte	TE	6-7	248	25	3	Cincinnati	Cincinnati, Ohio	D5-'23
82	TJ Sheffield	WR	5-10	188	24	R	Connecticut	Thompson's Station, Tenn.	FA-'25
83	Matt Landers	WR	6-4	200	26	1	Arkansas	St. Petersburg, Fla.	FA-'25
84	Gunnar Helm	TE	6-5	241	22	R	Texas	Englewood, Colo.	D4b-'25
85	Chig Okonkwo	TE	6-3	238	25	4	Maryland	Powder Springs, Ga.	D4b-'22
86	Drake Dabney	TE	6-5	246	23	R	Texas Christian	Cypress, Texas	FA-'25
87	Xavier Restrepo	WR	5-10	202	23	R	Miami (Fla.)	Coconut Creek, Fla.	FA-'25
88	David Martin-Robinson	TE	6-3	247	25	2	Temple	Landisville, Pa.	FA-'24
89	Thomas Odukoya	TE	6-6	253	28	2	Eastern Michigan	Almere, Netherlands	FA-'22
90	Joe Gaziano	DE	6-4	280	28	4	Northwestern	Scituate, Mass.	FA-'25
92	Jaylen Harrell	OLB	6-4	247	23	2	Michigan	Tampa, Fla.	D7b-'24
93	T'Vondre Sweat	NT	6-4	366	24	2	Texas	Huntsville, Texas	D2-'24
94	Timmy Horne	DT	6-4	323	27	4	Kansas State	Wadesboro, N.C.	FA-'25
95	Philip Bliidi	DT	6-3	284	23	R	Auburn	Trenton, N.J.	FA-'25
96	Carlos Watkins	DL	6-3	305	31	9	Clemson	Mooresboro, N.C.	FA-'25
97	James Lynch	DL	6-4	295	26	6	Baylor	Round Rock, Texas	FA-'24
98	Jeffery Simmons	DT	6-4	305	28	7	Mississippi State	Macon, Miss.	D1-'19
99	Ali Gaye	OLB	6-6	265	27	2	Louisiana State	Lynnwood, Wash.	W (HOU)-'24
PHYSICALLY UNABLE TO PERFORM (1) :									
38	L'Jarius Sneed	CB	6-1	192	28	6	Louisiana Tech	Minden, La.	T (KC)-'24
RESERVE/INJURED (3) :									
8	Will Levis	QB	6-4	229	26	3	Kentucky	Madison, Conn.	D2-'23
16	Treyton Burks	WR	6-2	225	25	4	Arkansas	Warren, Ark.	D1-'22
67	Chandler Brewer	OL	6-6	320	28	3	Middle Tennessee State	Florence, Ala.	FA-'24

Active Roster Count: 91

As of Aug. 11, 2025

HEAD COACH: BRIAN CALLAHAN

ASSISTANT COACHES: JOHN FASSEL (special teams coordinator), NICK HOLZ (offensive coordinator), DENNARD WILSON (defensive coordinator), DYLAN AUTENRIETH (defensive quality control), BRIAN BELL (assistant director of sports performance), BEN BLOOM (outside linebackers), TREVOR BROWDER (offensive assistant), FRANK BUSH (linebackers), KYLAN BUTLER (offensive assistant), BILL CALLAHAN (offensive line), STEVE DONATELL (defensive assistant), SCOTT FUCHS (assistant offensive line), BO HARDEGREE (quarterbacks), STEVE JACKSON (secondary/safeties), MATT JONES (offensive assistant), TOM JONES (assistant to the head coach), RANDY JORDAN (running backs), LORI LOCUST (defensive assistant), MARK LOVAT (assistant strength and conditioning), PAYTON MCCOLLUM (assistant quarterbacks), MIKE MCCOY (senior offensive assistant), TONY ODEN (defensive passing game coordinator/cornerbacks), TRACY ROCKER (defensive line), JOHN SHAW (assistant sports performance - speed training), TRAVIS SMITH (defensive run game coordinator), RAYNA STEWART (assistant special teams), LUKE STOCKER (tight ends), GRANT THORNE (assistant strength and conditioning), TYKE TOLBERT (wide receivers), ZAC WOODFIN (director of sports performance).

HOW ACQUIRED KEY: FA (free agent), UFA (unrestricted free agent), RFA (restricted free agent), D (draft pick), W (waivers), T (trade)



TENNESSEE TITANS

BRIAN CALLAHAN TRANSCRIPT



HEAD COACH BRIAN CALLAHAN PRESS CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT

Sunday, August 10, 2025

Okay, I'll just start. I will get rolling from last night. I thought there was a lot of really good things still after film review. Plenty of things still to work on but was very pleased with the way we played up front on offense. I was pleased with how Cam (Ward) played and there's certainly things we're going to correct and get better at. I thought that was some really good takeaways from the operation. And I think some of the things on defense was good to see us in the red zone again, just not give up touchdowns. I think they only were two for five in a red zone, which was good to see from all three groups that played for the most part. And looking forward to staying on our grind here on the road trip, our four AM arrival to the hotel was a lot of fun. But that's part of the whole process. So we're going to keep grinding along here. As far as injuries goes, I know you guys will ask, but (Tyjae) Spears is expected to probably miss some time here, a couple of weeks at least. We'll see, we're waiting on some final words on a few things, but he will definitely miss some time. And other than that, I'm expecting potentially to get Blake Hance back in practice this week. I'm hopeful that, potentially, Lloyd (Cushenberry III) gets back in practice this week in a return to play basis. And Kevin Winston, I know you'll ask about him. We'll see on Kevin Winston not totally sure one way or the other at this point, how much he'll do with these joint practices. So anybody else I forget, and if you want to ask, go ahead. But I think that covers the main ones. And with that, I'll let you guys ask some questions.

(on if there is a specific thing that he wants Cameron Ward to work on and if Brandon Allen's and Tim Boyle's play was concerning)

Yeah, first Cam (Ward). Yeah, there's definitely Cam's where— we know Cam's certainly hasn't arrived yet. We got a lot of things still we're we're working on. I thought it was a good start for him, encouraging. It was productive. But yeah, there's a couple of things that we're going to keep grinding on. Still working on getting the ball out fast, still working the timing part of it. I think it was good to feel some live action there to feel what that feels like for real, but overall pretty good. But there's certainly plenty of things that we're still working with Cam, so that process is still ongoing. As far as the backup quarterbacks go, I think some of it was circumstantial. I thought Brandon (Allen) did some good things, he gets an unlucky tip ball. Which looks bad on the stat sheet, but he did some stuff that was about in line with what I expect of him. And then Tim (Boyle) got put in a bit of a tough spot, especially at the end there. We go down two scores and we're trying to drop back and throw the ball bunch and didn't really want to get to that position, but put him in harm's way probably more than you'd like to for a preseason game. But they both got to get better they both got to do things better and good thing is we got a lot of weeks here still to go and that's one opportunity for him and we got two more coming up.

(on how concerning was it for the defense to let up as many points it did even though it's preseason)

Yeah, I think you take it for what it is. It's a pre-season game with a bunch of guys that for us had played a lot of football for the first time. Obviously we want to go out and win every game we play. I'm not going to sit here and dismiss it because I want to go win too and we're competitive in that sense. But yeah, I mean, it was a one score game deep into the fourth quarter. It was 13 to seven or whatever it was. And then it just got kind of sloppy and unraveled at the end on us. Yeah, I don't put a world of stock in the final score of a preseason game, but there's certainly things we got to do better and we got to clean up from that regard. So it's a little bit of all that, Paul, to be honest.

(on if James Proche II is the front runner for the punt return job and his assessment of the special teams performance overall)

Yeah, I think James (Proche II) was solid. It was good to see him. He ripped off the one we got called back on, but it just— it was good to see them hit that with some conviction and break off a long one for us there. Again, the end result of the play wasn't really what I was looking at. It's more just what he did with the ball when he had it, which is what we're trying to find out and he did fine with the kickoff return as well.

Special teams, I thought was solid, especially early on. I thought we covered punts pretty well. We had one late sort of leak out and we got the penalty to tack onto it. Those are the things that happened in the preseason that you're trying to clean up. Teachable moments for those guys for sure. Yeah, there was definitely some good things in special teams part of it. I think we've gotten a lot better there. And then there was some things that we're going to have to continue to clean up, especially with some of those guys that hadn't played a lot of special teams at this level at full speed. So that was good to see for us.

(on James Williams Sr.)

Yeah, he's done a good job. I thought he set the tone really well in the opening kickoff. There was some things that he did well at the linebacker spot over the reps that he had. I thought it was productive on the ball. He had some tackles. He keeps coming along. I think him and Cedric (Gray) is worthy to mention in the same sentence, because I thought both of those guys played a healthy amount of snaps and they did some things that were really positive and encouraging. So again, in the vein of some of the stuff that's not as good, you take it for what it is and you're encouraged by what you see in the first preseason game, but we still got work to do and we still got to keep coming along, but happy with where those guys are at the moment.

(on Kalel Mullings and the importance of the rest of the running back room with Tyjae Spears' injury)

Yeah, I thought both Julius (Chestnut) and Kalel (Mullings) ran hard last night. They picked up some tough yards and put the ball in the right spot. I think you see— we know what Julius can do. He's played some games for us, but I thought he showed well for himself. I thought Kalel put the ball in the right spot. He did it with some authority. He had the one mishap in protection. He went to go to a first live rep, a pass pro in the NFL and he went to go shoulder a linebacker instead of using his hands and fitting right and ended up in a sack, so we'll learn from that. But I was really pleased with both of those guys. They're both bigger backs, they both run with some power, and we like that and so those guys are going to keep battling. I think Kalel is coming along really well, again, considering he missed all the spring too, for the most part. It's good to have him out there and participating because I think they're both talented and I think they got a chance to help us.

(on a couple of throws from Cameron Ward and Brandon Allen)

The first third down with Cam (Ward), I think it was a bunch release pattern that disrupted. So the release was a little bit slower than normal. The defender had gotten some hands on the point, man on the release. Didn't like that part of it in terms of our execution as far as the tempo and speed off the ball for those guys. I thought that— and because of that, I think Cam's eyes, he got off it pretty because you didn't feel the timing the right way. But yeah, there was definitely a throw there probably either to Calvin (Ridley) or (Tyker) Lockett. But it just didn't develop the way that it normally does and so I think that timing for his first third down in a live rep and he had a little just a little bit of push from the pocket and so he just he got off it quick. I think he'd say the same thing if

you asked him. Could have stuck with it a little but for a half count longer probably would have bang the ball on either Calvin or Tyler. I think they both had opportunities to convert on third and five. So again learning experience for him and then we just got to be better. The receiver release part of it has to be better too so it's not necessarily all on the Cam, but that part of it I think we could improve that speed and release pattern in the moment would have probably helped us convert that.

And as far as Brandon (Allen) on the fourth down, to me I take a little bit of responsibility for that fourth down because Brandon's headset was going in and out and I called a play that probably wasn't the best for what they ended up playing and that happens sometimes. But I just didn't feel—I didn't love the call when I called it, especially as we we're trying to rush it to get it in, because if you look, Brandon had to run over to the sideline to get the call from me. So, in hindsight, I would have probably liked that call back. But then he starts moving around and there wasn't anybody really open and tried to give a guy a chance to go up and get the ball high and I think the throw got away from him a little bit. But I'll take the responsibility for that. I didn't like that play call in the moment.

(on if Cameron Ward's first third down throw should have gone out of bounds)

I didn't even realize that. I mean, he was throwing the ball away, and so when he throws it away, it's got to be gone. There was nowhere really for him to put the ball, so I didn't actually— John (Glennon) to be honest with you, I didn't really recognize that in the moment. But yeah, I would like that ball if you're going to throw it away to throw it away.

(on how concerning is it that the defense gave up 178 rushing yards)

Obviously, that number sucks. I mean we're not looking to give up 178 yards at any point in any game, preseason or otherwise. I think there's definitely some things that— we misfit some runs in the later part of that game. We've got to do a better job there in making sure that there's not the type of lanes to run the ball that there were. Some of that just we just had multiple issues in a couple of those runs. So, got to get it corrected. I don't want to see that very often. I mean, again, 178 yards is 178 yards no matter how you cut it. So not the number we're looking for and then that's got to get improved.

(on T'Vondre Sweat's expected return and if adding Jeffery Simmons and T'Vondre Sweat back in to the lineup fixes a lot of the issues giving up to many rushing yards)

Oh yeah, those guys are impact players. It's hard to replace guys that play at the level that they play at. (T'Vondre) Sweat, we'll expect Sweat back here in Atlanta, probably today or tomorrow, but I don't know that he'll be at practice. Probably need to give that surgery about a week or so before they're back. But yeah, any time you're missing two of your— arguably your best player on defense, that has an effect. But I think there was a couple of plays early on, when you watch the tape. We're around the quarterback, the quarterback got hit. We just didn't get there fast enough. So there was pressure in their face early. Those guys that didn't have clean pockets to throw in, but they made some nice throws, so credit to them as well. But, I think there's always room to continue to improve our rush and the more good players you have rushing, the better you're going to be.

(on Lloyd Cushenberry III's expected return)

Timeline-wise, I'll probably refrain from giving a timeline, but it's encouraging that, hopefully, we'll get him on the practice field with the group this week for the return to play process. Feel good about where he's at. He's worked really hard. There's optimism that he's on the right track. And again, we'll see as he gets out there. So encouraged though by where he was at.

(on clarifying what he meant when he said he put Tim Boyle in a tough spot and L'Jarius Sneed's expected return)

Yeah, I think you're right about that part. I just think when you want to give a guy a chance to have the run game at his disposal and you want give him a chance to have some of the play action things that go with it so you're not just in a full drop back mode, which is that last probably two series and we're down two scores with whatever it was, it was 16 to seven. There's roughly five-ish minutes left, so we were trying to go a little faster and play in a two-minute mode, which, again, it's, yes, you are correct about the statement that, yeah, you're not going to be in the best spot in the world when it comes to the preseason in the fourth quarter. But it's yeah— and I'm not trying to make an excuse for him either. I'd like to see him play better than he did, obviously, and that's got to get corrected the next time we get out. He's got be able to complete some balls and move the team down the field a little bit more than he did.

As far as L'Jarius (Sneed) goes, he's still in the same process. I think he's getting better. He's coming along well. We'll see this week where that ends up. I'm probably a little more optimistic about Lloyd (Cushenberry III) returning back to the process than LJ (L'Jarius Sneed) at the moment, but I think that he's in a good spot and we feel good about where he's at.

(on the offensive line performance and Cameron Ward's ability to get the ball out quickly)

Yeah, it's a combination of all of it. It's always a combination of those things. I thought those guys performed well for what we asked them to do. And they gave Cam (Ward) time to work in the pocket. He didn't have a whole lot of pressure to deal with. A lot— some of that is Cam getting the ball out of his hand and doing things the way that we wanted him to do it. So combination of both things, I think it was a good start. It was an encouraging start. Again, there's a lot of work still to be done and there's a lot of other rushers that are yet to be faced, so we'll build on a positive first step but definitely have a lot to keep going.

(on if there's more they're able to do in two joint practices versus having just one)

I think you can still get a lot of work done with one practice. I thought what we got out of Tampa was really productive. I think two practices allows you to maybe divide up some of the situations a little more. You might get a little bit more in depth on a couple of things as opposed to just one period. So I'm looking forward to it. I think it's going to be good work. I think we need all this work. See the different scheme, a different style here on both sides of the ball. They also have some good players and some good rushers and some things that we can— good young rushers and get some draft picks that we get a chance to go see against our players. And then they got some real talent on offense and I think that's going to be fun for us to continue to get challenged and keep getting better. So really excited about the work and I'm glad we got two days against these guys I think it allows you to come back a second day and really maybe try a couple new things and get a little bit of different emphasis on what you're looking for in practice.

TENNESSEE TITANS

GAME-BY-GAME STATISTICS



2025 PRESEASON GAME-BY-GAME STATISTICS -- TEAM OFFENSE

Game	8/9 at TB
Points	7
1st Qtr	0
2nd Qtr	7
3rd Qtr	0
4th Qtr	0
Overtime	0
TDs (Ru-P-Ret)	1-0-0
PATs (M/A)	1/1
2PT Convs (M/A)	0/0
FGs (M/A)	0/0
Safeties	0
First Downs	11
Rushing	3
Passing	8
Penalty	0
3rd Down Conv (M/A)	5/13
3rd Down Conv Pct	38.5%
4th Down Conv (M/A)	1/3
4th Down Conv Pct	33.3%
Red Zone Conv (M/A)	1/2
Red Zone Conv Pct	50.0%
Goal to Go Conv (M/A)	1/1
Goal to Go Conv Pct	100.0%
Total Net Yards	201
Total Off. Plays	56
Avg. Gain Per Play	3.6
Net Yards Rushing	66
Total Rushing Plays	21
Avg. Gain Per Rush	3.1
Net Yards Passing	135
Times Sacked	2
Yards Lost on Sacks	18
Gross Yards Passing	153
Pass Attempts	33
Pass Completions	15
Completion Pct	45.5%
Avg. Gain Per Pass	3.9
Interceptions	3
Fumbles / Fum. Lost	0/0
Penalties	7
PenaltyYards	61
Punts	4
Gross Punting Average	44.5
Touchbacks	0
Inside20	0
Punts Blocked	0
Net Punting Average	40.3
Punt Returns	1
Punt Return Yards	1
Punt Return Avg.	1.0
Fair Catches	1
Kickoff Returns	6
Kickoff Return Yards	152
Kickoff Return Avg.	25.3
Time of Possession	25:01

2025 PRESEASON GAME-BY-GAME STATISTICS -- TEAM DEFENSE

Game	8/9 at TB
Points	29
1st Qtr	3
2nd Qtr	10
3rd Qtr	0
4th Qtr	16
Overtime	0
TDs (Ru-P-Ret)	2-0-1
PATs (M/A)	2/3
2PT Convs (M/A)	0/0
FGs (M/A)	3/3
Safeties	0
First Downs	20
Rushing	9
Passing	9
Penalty	2
3rd Down Conv (M/A)	7/16
3rd Down Conv Pct	43.8%
4th Down Conv (M/A)	1/1
4th Down Conv Pct	100.0%
Red Zone Conv (M/A)	2/5
Red Zone Conv Pct	40.0%
Goal to Go Conv (M/A)	1/2
Goal to Go Conv Pct	50.0%
Total Net Yards	348
Total Off. Plays	67
Avg. Gain Per Play	5.2
Net Yards Rushing	178
Total Rushing Plays	41
Avg. Gain Per Rush	4.3
Net Yards Passing	170
Times Sacked	1
Yards Lost on Sacks	7
Gross Yards Passing	177
Pass Attempts	25
Pass Completions	18
Completion Pct	72.0%
Avg. Gain Per Pass	6.5
Interceptions	0
Fumbles / Fum. Lost	2/1
Penalties	5
PenaltyYards	45
Punts	3
Gross Punting Average	49.0
Touchbacks	1
Inside20	1
Punts Blocked	0
Net Punting Average	42.0
Punt Returns	1
Punt Return Yards	17
Punt Return Avg.	17.0
Fair Catches	0
Kickoff Returns	1
Kickoff Return Yards	19
Kickoff Return Avg.	19.0
Time of Possession	34:59

2025 PRESEASON GAME-BY-GAME STARTERS

BOLD denotes rookie

OFFENSE

[illegible]

BOLD denotes rookie

DEFENSE

[illegible]

2025 PRESEASON GAME-BY-GAME PASSING

BRANDON ALLEN

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Att	Cmp	Yds	Pct	Y/A	TD	TD%	Int	Int%	Lg	Sac	Lost	Rating
8/9 at TB	1	0	12	6	62	50.0	5.17	0	0.0	1	8.3	16	1	8	30.6
8/15 at ATL						-	-		-		-				-
8/22 vs. MIN						-	-		-		-				-
Totals:	1	0	12	6	62	50.0	5.17	0	0.0	1	8.3	16	1	8	30.6

TIM BOYLE

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Att	Cmp	Yds	Pct	Y/A	TD	TD%	Int	Int%	Lg	Sac	Lost	Rating
8/9 at TB	1	0	13	4	24	30.8	1.85	0	0.0	2	15.4	12	1	10	0.6
8/15 at ATL						-	-		-		-				-
8/22 vs. MIN						-	-		-		-				-
Totals:	1	0	13	4	24	30.8	1.85	0	0.0	2	15.4	12	1	10	0.6

CAMERON WARD

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Att	Cmp	Yds	Pct	Y/A	TD	TD%	Int	Int%	Lg	Sac	Lost	Rating
8/9 at TB	1	1	8	5	67	62.5	8.38	0	0.0	0	0.0	27	0	0	89.1
8/15 at ATL						-	-		-		-				-
8/22 vs. MIN						-	-		-		-				-
Totals:	1	1	8	5	67	62.5	8.38	0	0.0	0	0.0	27	0	0	89.1

2025 PRESEASON GAME-BY-GAME RUSHING & RECEIVING

BRANDON ALLEN

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	1	-1	-1.0	-1	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	1	-1	-1.0	-1	0	0	0	-	0	0

ELIC AYOMANOR

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

TIM BOYLE

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

JULIUS CHESTNUT

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	3	18	6.0	8	0	1	8	8.0	8	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	3	18	6.0	8	0	1	8	8.0	8	0

DRAKE DABNEY

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

CHIMERE DIKE

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	6	6.0	6	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	6	6.0	6	0

GUNNAR HELM

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	1	0	0	-	0	0	1	16	16.0	16	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	1	0	0	-	0	0	1	16	16.0	16	0

Jha'QUAN JACKSON

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

JERMAR JEFFERSON

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

VAN JEFFERSON

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

MASON KINSEY

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

MATT LANDERS

Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

TYLER LOCKETT												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	7	7.0	7	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	7	7.0	7	0

DAVID MARTIN-ROBINSON												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	8	8.0	8	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	8	8.0	8	0

JORDAN MIMS												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	3	8	2.7	7	0	2	5	2.5	6	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	3	8	2.7	7	0	2	5	2.5	6	0

KALEL MULLINGS												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	7	33	4.7	12	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	7	33	4.7	12	0	0	0	-	0	0

THOMAS ODUKOYA												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

CHIG OKONKWO												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	1	0	0	-	0	0	1	10	10.0	10	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	1	0	0	-	0	0	1	10	10.0	10	0

BRYCE OLIVER												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	11	11.0	11	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	11	11.0	11	0

TONY POLLARD												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	1	4	9	2.3	5	1	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	1	4	9	2.3	5	1	0	0	-	0	0

JAMES PROCHE II												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

XAVIER RESTREPO												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

CALVIN RIDLEY												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	1	0	0	-	0	0	3	50	16.7	27	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	1	0	0	-	0	0	3	50	16.7	27	0

TJ SHEFFIELD												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	12	12.0	12	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	12	12.0	12	0

TYJAE SPEARS												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	3	-1	-0.3	3	0	1	13	13.0	13	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	3	-1	-0.3	3	0	1	13	13.0	13	0

CAMERON WARD												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

JOSH WHYLE												
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Rush	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	Rec	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	7	7.0	7	0
8/15 at ATL					-					-		
8/22 vs. MIN					-					-		
Totals:	1	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	7	7.0	7	0

2025 PRESEASON GAME-BY-GAME OFFENSIVE LINE

B. CRENSHAW-DICKSON			LLOYD CUSHENBERRY III			JAELYN DUNCAN			ARLINGTON HAMBRIGHT			BLAKE HANCE		
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Date/Opp.	GP	GS
8/9 at TB	1	0	8/9 at TB	-	-	8/9 at TB	1	0	8/9 at TB	0	0	8/9 at TB	0	0
8/15 at ATL			8/15 at ATL			8/15 at ATL			8/15 at ATL			8/15 at ATL		
8/22 vs. MIN			8/22 vs. MIN			8/22 vs. MIN			8/22 vs. MIN			8/22 vs. MIN		
Totals:	1	0	Totals:	0	0	Totals:	1	0	Totals:	0	0	Totals:	0	0

BRENDEN JAIMES			JC LATHAM			COREY LEVIN			DAN MOORE JR.			SAM MUSTIPHER		
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Date/Opp.	GP	GS
8/9 at TB	1	0	8/9 at TB	1	1	8/9 at TB	1	1	8/9 at TB	1	1	8/9 at TB	1	1
8/15 at ATL			8/15 at ATL			8/15 at ATL			8/15 at ATL			8/15 at ATL		
8/22 vs. MIN			8/22 vs. MIN			8/22 vs. MIN			8/22 vs. MIN			8/22 vs. MIN		
Totals:	1	0	Totals:	1	1	Totals:	1	1	Totals:	1	1	Totals:	1	1

JOHN OJUKWU			ANDREW RUPCICH			PETER SKORONSKI			JACKSON SLATER			OLISAEMEKA UDOH		
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Date/Opp.	GP	GS
8/9 at TB	1	0	8/9 at TB	1	1	8/9 at TB	1	1	8/9 at TB	1	0	8/9 at TB	1	0
8/15 at ATL			8/15 at ATL			8/15 at ATL			8/15 at ATL			8/15 at ATL		
8/22 vs. MIN			8/22 vs. MIN			8/22 vs. MIN			8/22 vs. MIN			8/22 vs. MIN		
Totals:	1	0	Totals:	1	1	Totals:	1	1	Totals:	1	0	Totals:	1	0

KEVIN ZEITLER		
Date/Opp.	GP	GS
8/9 at TB	0	0
8/15 at ATL		
8/22 vs. MIN		
Totals:	0	0

CEDRIC GRAY			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0	7	2	5	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	0	7	2	5	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

JAYLEN HARRELL			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0	3	1	2	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	0	3	1	2	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

JERMARI HARRIS			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0	1	1	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	0	1	1	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

MARCUS HARRIS			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0	2	1	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	0	2	1	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

AMANI HOOKER			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	1	2	1	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	1	2	1	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

TIMMY HORNE			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	1	7	3	4	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	1	7	3	4	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

CAM HORSLEY			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0	2	1	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	0	2	1	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

CURTIS JACOBS			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0	1	0	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	0	1	0	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

GABE JEUDY-LALLY			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0	4	3	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	0	4	3	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

DRE'MONT JONES			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	1	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	1	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

SEBASTIAN JOSEPH-DAY			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	1	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	1	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

ARDEN KEY			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0	1	0	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	0	1	0	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

JALEN KIMBER			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

CLARENCE LEWIS			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0	2	2	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	0	2	2	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

JAMES LYNCH				TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS		Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	1		1	0	1	0.0	0.0		0	0	0	0		0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																	
8/22 vs. MIN																	
Totals:	1	1		1	0	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ROGER McCREARY				TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS		Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0		0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																	
8/22 vs. MIN																	
Totals:	1	0		0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OLUWAFEMI OLADEJO				TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS		Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	1		4	0	4	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																	
8/22 vs. MIN																	
Totals:	1	1		4	0	4	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ANFERNEE ORJI				TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS		Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	0	0		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8/15 at ATL																	
8/22 vs. MIN																	
Totals:	0	0		0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AMANI ORUWARIYE				TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS		Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0		1	0	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																	
8/22 vs. MIN																	
Totals:	1	0		1	0	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ISAIAH RAIKES				TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS		Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0		4	3	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																	
8/22 vs. MIN																	
Totals:	1	0		4	3	1	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
OTIS REESE IV				TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS		Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	0	0		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8/15 at ATL																	
8/22 vs. MIN																	
Totals:	0	0		0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DAVION ROSS				TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS		Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0		3	1	2	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
8/15 at ATL																	
8/22 vs. MIN																	
Totals:	1	0		3	1	2	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
JEFFERY SIMMONS				TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS		Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	0	0		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8/15 at ATL																	
8/22 vs. MIN																	
Totals:	0	0		0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L'JARIUS SNEED				TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS		Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8/15 at ATL																	
8/22 vs. MIN																	
Totals:	0	0		0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
T'VONDRE SWEAT				TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS		Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	0	0		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8/15 at ATL																	
8/22 vs. MIN																	
Totals:	0	0		0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
JIHAD WARD				TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS		Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0		1	1	0	1.0	7.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																	
8/22 vs. MIN																	
Totals:	1	0		1	1	0	1.0	7.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CARLOS WATKINS				TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS		Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	0	0		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8/15 at ATL																	
8/22 vs. MIN																	
Totals:	0	0		0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KEVIN WINSTON JR.				TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS		Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	0	0		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8/15 at ATL																	
8/22 vs. MIN																	
Totals:	0	0		0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

JAMES WILLIAMS SR.			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	1	6	3	3	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	1	6	3	3	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

JULIUS WOOD			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	0	6	3	3	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	0	6	3	3	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

XAVIER WOODS			TACKLES					INTERCEPTIONS					FUMBLES			
Date/Opp.	GP	GS	Tot	Solo	Asst	Sk	Yds	No	Yds	Lg	TD	PD	FF	FR	Yds	SpT
8/9 at TB	1	1	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8/15 at ATL																
8/22 vs. MIN																
Totals:	1	1	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Additional Special Teams Tackles:

Misc. Tackles: Mullings 1 (at TB), Proche II 1 (at TB)

2025 PRESEASON GAME-BY-GAME STATISTICS - RETURNS

CHIMERE DIKE

Date/Opp.	KR	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	PR	FC	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	32	32.0	32	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL			-						-		
8/22 vs. MIN			-						-		
Totals:	1	32	32.0	32	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

Jha'QUAN JACKSON

Date/Opp.	KR	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	PR	FC	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	23	23.0	23	0	0	1	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL			-						-		
8/22 vs. MIN			-						-		
Totals:	1	23	23.0	23	0	0	1	0	-	0	0

MATT LANDERS

Date/Opp.	KR	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	PR	FC	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	22	22.0	22	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL			-						-		
8/22 vs. MIN			-						-		
Totals:	1	22	22.0	22	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

JAMES PROCHE II

Date/Opp.	KR	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	PR	FC	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	1	21	21.0	21	0	1	0	1	1.0	1	0
8/15 at ATL			-						-		
8/22 vs. MIN			-						-		
Totals:	1	21	21.0	21	0	1	0	1	1.0	1	0

TJ SHEFFIELD

Date/Opp.	KR	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD	PR	FC	Yds	Avg	Lg	TD
8/9 at TB	2	54	27.0	29	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
8/15 at ATL			-						-		
8/22 vs. MIN			-						-		
Totals:	2	54	27.0	29	0	0	0	0	-	0	0

2025 PRESEASON GAME-BY-GAME STATISTICS - KICKING

JOEY SLYE

Date/Opp.	GP	PAT		FG			1-19		20-29		30-39		40-49		50+		Blk	LG	Pts
		Ma	Att	Ma	Att	Pct	Ma	Att	Ma	Att	Ma	Att	Ma	Att	Ma	Att			
8/9 at TB	1	1	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	1
8/15 at ATL						-													0
8/22 vs. MIN						-													0
Totals:	1	1	1	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

2025 PRESEASON GAME-BY-GAME STATISTICS - PUNTING

JOHNNY HEKKER

Date/Opp.	GP	No.	Yds	Avg	Ret	Yds	R Avg	TB	In	Lg	Blk	Net
8/9 at TB	1	4	178	44.5	1	17	17.0	0	0	53	0	40.3
8/15 at ATL				-			-					-
8/22 vs. MIN				-			-					-
Totals:	1	4	178	44.5	1	17	17.0	0	0	53	0	40.3

TENNESSEE TITANS

LAST WEEK'S GAMEBOOK



National Football League Game Summary

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Date: Saturday, 8/9/2025

Tennessee Titans at Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Start Time: 7:38 PM EDT

at Raymond James Stadium, Tampa, FL

Game Day Weather

Game Weather: Cloudy

Temp: 82° F (27.8° C) Humidity: 83%, Wind: SE 2 mph

Open Stadium on Natural Grass

Outdoor Weather: Cloudy

Officials

Referee: Eck, Alan (76)

Umpire: Slaughter, Tab (110)

Down Judge: Oliver, David (24)

Line Judge: Bradley, Greg (98)

Field Judge: Jenkins, John (117)

Side Judge: Shaw, Dale (104)

Back Judge: Bell, Grantis (27)

Replay Official: Wollan, Joe (0)

Lineups

Tennessee Titans				Tampa Bay Buccaneers			
Offense		Defense		Offense		Defense	
WR	11 V.Jefferson	DE	69 S.Joseph	WR	9 E.Egbuka	OLB	98 A.Nelson
LT	75 D.Moore	DT	94 T.Horne	LT	77 C.Heck	DL	52 C.Brewer
LG	77 P.Skoronski	DL	97 J.Lynch	LG	75 R.O'Neal	DL	96 G.Gaines
C	62 C.Levin	OLB	45 D.Jones	C	79 E.Klein	DL	97 A.Gotsis
RG	76 A.Rupcich	OLB	7 F.Oladejo	RG	72 L.Haggard	OLB	43 C.Braswell
RT	55 J.Latham	LB	50 C.Barton	RT	60 M.Jordan	LB	45 D.Jones
TE	84 G.Helm	LB	52 J.Williams	TE	87 P.Durham	LB	8 S.Dennis
TE	85 C.Okonkwo	CB	29 J.Brownlee	TE	41 K.Kieft	CB	25 J.Parrish
WR	0 C.Ridley	CB	39 D.Baker	WR	15 J.McMillan	CB	32 J.Hayes
QB	1 C.Ward	S	25 X.Woods	QB	2 K.Trask	S	29 C.Izien
RB	20 T.Pollard	S	37 A.Hooker	RB	1 R.White	S	26 K.Merriweather

Substitutions

RB 2 T.Spears, P 3 J.Hekker, WR 4 T.Lockett, WR 5 E.Ayomanor, K 6 J.Slye, QB 10 B.Allen, WR 12 M.Kinsey, WR 13 J.Proche, QB 15 T.Boyle, WR 17 C.Dike, WR 19 J.Jackson, CB 21 R.McCreary, DB 24 J.Wood, RB 24 J.Mims, CB 26 M.Harris, RB 28 K.Mullings, CB 30 J.Harris, CB 31 A.Oruwariye, CB 32 G.Jeudy-Lally, RB 32 J.Jefferson, DB 33 K.Brooks, CB 35 J.Kimber, CB 36 C.Lewis, RB 36 J.Chestnut, CB 40 D.Ross, DB 42 J.Bledsoe, S 44 M.Brown, LS 46 M.Cox, LB 48 D.Gbenda, OLB 49 A.Key, LB 51 C.Gray, OLB 53 J.Ward, OLB 56 D.Evans, LB 57 C.Jacobs, LB 58 A.Burney, OL 60 S.Mustipher, OL 61 J.Ojukwu, G 64 J.Slater, OL 66 B.Jaimes, G 68 A.Hambright, OL 71 J.Duncan, DT 72 C.Horsley, OL 72 O.Udoh, DT 73 J.Bronson, NT 76 I.Raikes, T 78 B.Crenshaw-Dickson, WR 80 B.Oliver, TE 81 J.Whyle, WR 82 T.Sheffield, WR 83 M.Landers, TE 86 D.Dabney, WR 87 X.Restrepo, TE 88 D.Martin-Robinson, TE 89 T.Odukoya, DE 90 J.Gaziano, OLB 92 J.Harrell, DT 95 P.Blidi, OLB 99 A.Gaye

Did Not Play

S 23 K.Winston, S 28 Q.Diggs, CB 38 L.Sneed, LB 41 O.Reese, LB 59 A.Orji, G 70 K.Zeitler, OL 73 B.Hance, C 79 L.Cushenberry, NT 93 T.Sweat, DL 96 C.Watkins, DT 98 J.Simmons

Not Active

Substitutions

K 4 C.McLaughlin, QB 8 C.Bazelak, WR 17 S.Shepard, WR 18 R.Jarrett, CB 22 K.Vildor, CB 24 T.Funderburk, S 28 S.Sanders, WR 30 J.Harris, OLB 33 J.Ramirez, CB 34 B.Hall, S 36 J.Roberts, S 38 R.Wisdom, K 39 R.Coe, RB 44 S.Tucker, CB 46 R.Parodie, LB 48 A.Grier, RB 49 O.Wright, LB 53 N.Jackson, LB 57 J.Bullock, OLB 58 M.Watts, OLB 59 W.Peebles, DL 64 N.Hutmacher, C 65 J.Majors, G 66 B.Scott, T 70 B.Chukwuma, OL 71 L.Metz, DL 73 D.J.Thomas, T 74 T.McLellan, WR 80 J.Smith, WR 81 R.Miller, TE 82 D.Culp, TE 84 T.Taula, WR 85 G.Greene, LS 86 E.Deckers, WR 89 D.Houston, DL 91 M.Greene, P 92 R.Dixon, DL 93 E.Banks, DL 95 E.Roberts

Did Not Play

LB 0 Y.Diaby, LB 3 A.Walker, OLB 5 H.Reddick, QB 6 B.Mayfield, RB 7 B.Irving, WR 10 T.Palmer, QB 11 M.Pratt, WR 13 M.Evans, WR 14 C.Godwin, QB 16 T.Bridgewater, WR 19 K.Johnson, CB 21 B.Morrison, S 23 T.Smith, CB 27 Z.McCollum, S 31 A.Winfield, CB 35 J.Dean, RB 37 J.Williams, NT 50 V.Vea, LB 54 L.David, NT 56 D.Watson, C 62 G.Barton, T 67 L.Goedeke, G 68 B.Bredeson, G 69 C.Mauch, G 76 I.Opet, T 78 T.Wirfs, WR 83 T.Johnson, TE 88 C.Otton, DL 90 L.Hall, DL 94 C.Kancey

Not Active

Field Goals (made () & missed)

		R.Coe	(36)				
		C.McLaughlin	(45) (23)				
		1	2	3	4	OT	Total
VISITOR:	Tennessee Titans	0	7	0	0	0	7
HOME:	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	3	10	0	16	0	29

National Football League Game Summary

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Scoring Plays					
Team	Qtr	Time	Play Description (Extra Point) (Drive Info)	Visitor	Home
Buccaneers	1	11:41	C.McLaughlin 45 yd. Field Goal (7-55, 3:19)	0	3
Buccaneers	2	14:55	S.Tucker 2 yd. run (C.McLaughlin kick) (17-80,10:48)	0	10
Titans	2	8:17	T.Pollard 1 yd. run (J.Slye kick) (11-65, 6:38)	7	10
Buccaneers	2	0:09	C.McLaughlin 23 yd. Field Goal (13-44, 3:30)	7	13
Buccaneers	4	5:33	R.Coe 36 yd. Field Goal (8-23, 2:52)	7	16
Buccaneers	4	3:19	O.Wright 15 yd. run (kick failed, wr) (3-30, 1:54)	7	22
Buccaneers	4	1:21	R.Parodie 39 yd. interception return (R.Coe kick)	7	29
Paid Attendance: 60,488				Time: 2:58	

Tennessee Titans vs Tampa Bay Buccaneers
8/9/2025 at Raymond James Stadium

Final Individual Statistics

Tennessee Titans									Tampa Bay Buccaneers										
RUSHING		ATT		YDS	AVG	LG	TD		RUSHING		ATT		YDS	AVG	LG	TD			
K.Mullings		7		33	4.7	12	0		O.Wright		18		87	4.8	15	1			
J.Chestnut		3		18	6.0	8	0		S.Tucker		13		50	3.8	23	1			
T.Pollard		4		9	2.3	5	1		R.White		6		28	4.7	12	0			
J.Mims		3		8	2.7	7	0		K.Trask		3		8	2.7	6	0			
T.Spears		3		-1	-0.3	3	0		J.Harris		1		5	5.0	5	0			
B.Allen		1		-1	-1.0	-1	0												
Total		21		66	3.1	12	1		Total		41		178	4.3	23	2			
PASSING		ATT	CMP	YDS	SK/YD	TD	LG	IN	RT	PASSING		ATT	CMP	YDS	SK/YD	TD	LG	IN	RT
T.Boyle		13	4	24	1/10	0	12	2	0.6	K.Trask		16	12	129	1/7	0	25	0	98.2
B.Allen		12	6	62	1/8	0	16	1	30.6	C.Bazelak		9	6	48	0/0	0	18	0	79.9
C.Ward		8	5	67	0/0	0	27	0	89.1										
Total		33	15	153	2/18	0	27	3	21.4	Total		25	18	177	1/7	0	25	0	91.6
PASS RECEIVING		TAR		REC	YDS	AVG	LG	TD		PASS RECEIVING		TAR		REC	YDS	AVG	LG	TD	
C.Ridley		3		3	50	16.7	27	0		R.Miller		7		6	66	11.0	21	0	
J.Mims		2		2	5	2.5	6	0		G.Greene		2		2	22	11.0	13	0	
G.Helm		2		1	16	16.0	16	0		D.Culp		4		2	13	6.5	8	0	
T.Spears		1		1	13	13.0	13	0		J.Harris		2		2	8	4.0	6	0	
T.Sheffield		1		1	12	12.0	12	0		O.Wright		3		2	4	2.0	6	0	
B.Oliver		2		1	11	11.0	11	0		J.McMillan		1		1	25	25.0	25	0	
C.Okonkwo		1		1	10	10.0	10	0		E.Egbuka		2		1	21	21.0	21	0	
J.Chestnut		2		1	8	8.0	8	0		R.Jarrett		2		1	18	18.0	18	0	
D.Martin-Robinson		2		1	8	8.0	8	0		S.Tucker		1		1	0	0.0	0	0	
J.Whyle		2		1	7	7.0	7	0		J.Smith		1		0	0	0.0	0	0	
T.Lockett		1		1	7	7.0	7	0											
C.Dike		2		1	6	6.0	6	0											
E.Ayomanor		2		0	0	0.0	0	0											
X.Restrepo		2		0	0	0.0	0	0											
M.Kinsey		2		0	0	0.0	0	0											
J.Jackson		1		0	0	0.0	0	0											
M.Landers		1		0	0	0.0	0	0											
D.Dabney		1		0	0	0.0	0	0											
J.Proche		1		0	0	0.0	0	0											
V.Jefferson		1		0	0	0.0	0	0											
Total		32		15	153	10.2	27	0		Total		25		18	177	9.8	25	0	
INTERCEPTIONS		NO		YDS	AVG	LG	TD		INTERCEPTIONS		NO		YDS	AVG	LG	TD			
									R.Parodie		1		39	39.0	39	1			
									T.Funderburk		1		6	6.0	6	0			
									N.Jackson		1		0	0.0	0	0			
Total		0		0	0	0	0		Total		3		45	15.0	39	1			
PUNTING		NO	YDS	AVG	NET	TB	IN20	LG	PUNTING		NO	YDS	AVG	NET	TB	IN20	LG		
J.Hekker		4	178	44.5	40.3	0	0	53	R.Dixon		3	147	49.0	42.0	1	1	57		
Total		4	178	44.5	40.3	0	0	53	Total		3	147	49.0	42.0	1	1	57		
PUNT RETURNS		NO	YDS	AVG	FC	LG	TD		PUNT RETURNS		NO	YDS	AVG	FC	LG	TD			
J.Proche		1	1	1.0	0	1	0		G.Greene		1	17	17.0	0	17	0			
J.Jackson		0	0	0.0	1	0	0		[DOWNED]		1	0	0.0	0	0	0			
[TOUCHBACK]		1	0	0.0	0	0	0		[OUT OF BOUNDS]		2	0	0.0	0	0	0			
Total		1	1	1.0	1	1	0		Total		1	17	17.0	0	17	0			
KICKOFF RETURNS		NO	YDS	AVG	FC	LG	TD		KICKOFF RETURNS		NO	YDS	AVG	FC	LG	TD			
T.Sheffield		2	54	27.0	0	29	0		R.Jarrett		1	19	19.0	0	19	0			
C.Dike		1	32	32.0	0	32	0		[TOUCHBACK]		1	0	0.0	0	0	0			
J.Jackson		1	23	23.0	0	23	0												
M.Landers		1	22	22.0	0	22	0												

8/9/2025 at Raymond James Stadium

[illegible]

Tennessee Titans										
FUMBLES	FUM	LOST	OWN-REC	YDS	TD	FORCED	OPP-REC	YDS	TD	OUT-BDS
D.Ross	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Tampa Bay Buccaneers										
FUMBLES	FUM	LOST	OWN-REC	YDS	TD	FORCED	OPP-REC	YDS	TD	OUT-BDS
J.Harris	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E.Klein	1	0	0	-18	0	0	0	0	0	0
K.Trask	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	1	1	-18	0	0	0	0	0	0

Tennessee Titans vs Tampa Bay Buccaneers
8/9/2025 at Raymond James Stadium

Final Team Statistics

	Visitor Titans	Home Buccaneers
TOTAL FIRST DOWNS	11	20
By Rushing	3	9
By Passing	8	9
By Penalty	0	2
THIRD DOWN EFFICIENCY	5-13-38.5%	7-16-43.8%
FOURTH DOWN EFFICIENCY	1-3-33.3%	1-1-100.0%
TOTAL NET YARDS	201	348
Total Offensive Plays (inc. times thrown passing)	56	67
Average gain per offensive play	3.6	5.2
NET YARDS RUSHING	66	178
Total Rushing Plays	21	41
Average gain per rushing play	3.1	4.3
Tackles for a loss-number and yards	2-6	1-1
NET YARDS PASSING	135	170
Times thrown - yards lost attempting to pass	2-18	1-7
Gross yards passing	153	177
PASS ATTEMPTS-COMPLETIONS-HAD INTERCEPTED	33-15-3	25-18-0
Avg gain per pass play (inc.# thrown passing)	3.9	6.5
KICKOFFS Number-In End Zone-Touchbacks	2-2-1	7-1-1
PUNTS Number and Average	4-44.5	3-49.0
Had Blocked	0	0
FGs - PATs Had Blocked	0-0	0-0
Net Punting Average	40.3	42.0
TOTAL RETURN YARDAGE (Not Including Kickoffs)	1	62
No. and Yards Punt Returns	1-1	1-17
No. and Yards Kickoff Returns	6-152	1-19
No. and Yards Interception Returns	0-0	3-45
PENALTIES Number and Yards	7-61	5-45
FUMBLES Number and Lost	0-0	2-1
TOUCHDOWNS	1	3
Rushing	1	2
Passing	0	0
Interceptions	0	1
EXTRA POINTS Made-Attempts	1-1	2-3
Kicking Made-Attempts	1-1	2-3
FIELD GOALS Made-Attempts	0-0	3-3
RED ZONE EFFICIENCY	1-2-50%	2-5-40%
GOAL TO GO EFFICIENCY	1-1-100%	1-2-50%
SAFETIES	0	0
FINAL SCORE	7	29
TIME OF POSSESSION	25:01	34:59

Tennessee Titans vs Tampa Bay Buccaneers
8/9/2025 at Raymond James Stadium

Ball Possession And Drive Chart

Tennessee Titans												
#	Time Recd	Time Lost	Time Poss	How Ball Obtained	Drive Began	# Play	Yds Gain	Yds Pen	Net Yds	1st Down	Last Scrm	How Given Up
1	11:41	10:43	0:58	Kickoff	TEN 29	3	5	0	5	0	TEN 34	Punt
2	14:55	8:17	6:38	Kickoff	TEN 35	11	75	-10	65	5	* TB 1	Touchdown
3	4:53	3:39	1:14	Punt	TEN 20	3	8	0	8	0	TEN 28	Punt
4	0:09	0:00	0:09	Kickoff	TEN 31	1	-1	0	-1	0	TEN 31	End of Half
5	15:00	9:16	5:44	Kickoff	TEN 33	12	58	0	58	3	* TB 9	Downs
6	7:27	4:37	2:50	Punt	TEN 26	5	17	0	17	1	TEN 43	Interception
7	1:50	14:02	2:48	Fumble	TEN 11	5	17	-5	12	1	TEN 23	Punt
8	9:26	8:25	1:01	Punt	TEN 7	3	0	0	0	0	TEN 7	Punt
9	5:33	5:13	0:20	Kickoff	TEN 30	3	0	0	0	0	TEN 30	Interception
10	3:19	1:21	1:58	Kickoff	TEN 15	8	14	0	14	1	TEN 29	Interception
11	1:21	0:00	1:21	Kickoff	TEN 35	2	8	0	8	0	TEN 42	End of Game

(272) Average TEN 25

Tampa Bay Buccaneers												
#	Time Recd	Time Lost	Time Poss	How Ball Obtained	Drive Began	# Play	Yds Gain	Yds Pen	Net Yds	1st Down	Last Scrm	How Given Up
1	15:00	11:41	3:19	Kickoff	TB 18	7	55	0	55	2	TEN 27	Field Goal
2	10:43	14:55	10:48	Punt	TB 20	17	90	-10	80	7	* TEN 2	Touchdown
3	8:17	4:53	3:24	Kickoff	TB 35	5	8	0	8	1	TB 43	Punt
4	3:39	0:09	3:30	Punt	TEN 49	13	38	6	44	3	* TEN 5	Field Goal
5	9:16	7:27	1:49	Downs	TB 9	3	3	0	3	0	TB 12	Punt
6	4:37	1:50	2:47	Interception	TEN 40	6	29	0	29	1	* TEN 13	Fumble
7	14:02	9:26	4:36	Punt	TB 32	8	34	-10	24	2	TEN 44	Punt
8	8:25	5:33	2:52	Punt	TEN 41	8	38	-15	23	2	* TEN 18	Field Goal
9	5:13	3:19	1:54	Interception	TEN 30	3	35	-5	30	2	* TEN 15	Touchdown

(354) Average TB 39

* inside opponent's 20

Time of Possession by Quarter		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Visitor	Tennessee Titans	0:58	8:01	10:24	5:38		25:01
Home	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	14:02	6:59	4:36	9:22		34:59
Kickoff Drive No.-Start Average		Titans: 7 - TEN 30		Buccaneers: 2 - TB 26			

Final Defensive Statistics

Tennessee Titans		Regular Defensive Plays											Special Teams					Misc			
	TKL	AST	COMB	SK	/ YDS	TFL	Q	IN	PD	FF	FR		TKL	AST	FF	FR	BL	TKL	AST	FF	FR
T.Horne	3	4	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C.Gray	2	5	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.Williams	3	3	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.Wood	3	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.Bledsoe	1	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I.Raikes	3	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
G.Jeudy-Lally	3	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M.Brown	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K.Brooks	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
F.Oladejo	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
D.Ross	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.Harrell	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C.Lewis	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A.Hooker	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M.Harris	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C.Horsley	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A.Gaye	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P.Blidi	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.Ward	1	0	1	1	7	1	1	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
D.Baker	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.Harris	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C.Jacobs	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C.Barton	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A.Key	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.Lynch	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A.Oruwariye	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
D.Evans	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A.Burney	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S.Joseph	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.Gaziano	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.Brownlee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K.Mullings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
J.Proche	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	34	45	79	1	7	3	3	0	4	1	1		2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0

TKL = Tackle AST = Assist COMB = Combined QH=QB Hit IN = Interception PD = Pass Defense FF = Forced Fumble FR = Fumble Recovery

Final Defensive Statistics

Tampa Bay Buccaneers	Regular Defensive Plays												Special Teams					Misc			
	TKL	AST	COMB	SK	/ YDS	TFL	QH	IN	PD	FF	FR	TKL	AST	FF	FR	BL	TKL	AST	FF	FR	
N.Jackson	6	0	6	1	8	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
J.Roberts	4	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
C.Braswell	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
A.Grier	2	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
J.Bullock	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
J.Hayes	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
C.Brewer	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
A.Gotsis	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
R.Wisdom	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
C.Izien	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
S.Dennis	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
W.Peebles	1	0	1	1	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
S.Sanders	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
J.Parrish	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
M.Watts	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
A.Nelson	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
K.Vildor	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
M.Greene	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
R.Parodie	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
B.Hall	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
T.Funderburk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
R.Dixon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
R.Coe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
J.Ramirez	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
K.Trask	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Total	32	8	40	2	18	5	3	3	10	0	0	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	

Tennessee Titans vs Tampa Bay Buccaneers
8/9/2025 at Raymond James Stadium

First Half Summary

PERIOD SCORES			TIME OF POSSESSION		
Titans	0	7 = 7	Titans	8:59	
Buccaneers	3	10 = 13	Buccaneers	21:01	

Scoring Plays					
Team	Qtr	Time	Play Description (Extra Point) (Drive Info)	Visitor	Home
Buccaneers	1	11:41	C.McLaughlin 45 yd. Field Goal (7-55, 3:19)	0	3
Buccaneers	2	14:55	S.Tucker 2 yd. run (C.McLaughlin kick) (17-80,10:48)	0	10
Titans	2	8:17	T.Pollard 1 yd. run (J.Slye kick) (11-65, 6:38)	7	10
Buccaneers	2	0:09	C.McLaughlin 23 yd. Field Goal (13-44, 3:30)	7	13

			Tennessee Titans	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
TOTAL FIRST DOWNS			5	13
First Downs Rushing-Passing-by Penalty			1 - 4 - 0	6 - 6 - 1
THIRD DOWN EFFICIENCY			2-4-50.0%	5-10-50.0%
TOTAL NET YARDS			87	209
Total Offensive Plays			18	40
NET YARDS RUSHING			7	87
NET YARDS PASSING			80	122
Gross Yards Passing			80	129
Times thrown-yards lost attempting to pass			0-0	1-7
Pass Attempts-Completions-Had Intercepted			10 - 6 - 0	16 - 12 - 0
Punts-Number and Average			2 - 49.5	1 - 57.0
Penalties-Number and Yards			3 - 31	1 - 10
Fumbles-Number and Lost			0 - 0	1 - 0
Red Zone Efficiency			1-1-100%	1-2-50%
Average Drive Start			TEN 29	TB 31

Tennessee Titans										Tampa Bay Buccaneers									
RUSHING		ATT		YDS	AVG	LG	TD		RUSHING		ATT		YDS	AVG	LG	TD			
T.Pollard		4		9	2.3	5	1		S.Tucker		9		34	3.8	23	1			
T.Spears		3		-1	-0.3	3	0		R.White		6		28	4.7	12	0			
B.Allen		1		-1	-1.0	-1	0		O.Wright		4		12	3.0	5	0			
									K.Trask		3		8	2.7	6	0			
									J.Harris		1		5	5.0	5	0			
Total		8		7	0.9	5	1		Total		23		87	3.8	23	1			
PASSING		ATT	CMP	YDS	SK/YD	TD	LG	IN	RT	PASSING		ATT	CMP	YDS	SK/YD	TD	LG	IN	RT
C.Ward		8	5	67	0/0	0	27	0	89.1	K.Trask		16	12	129	1/7	0	25	0	98.2
B.Allen		2	1	13	0/0	0	13	0	70.8										
Total		10	6	80	0/0	0	27	0	85.4	Total		16	12	129	1/7	0	25	0	98.2
PASS RECEIVING		TAR	REC	YDS	AVG	LG	TD		PASS RECEIVING		TAR	REC	YDS	AVG	LG	TD			
C.Ridley		3	3	50	16.7	27	0		R.Miller		5	5	63	12.6	21	0			
T.Spears		1	1	13	13.0	13	0		D.Culp		4	2	13	6.5	8	0			
C.Okonkwo		1	1	10	10.0	10	0		J.McMillan		1	1	25	25.0	25	0			
T.Lockett		1	1	7	7.0	7	0		E.Egbuka		2	1	21	21.0	21	0			
E.Ayomanor		2	0	0	0.0	0	0		G.Greene		1	1	9	9.0	9	0			
V.Jefferson		1	0	0	0.0	0	0		S.Tucker		1	1	0	0.0	0	0			
									O.Wright		1	1	-2	-2.0	-2	0			
									R.Jarrett		1	0	0	0.0	0	0			
Total		9	6	80	13.3	27	0		Total		16	12	129	10.8	25	0			

Tennessee Titans	Regular Defensive Plays	Special Teams	Misc

Tennessee Titans vs Tampa Bay Buccaneers
8/9/2025 at Raymond James Stadium

First Half Summary

	TKL	AST	COMB	SK	/ YDS	TFL	Q	IN	PD	FF	FR	TKL	AST	FF	FR	BL	TKL	AST	FF	FR
T.Horne	3	4	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.Williams	3	3	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C.Gray	2	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K.Brooks	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	10	13	23	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Tampa Bay Buccaneers	Regular Defensive Plays											Special Teams					Misc			
	TKL	AST	COMB	SK	/ YDS	TFL	QH	IN	PD	FF	FR	TKL	AST	FF	FR	BL	TKL	AST	FF	FR
J.Hayes	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S.Dennis	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C.Izien	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C.Braswell	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	2	7	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Play By Play

First Quarter

8/9/2025

TB wins toss, elects to Receive, and TEN elects to defend the South goal.

J.Slye kicks 66 yards from TEN 35 to TB -1. R.Jarrett to TB 18 for 19 yards (J.Williams).

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at 15:00, (1st play from scrimmage 14:56)

1-10-TB 18	(14:56) K.Trask pass deep left to J.McMillan to TB 43 for 25 yards (D.Baker).	P1
<u>1-10-TB 43</u>	(14:21) R.White up the middle to TB 46 for 3 yards (T.Horne, J.Williams).	
2-7-TB 46	(13:41) K.Trask pass deep right to E.Egbuka to TEN 33 for 21 yards (A.Hooker) [S.Joseph].	P2
<u>1-10-TEN 33</u>	(13:04) R.White left guard to TEN 30 for 3 yards (C.Barton; A.Hooker).	
2-7-TEN 30	(12:30) R.White left tackle to TEN 27 for 3 yards (A.Key; J.Lynch).	
3-4-TEN 27	(11:51) (Shotgun) K.Trask pass incomplete deep left to E.Egbuka (J.Brownlee).	
4-4-TEN 27	(11:45) C.McLaughlin 45 yard field goal is GOOD, Center-E.Deckers, Holder-R.Dixon.	

Timeout at 11:41.

TEN 0 TB 3, 7 plays, 55 yards, 3:19 drive, 3:19 elapsed

C.McLaughlin kicks 57 yards from TB 35 to TEN 8. J.Proche to TEN 29 for 21 yards (C.Braswell; M.Watts).

Tennessee Titans at 11:41, (1st play from scrimmage 11:36)

1-10-TEN 29	(11:36) T.Pollard right tackle to TEN 34 for 5 yards (C.Brewer).
2-5-TEN 34	(11:02) (Shotgun) C.Ward pass incomplete short middle to V.Jefferson (J.Parrish).
3-5-TEN 34	(10:58) (Shotgun) C.Ward pass incomplete deep right.
4-5-TEN 34	(10:51) J.Hekker punts 46 yards to TB 20, Center-M.Cox, out of bounds.

Timeout at 10:43.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at 10:43

1-10-TB 20	(10:43) (Shotgun) R.White left tackle to TB 24 for 4 yards (F.Oladejo; M.Harris).	
2-6-TB 24	(10:02) K.Trask scrambles left guard to TB 30 for 6 yards (J.Williams).	R3
<u>1-10-TB 30</u>	(9:23) R.White right tackle pushed ob at TB 42 for 12 yards (M.Brown).	R4
<u>1-10-TB 42</u>	(8:52) R.White right tackle to TB 45 for 3 yards (F.Oladejo; T.Horne).	
2-7-TB 45	(8:14) (Shotgun) S.Tucker right tackle to TEN 49 for 6 yards (J.Williams; M.Brown).	
3-1-TEN 49	(7:33) S.Tucker left guard to TEN 48 for 1 yard (T.Horne; C.Horsley).	R5
<u>1-10-TEN 48</u>	(6:47) K.Trask sacked at TB 45 for -7 yards (J.Ward).	
2-17-TB 45	(6:02) (Shotgun) J.Harris right end to 50 for 5 yards (G.Jeudy-Lally, F.Oladejo).	
3-12-50	(5:23) (Shotgun) K.Trask pass short left to R.Miller to TEN 39 for 11 yards (G.Jeudy-Lally).	
	Timeout #1 by TEN at 04:44.	
4-1-TEN 39	(4:44) (Shotgun) K.Trask up the middle to TEN 37 for 2 yards (C.Gray).	R6
<u>1-10-TEN 37</u>	(4:09) (Shotgun) K.Trask pass short left to S.Tucker to TEN 37 for no gain (M.Harris).	
2-10-TEN 37	(3:32) (Shotgun) S.Tucker up the middle to TEN 34 for 3 yards (C.Gray; J.Lynch).	
	PENALTY on TB-B.Chukwuma, Offensive Holding, 10 yards, enforced at TEN 37 - No Play.	
2-20-TEN 47	(3:07) (Shotgun) K.Trask pass short right to R.Miller to TEN 36 for 11 yards (I.Raikes).	
3-9-TEN 36	(2:25) (Shotgun) K.Trask pass short middle to R.Miller to TEN 25 for 11 yards (J.Williams).	P7
<u>1-10-TEN 25</u>	(1:40) S.Tucker right end pushed ob at TEN 2 for 23 yards (K.Brooks).	R8
<u>1-2-TEN 2</u>	(1:00) (Shotgun) S.Tucker right tackle to TEN 2 for no gain (F.Oladejo; T.Horne).	
2-2-TEN 2	(:18) S.Tucker right guard to TEN 2 for no gain (T.Horne).	

END OF QUARTER

	Score	Time Poss	First Downs				Efficiencies	
			R	P	X	T	3 Down	4 Down
Tennessee Titans	0	0:58	0	0	0	0	0/1	0/0
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	3	14:02	5	3	0	8	2/4	1/1

Play By Play

Second Quarter

8/9/2025

Tampa Bay Buccaneers continued.

3-2-TEN 2

(15:00) S.Tucker right guard for 2 yards, TOUCHDOWN.

R9

C.McLaughlin extra point is GOOD, Center-E.Deckers, Holder-R.Dixon.

Timeout at 14:55.

TEN 0 TB 10, 17 plays, 80 yards, 10:48 drive, 0:05 elapsed

C.McLaughlin kicks 65 yards from TB 35 to end zone, Touchback to the TEN 35.

Tennessee Titans at 14:55

1-10-TEN 35

(14:55) (Shotgun) C.Ward pass deep middle to C.Ridley to TB 38 for 27 yards (J.Hayes).

P1

1-10-TB 38

(14:11) (Shotgun) C.Ward pass short left to T.Lockett to TB 34 for 4 yards (C.Izien).

PENALTY on TEN-C.Ridley, Offensive Pass Interference, 10 yards, enforced at TB 38 - No Play.

1-20-TB 48

(13:52) (Shotgun) C.Ward pass short left to C.Ridley to TB 38 for 10 yards.

2-10-TB 38

(13:18) (Shotgun) C.Ward pass short left to C.Ridley to TB 25 for 13 yards (C.Izien).

P2

1-10-TB 25

(12:33) (Shotgun) T.Pollard up the middle to TB 24 for 1 yard (C.Braswell).

2-9-TB 24

(11:45) (Shotgun) C.Ward pass incomplete short left to E.Ayomanor (J.Hayes).

3-9-TB 24

(11:41) (Shotgun) C.Ward pass short middle to C.Okonkwo to TB 14 for 10 yards (S.Dennis; C.Izien).

P3

1-10-TB 14

(11:01) T.Spears left guard to TB 11 for 3 yards (A.Nelson).

2-7-TB 11

(10:28) (Shotgun) T.Spears left guard to TB 10 for 1 yard (A.Gotsis).

3-6-TB 10

(9:43) (Shotgun) C.Ward pass short left to T.Lockett to TB 3 for 7 yards (J.Parrish).

P4

1-3-TB 3

(8:59) T.Pollard right guard to TB 1 for 2 yards (S.Dennis).

2-1-TB 1

(8:22) T.Pollard right guard for 1 yard, TOUCHDOWN.

R5

J.Slye extra point is GOOD, Center-M.Cox, Holder-J.Hekker.

Timeout at 08:17.

TEN 7 TB 10, 11 plays, 65 yards, 6:38 drive, 6:43 elapsed

J.Slye kicks 65 yards from TEN 35 to end zone, Touchback to the TB 35.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at 8:17

1-10-TB 35

(8:17) O.Wright right guard to TB 38 for 3 yards (I.Raikes).

**** Injury Update: TB-R.White is Out of the game.****** Injury Update: TB-D.Houston is Out of the game.**

2-7-TB 38

(7:39) K.Trask pass deep middle to R.Miller to TEN 41 for 21 yards (M.Brown) [J.Gaziano].

P10

1-10-TEN 41

(6:57) (Shotgun) K.Trask Aborted. E.Klein FUMBLES at TB 48, recovered by TB-K.Trask at TB 41.

2-28-TB 41

(6:19) (Shotgun) O.Wright right guard to TB 45 for 4 yards (C.Gray; I.Raikes).

3-24-TB 45

(5:37) (Shotgun) K.Trask pass short right to O.Wright pushed ob at TB 43 for -2 yards (J.Williams).

4-26-TB 43

(5:02) R.Dixon punts 57 yards to end zone, Center-E.Deckers, Touchback.

Timeout at 04:53.

Tennessee Titans at 4:53

1-10-TEN 20

(4:53) T.Spears left tackle to TEN 15 for -5 yards (J.Hayes).

2-15-TEN 15

(4:15) (Shotgun) B.Allen pass incomplete short right to E.Ayomanor (J.Parrish).

3-15-TEN 15

(4:10) (Shotgun) B.Allen pass short left to T.Spears to TEN 28 for 13 yards (R.Wisdom; J.Roberts).

4-2-TEN 28

(3:51) J.Hekker punts 53 yards to TB 19, Center-M.Cox. G.Green to TB 36 for 17 yards (C.Jacobs).

PENALTY on TEN-C.Jacobs, Face Mask, 15 yards, enforced at TB 36.

Timeout at 03:39.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at 3:39

1-10-TEN 49

(3:39) O.Wright left tackle to TEN 49 for no gain (C.Gray).

2-10-TEN 49

(3:02) (Shotgun) K.Trask pass short middle to R.Miller to TEN 40 for 9 yards (A.Gaye; J.Williams).

3-1-TEN 40

(2:27) S.Tucker up the middle to TEN 40 for no gain (C.Gray; G.Jeudy-Lally).

Two-Minute Warning

4-1-TEN 40

(2:00) (Run formation) PENALTY on TEN-J.Bronson, Neutral Zone Infraction, 6 yards, enforced at TEN 40 - No Play.

X11

1-10-TEN 34

(2:00) K.Trask pass incomplete short right to D.Culp.

2-10-TEN 34

(1:55) (Shotgun) S.Tucker left tackle to TEN 31 for 3 yards (P.Blidi; J.Harrell).

Timeout #2 by TEN at 01:49.

Tennessee Titans vs Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Raymond James Stadium			
3-7-TEN 31	(1:49) (Shotgun) K.Trask pass short right to G.Green to TEN 22 for 9 yards (K.Brooks; M.Brown).		P12
<u>1-10-TEN 22</u>	(1:12) (Shotgun) S.Tucker right tackle to TEN 23 for -1 yards (T.Horne).		
2-11-TEN 23	(:33) (Shotgun) O.Wright left tackle to TEN 18 for 5 yards (T.Horne; C.Gray).		
	Timeout #1 by TB at 00:28.		
3-6-TEN 18	(:28) (Shotgun) K.Trask pass short middle to D.Culp to TEN 10 for 8 yards (C.Gray; K.Brooks).		P13
	Timeout #2 by TB at 00:23.		
<u>1-10-TEN 10</u>	(:23) (Shotgun) K.Trask pass short left to D.Culp pushed ob at TEN 5 for 5 yards (K.Brooks).		
2-5-TEN 5	(:19) (Shotgun) K.Trask pass incomplete short left to D.Culp (I.Raikes).		
3-5-TEN 5	(:16) (Shotgun) K.Trask pass incomplete short right to R.Jarrett (M.Brown).		
	<i>Penalty on TB, Illegal Shift, declined.</i>		
4-5-TEN 5	(:12) C.McLaughlin 23 yard field goal is GOOD, Center-E.Deckers, Holder-R.Dixon.		

TEN 7 TB 13, 13 plays, 44 yards, 1 penalty, 3:30 drive, 14:51 elapsed

C.McLaughlin kicks 57 yards from TB 35 to TEN 8. J.Jackson to TEN 31 for 23 yards (M.Watts).

Tennessee Titans at 0:09, (1st play from scrimmage 0:03)

1-10-TEN 31 (:03) B.Allen kneels to TEN 30 for -1 yards.

END OF QUARTER			First Downs				Efficiencies	
	Score	Time Poss	R	P	X	T	3 Down	4 Down
Tennessee Titans	7	8:01	1	4	0	5	2/3	0/0
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	13	6:59	1	3	1	5	3/6	0/0

Play By Play

Third Quarter

8/9/2025

TEN elects to Receive, and TB elects to defend the North goal.

R.Coe kicks 64 yards from TB 35 to TEN 1. C.Dike to TEN 33 for 32 yards (R.Parodie).

Tennessee Titans at 15:00, (1st play from scrimmage 14:55)

1-10-TEN 33	(14:55) B.Allen pass short left to J.Chestnut to TEN 41 for 8 yards (N.Jackson).	
2-2-TEN 41	(14:16) B.Allen pass incomplete deep left to C.Dike.	
3-2-TEN 41	(14:10) (Shotgun) B.Allen pass short left to G.Helm pushed ob at TB 43 for 16 yards (A.Grier).	P6
<u>1-10-TB 43</u>	(13:34) J.Chestnut right guard to TB 35 for 8 yards (J.Roberts).	
2-2-TB 35	(12:55) (Shotgun) J.Chestnut right tackle to TB 28 for 7 yards (C.Braswell).	R7
<u>1-10-TB 28</u>	(12:14) B.Allen pass incomplete short left to G.Helm [S.Sanders].	
2-10-TB 28	(12:11) (Shotgun) B.Allen pass incomplete short right to J.Chestnut.	
3-10-TB 28	(12:07) (Shotgun) B.Allen pass short right to B.Oliver to TB 17 for 11 yards (K.Vildor).	P8
<u>1-10-TB 17</u>	(11:29) (Shotgun) B.Allen pass short left to C.Dike to TB 11 for 6 yards (B.Hall; A.Grier).	
2-4-TB 11	(10:49) (Shotgun) J.Chestnut left guard to TB 8 for 3 yards (C.Brewer).	
3-1-TB 8	(10:05) K.Mullings right tackle to TB 9 for -1 yards (A.Grier, C.Braswell).	
4-2-TB 9	(9:21) (Shotgun) B.Allen pass incomplete short middle to B.Oliver.	

Timeout at 09:16.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at 9:16

1-10-TB 9	(9:16) O.Wright left tackle to TB 9 for no gain (I.Raikes).	
2-10-TB 9	(8:35) (Shotgun) O.Wright left tackle to TB 9 for no gain (J.Harrell; C.Gray).	
3-10-TB 9	(7:58) (Shotgun) C.Bazelak pass short right to R.Miller to TB 12 for 3 yards (G.Jeudy-Lally). TB-R.Miller was injured during the play.	

Timeout at 07:43.

4-7-TB 12	(7:42) R.Dixon punts 53 yards to TEN 35, Center-E.Deckers. J.Proche to TB 32 for 33 yards (R.Dixon). <i>PENALTY on TEN-M.Kinsey, Offensive Holding, 10 yards, enforced at TEN 36.</i>	

Tennessee Titans at 7:27

1-10-TEN 26	(7:27) (Shotgun) B.Allen sacked at TEN 18 for -8 yards (N.Jackson).	
2-18-TEN 18	(6:45) (Shotgun) K.Mullings up the middle to TEN 30 for 12 yards (J.Roberts).	
3-6-TEN 30	(6:02) (Shotgun) B.Allen pass short right to D.Martin-Robinson to TEN 38 for 8 yards (N.Jackson).	P9
<u>1-10-TEN 38</u>	(5:25) K.Mullings right tackle to TEN 43 for 5 yards (A.Gotsis).	
2-5-TEN 43	(4:45) (Shotgun) B.Allen pass short right intended for D.Martin-Robinson INTERCEPTED by N.Jackson (J.Bullock) at TEN 40. N.Jackson to TEN 40 for no gain (K.Mullings).	

Timeout at 04:37.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at 4:37

1-10-TEN 40	(4:37) C.Bazelak pass incomplete short middle to O.Wright.	
2-10-TEN 40	(4:32) (Shotgun) C.Bazelak pass short right to O.Wright to TEN 34 for 6 yards (C.Lewis).	
3-4-TEN 34	(3:50) (Shotgun) C.Bazelak pass short middle to G.Greene to TEN 21 for 13 yards (J.Wood; J.Bledsoe).	P14
<u>1-10-TEN 21</u>	(3:06) (Shotgun) O.Wright right guard to TEN 18 for 3 yards (C.Horsley).	
	** Injury Update: TB-R.Miller return is Questionable.	
2-7-TEN 18	(2:43) (Shotgun) O.Wright left guard to TEN 13 for 5 yards (J.Wood).	
3-2-TEN 13	(2:03) (Shotgun) C.Bazelak pass short left to J.Harris to TEN 11 for 2 yards (D.Ross; J.Bledsoe). FUMBLES (D.Ross), RECOVERED by TEN-D.Ross at TEN 11.	

Timeout at 01:50.

Tennessee Titans at 1:50

1-10-TEN 11	(1:50) K.Mullings right tackle to TEN 13 for 2 yards (M.Greene).	
2-8-TEN 13	(1:15) K.Mullings right guard to TEN 21 for 8 yards (J.Roberts).	R10
<u>1-10-TEN 21</u>	(:38) K.Mullings left tackle to TEN 24 for 3 yards (M.Watts).	

END OF QUARTER

	Score	Time Poss	First Downs				Efficiencies	
			R	P	X	T	3 Down	4 Down
Tennessee Titans	7	10:24	2	3	0	5	3/4	0/1
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	13	4:36	0	1	0	1	1/3	0/0

Tennessee Titans continued.

- 2-7-TEN 24 (15:00) K.Mullings left guard to TEN 28 for 4 yards (S.Sanders).
- 3-3-TEN 28 (14:18) (Shotgun) PENALTY on TEN-J.Ojukwu, False Start, 5 yards, enforced at TEN 28 - No Play.
- 3-8-TEN 23 (14:18) (Shotgun) T.Boyle pass incomplete deep right to J.Proche.
- 4-8-TEN 23 (14:14) J.Hekker punts 45 yards to TB 32, Center-M.Cox, downed by TEN-B.Oliver.

Timeout at 14:02.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at 14:02

- 1-10-TB 32 (14:02) S.Tucker right guard to TB 36 for 4 yards (A.Oruwariye; J.Bledsoe).
- 2-6-TB 36 (13:20) S.Tucker up the middle to TB 43 for 7 yards (J.Bledsoe; J.Wood).
PENALTY on TB-B.Scott, Offensive Holding, 10 yards, enforced at TB 36 - No Play.
- 2-16-TB 26 (12:56) (Shotgun) C.Bazelak pass short middle to R.Jarrett to TB 44 for 18 yards (J.Wood). P15
- 1-10-TB 44 (12:17) S.Tucker up the middle to TB 47 for 3 yards (D.Evans; D.Ross).
- 2-7-TB 47 (11:34) (Shotgun) S.Tucker right guard to TB 48 for 1 yard (J.Wood).
- 3-6-TB 48 (10:52) (Shotgun) C.Bazelak pass short left to J.Harris to TEN 46 for 6 yards (C.Lewis). P16
Penalty on TEN-C.Lewis, Defensive Holding, declined.
- 1-10-TEN 46 (10:21) O.Wright right guard to TEN 44 for 2 yards (A.Gaye, C.Jacobs). ** Injury Update: TB-R.Miller has returned to the game.
- 2-8-TEN 44 (9:41) (Shotgun) C.Bazelak pass incomplete short right to R.Miller (C.Lewis).
- 3-8-TEN 44 (9:37) (Shotgun) C.Bazelak pass incomplete deep right to J.Smith.
- 4-8-TEN 44 (9:33) R.Dixon punts 37 yards to TEN 7, Center-E.Deckers, fair catch by J.Jackson.

Timeout at 09:26.

Tennessee Titans at 9:26

- 1-10-TEN 7 (9:26) J.Mims left tackle to TEN 7 for no gain (J.Bullock, R.Parodie).
- 2-10-TEN 7 (8:44) (Shotgun) T.Boyle pass incomplete deep right to X.Restrepo.
- 3-10-TEN 7 (8:39) (Shotgun) T.Boyle pass incomplete short middle to X.Restrepo (J.Roberts).
- 4-10-TEN 7 (8:34) J.Hekker punts 34 yards to TEN 41, Center-M.Cox, out of bounds.

Timeout at 08:25.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at 8:25

- 1-10-TEN 41 (8:25) O.Wright left tackle to TEN 26 for 15 yards (J.Bledsoe). R17
- 1-10-TEN 26 (7:46) O.Wright left guard to TEN 25 for 1 yard (P.Blidi).
PENALTY on TEN-D.Evans, Illegal Use of Hands, 5 yards, enforced at TEN 25. X18
- 1-10-TEN 20 (7:22) O.Wright left guard to TEN 13 for 7 yards (J.Harrell). TEN-J.Harrell was injured during the play.
- 2-3-TEN 13 (7:01) O.Wright left end for 13 yards, TOUCHDOWN NULLIFIED by Penalty.
PENALTY on TB-J.Harris, Offensive Holding, 10 yards, enforced at TEN 9.
- 2-9-TEN 19 (6:54) S.Tucker left guard to TEN 11 for 8 yards (J.Bledsoe; J.Wood).
- 3-1-TEN 11 (6:24) O.Wright right end for 11 yards, TOUCHDOWN NULLIFIED by Penalty.
PENALTY on TB-K.Kieft, Offensive Holding, 10 yards, enforced at TEN 9.
- 3-9-TEN 19 (6:19) O.Wright left guard to TEN 18 for 1 yard (A.Burney; J.Wood). ** Injury Update: TEN-J.Harrell has returned to the game.
- 4-8-TEN 18 (5:36) R.Coe 36 yard field goal is GOOD, Center-E.Deckers, Holder-R.Dixon.

TEN 7 TB 16, 8 plays, 23 yards, 1 penalty, 2:52 drive, 9:27 elapsed

R.Coe kicks 60 yards from TB 35 to TEN 5. T.Sheffield to TEN 30 for 25 yards (R.Wisdom).

Tennessee Titans at 5:33, (1st play from scrimmage 5:27)

- 1-10-TEN 30 (5:27) (Shotgun) T.Boyle pass incomplete short left to J.Whyle (J.Bullock).
- 2-10-TEN 30 (5:23) (Shotgun) T.Boyle pass incomplete short right to M.Kinsey.
- 3-10-TEN 30 (5:20) (Shotgun) T.Boyle pass short right intended for J.Jackson INTERCEPTED by T.Funderburk (J.Roberts) at TEN 36. T.Funderburk to TEN 30 for 6 yards (J.Proche).

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at 5:13

- 1-10-TEN 30 (5:13) O.Wright right guard to TEN 30 for no gain (D.Gbenda).
PENALTY on TB, Illegal Formation, 5 yards, enforced at TEN 30 - No Play.
- 1-15-TEN 35 (4:49) O.Wright up the middle to TEN 20 for 15 yards (J.Harris). R19
- 1-10-TEN 20 (4:07) O.Wright left guard to TEN 15 for 5 yards (D.Ross).
- 2-5-TEN 15 (3:25) O.Wright right tackle for 15 yards, TOUCHDOWN. R20

TEN 7 TB 22, 3 plays, 30 yards, 1:54 drive, 11:41 elapsed

R.Coe kicks 62 yards from TB 35 to TEN 3. M.Landers pushed ob at TEN 39 for 36 yards (R.Coe).

PENALTY on TEN-K.Brooks, Illegal Block Above the Waist, 10 yards, enforced at TEN 25.

Tennessee Titans at 3:19, (1st play from scrimmage 3:11)

- 1-10-TEN 15

(3:11) (Shotgun) T.Boyle pass short left to J.Mims to TEN 14 for -1 yards (N.Jackson).
- 2-11-TEN 14

(2:47) (No Huddle, Shotgun) T.Boyle pass short right to J.Mims to TEN 20 for 6 yards (J.Roberts).
- 3-5-TEN 20

(2:22) (No Huddle, Shotgun) T.Boyle pass incomplete short right to M.Landers.
- 4-5-TEN 20

(2:18) (Shotgun) T.Boyle pass short middle to T.Sheffield to TEN 32 for 12 yards (R.Wisdom).
- P11

Two-Minute Warning

- 1-10-TEN 32

(2:00) (Shotgun) T.Boyle pass short left to J.Whyle to TEN 39 for 7 yards (N.Jackson).
- 2-3-TEN 39

(1:42) (No Huddle, Shotgun) T.Boyle sacked at TEN 29 for -10 yards (W.Peeples).

Timeout #1 by TEN at 01:35.
- 3-13-TEN 29

(1:35) (Shotgun) T.Boyle pass incomplete short right to D.Dabney.
- 4-13-TEN 29

(1:31) (Shotgun) T.Boyle pass short left intended for M.Kinsey INTERCEPTED by R.Parodie at TEN 39. R.Parodie for 39 yards, TOUCHDOWN.

The Replay Official reviewed the runner broke the plane ruling, and the play was Upheld. The ruling on the field stands.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers at 1:21

R.Coe extra point is GOOD, Center-E.Deckers, Holder-R.Dixon.

TEN 7 TB 29, 0 plays, 39 yards, 0:00 drive , 13:39 elapsed

R.Coe kicks 59 yards from TB 35 to TEN 6. T.Sheffield pushed ob at TEN 35 for 29 yards (R.Wisdom; J.Ramirez).

Tennessee Titans at 1:21, (1st play from scrimmage 1:15)

- 1-10-TEN 35

(1:15) J.Mims left tackle to TEN 42 for 7 yards (J.Bullock).
- 2-3-TEN 42

(:31) J.Mims left tackle to TEN 43 for 1 yard (N.Jackson).

END OF QUARTER

	Score	Time Poss	First Downs				Efficiencies	
			R	P	X	T	3 Down	4 Down
Tennessee Titans	7	5:38	0	1	0	1	0/5	1/2
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	29	9:22	3	2	1	6	1/3	0/0

Miscellaneous Statistics Report

Tennessee Titans vs Tampa Bay Buccaneers
8/9/2025 at Raymond James Stadium

Ten Longest Plays for Tennessee Titans

Yards	Qtr	Play Start	Play Description
27	2	1-10-TEN 35	(14:55) (Shotgun) C.Ward pass deep middle to C.Ridley to TB 38 for 27 yards (J.Hayes).
16	3	3-2-TEN 41	(14:10) (Shotgun) B.Allen pass short left to G.Helm pushed ob at TB 43 for 16 yards (A.Grier).
13	2	2-10-TB 38	(13:18) (Shotgun) C.Ward pass short left to C.Ridley to TB 25 for 13 yards (C.Izien).
13	2	3-15-TEN 15	(4:10) (Shotgun) B.Allen pass short left to T.Spears to TEN 28 for 13 yards (R.Wisdom; J.Roberts).
12	3	2-18-TEN 18	(6:45) (Shotgun) K.Mullings up the middle to TEN 30 for 12 yards (J.Roberts).
12	4	4-5-TEN 20	(2:18) (Shotgun) T.Boyle pass short middle to T.Sheffield to TEN 32 for 12 yards (R.Wisdom).
11	3	3-10-TB 28	(12:07) (Shotgun) B.Allen pass short right to B.Oliver to TB 17 for 11 yards (K.Vildor).
10	2	1-20-TB 48	(13:52) (Shotgun) C.Ward pass short left to C.Ridley to TB 38 for 10 yards.
10	2	3-9-TB 24	(11:41) (Shotgun) C.Ward pass short middle to C.Okonkwo to TB 14 for 10 yards (S.Dennis; C.Izien).
8	3	1-10-TEN 33	(14:55) B.Allen pass short left to J.Chestnut to TEN 41 for 8 yards (N.Jackson).

Ten Longest Plays for Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Yards	Qtr	Play Start	Play Description
25	1	1-10-TB 18	(14:56) K.Trask pass deep left to J.McMillan to TB 43 for 25 yards (D.Baker).
23	1	1-10-TEN 25	(1:40) S.Tucker right end pushed ob at TEN 2 for 23 yards (K.Brooks).
21	1	2-7-TB 46	(13:41) K.Trask pass deep right to E.Egbuka to TEN 33 for 21 yards (A.Hooker) [S.Joseph].
21	2	2-7-TB 38	(7:39) K.Trask pass deep middle to R.Miller to TEN 41 for 21 yards (M.Brown) [J.Gaziano].
18	4	2-16-TB 26	(12:56) (Shotgun) C.Bazelak pass short middle to R.Jarrett to TB 44 for 18 yards (J.Wood).
15	4	1-10-TEN 41	(8:25) O.Wright left tackle to TEN 26 for 15 yards (J.Bledsoe).
15	4	1-15-TEN 35	(4:49) O.Wright up the middle to TEN 20 for 15 yards (J.Harris).
15	4	2-5-TEN 15	(3:25) O.Wright right tackle for 15 yards, TOUCHDOWN.
13	3	3-4-TEN 34	(3:50) (Shotgun) C.Bazelak pass short middle to G.Greene to TEN 21 for 13 yards (J.Wood; J.Bledsoe).
12	1	1-10-TB 30	(9:23) R.White right tackle pushed ob at TB 42 for 12 yards (M.Brown).

Touchdown Scoring Information

		Offense	Defense	Special Teams
VISITOR	Tennessee Titans	1	0	0
HOME	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	2	1	0

Player Scoring Information

Club	Player	TD	Rush TD	Rec TD	KO TD	Punt TD	Int TD	Fum TD	Misc TD	FG	XP	2Pt Rush	2Pt Rec	Sfty	Points
TEN	T.Pollard	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
TEN	J.Slye	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
TB	C.McLaughlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	7
TB	O.Wright	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
TB	S.Tucker	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
TB	R.Parodie	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
TB	R.Coe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4

Possession Detail

	First Half		Second Half		Game	
	Visitor	Home	Visitor	Home	Visitor	Home
Largest Lead	0	10	0	22	0	22
Drives Leading	0	3	0	5	0	8
Time of Possession Leading	0:00	17:42	0:00	13:58	0:00	31:40
Largest Deficit	-10	0	-22	0	-22	0
Drives Trailing	4	0	7	0	11	0
Time of Possession Trailing	8:59	0:00	16:02	0:00	25:01	0:00
Times Score Tied Up		0		0		0
Lead Changes		1		0		1

Playtime Percentage

Percent of playtime per player on offense, defense and special teams (Unofficial)

Tennessee Titans								Tampa Bay Buccaneers							
		Offense		Defense		Special Teams				Offense		Defense		Special Teams	
A.Rupcich	OL	47	82%			1	4%	E.Klein	G	59	84%			6	26%
J.Slater	G	42	74%					L.Haggard	T	52	74%			6	26%
B.Jaimes	OL	29	51%			1	4%	B.Chukwuma	T	49	70%			4	17%
J.Ojukwu	OL	25	44%					M.Jordan	G	44	63%			3	13%
O.Udoh	OL	25	44%					K.Trask	QB	41	59%				
E.Ayomanor	WR	24	42%			6	26%	J.Harris	WR	40	57%			1	4%
C.Dike	WR	21	37%			3	13%	R.Jarrett	WR	37	53%			10	43%
B.Allen	QB	21	37%					B.Scott	G	37	53%			6	26%
T.Boyle	QB	21	37%					T.McLellan	T	37	53%			3	13%
G.Helm	TE	19	33%			4	17%	R.Miller	WR	34	49%			3	13%
B.Oliver	WR	17	30%			3	13%	R.O'Neal	T	33	47%			3	13%
B.Crenshaw-Dickson	T	17	30%					O.Wright	RB	32	46%			1	4%
J.Duncan	OL	17	30%					G.Greene	WR	29	41%			4	17%
D.Martin-Robinson	TE	15	26%			5	22%	J.Majors	C	29	41%				
D.Moore	T	15	26%			1	4%	C.Bazalak	QB	29	41%				
C.Levin	C/G	15	26%			1	4%	K.Kieft	TE	28	40%			11	48%
J.Latham	T	15	26%			1	4%	S.Tucker	RB	28	40%			3	13%
P.Skoronski	OL	15	26%			1	4%	P.Durham	TE	25	36%			11	48%
C.Okonkwo	TE	15	26%					D.Culp	TE	22	31%			11	48%
C.Ward	QB	15	26%					T.Taula	TE	19	27%			5	22%
J.Chestnut	RB	13	23%			5	22%	J.Smith	WR	16	23%				
V.Jefferson	WR	13	23%			1	4%	C.Heck	T	10	14%			2	9%
S.Mustipher	OL	13	23%					E.Egbuka	WR	10	14%			1	4%
M.Kinsey	WR	12	21%			8	35%	R.White	RB	10	14%				
T.Pollard	RB	12	21%					J.McMillan	WR	9	13%				
J.Whyle	TE	11	19%			6	26%	D.Houston	WR	6	9%			1	4%
T.Sheffield	WR	11	19%			4	17%	S.Shepard	WR	5	7%				
X.Restrepo	WR	11	19%			1	4%	J.Roberts	S			42	74%	6	26%
C.Ridley	WR	11	19%					R.Wisdom	S			39	68%	11	48%
J.Proche	WR	10	18%			4	17%	S.Sanders	S			37	65%	7	30%
T.Lockett	WR	10	18%					C.Braswell	LB			31	54%	8	35%
A.Hambright	G	10	18%					N.Jackson	LB			30	53%	9	39%
K.Mullings	RB	9	16%			6	26%	K.Vildor	CB			28	49%	5	22%
J.Mims	RB	9	16%			6	26%	M.Watts	LB			26	46%	8	35%
M.Landers	WR	9	16%			3	13%	J.Ramirez	LB			26	46%	3	13%
J.Jackson	WR	8	14%			6	26%	J.Bullock	LB			26	46%	3	13%
D.Dabney	TE	8	14%			6	26%	A.Grier	LB			24	42%	11	48%
J.Jefferson	RB	8	14%			4	17%	B.Hall	CB			23	40%	2	9%
T.Spears	RB	6	11%					T.Funderburk	CB			21	37%	7	30%
T.Odukoya	TE	3	5%			6	26%	E.Roberts	DL			21	37%	6	26%
C.Gray	LB			44	63%	5	22%	M.Greene	DL			20	35%	1	4%
J.Williams	LB			41	59%	4	17%	D.Jones	LB			19	33%	1	4%
T.Horne	DT			40	57%	4	17%	C.Brewer	DL			19	33%		
A.Gaye	LB			38	54%	8	35%	J.Hayes	CB			18	32%	7	30%
G.Jeudy-Lally	CB			38	54%	5	22%								

M.Harris	CB	38	54%	4	17%	J.Parrish	CB	18	32%	4	17%
J.Harrell	LB	36	51%	6	26%	E.Banks	DL	17	30%	1	4%
K.Brooks	DB	35	50%	8	35%	C.Izien	S	17	30%	1	4%
M.Brown	S	35	50%	8	35%	R.Parodie	CB	16	28%	9	39%
C.Horsley	DT	33	47%	4	17%	W.Peebles	LB	16	28%	1	4%
J.Kimber	CB	31	44%	3	13%	K.Merriweather	S	15	26%	7	30%
J.Wood	DB	29	41%	8	35%	A.Nelson	LB	15	26%	4	17%
J.Bledsoe	DB	29	41%	8	35%	S.Dennis	LB	15	26%	1	4%
I.Raikes	NT	23	33%	1	4%	N.Hutmacher	DL	14	25%		
A.Oruwariye	CB	22	31%	6	26%	D.J-Thomas	DL	14	25%		
J.Ward	LB	22	31%	2	9%	A.Gotsis	DL	10	18%	1	4%
D.Gbenda	LB	20	29%	12	52%	G.Gaines	DL	10	18%		
F.Oladejo	LB	20	29%	1	4%	E.Deckers	LS			9	39%
J.Lynch	DL	20	29%	1	4%	R.Dixon	P			9	39%
D.Ross	CB	19	27%	5	22%	R.Coe	K			7	30%
C.Jacobs	LB	18	26%	13	57%	C.McLaughlin	K			6	26%
D.Evans	LB	18	26%	1	4%	L.Metz	OL			3	13%
J.Gaziano	DE	16	23%	3	13%						
C.Lewis	CB	15	21%	1	4%						
J.Bronson	DT	12	17%	1	4%						
P.Blidi	DT	12	17%								
J.Harris	CB	11	16%	8	35%						
A.Burney	LB	11	16%	8	35%						
A.Hooker	S	6	9%	1	4%						
C.Barton	LB	6	9%	1	4%						
J.Brownlee	CB	6	9%	1	4%						
D.Baker	CB	6	9%	1	4%						
S.Joseph	DE	6	9%	1	4%						
X.Woods	S	6	9%	1	4%						
D.Jones	LB	4	6%	1	4%						
A.Key	LB	3	4%	1	4%						
R.McCreary	CB	1	1%	1	4%						
M.Cox	LS			5	22%						
J.Hekker	P			5	22%						
J.Slye	K			3	13%						

TENNESSEE TITANS

LAST WEEK'S GAME CLIPS



QB CAM WARD MAKES A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION, BUT TITANS FALL 29-7 TO BUCS IN PRESEASON OPENER

TENNESSEETITANS.COM
AUGUST 9, 2025

Titans quarterback Cam Ward made a nice first impression in his NFL preseason debut.

In Saturday night's 29-7 loss to the Buccaneers, Ward completed 5-of-8 passes for 67 yards before leaving after the team's second offensive series.

It was the highlight of the night for the Titans.

"Some good, some bad," Coach Brian Callahan told reporters after the game. "A lot of guys getting their first NFL action. Cam played well in the two series he got. Kind of a weird first half, with only three possessions. Had one three-and-out, and led a touchdown drive. I thought he looked good, started to feel a little bit comfortable, was begging to go back in, but that wasn't in the cards for tonight.

"I thought he did some good things, and it was encouraging."

The Titans went three-and-out on Ward's first possession, which ended in a punt.

But on Ward's second possession he completed three passes to receiver Calvin Ridley, one to receiver Tyler Lockett and another one to tight end Chig Okonkwo to lead the Titans downfield, and they scored on a one-yard touchdown run by Tony Pollard.

"It felt good operation-wise," Ward said. "We really didn't have any MAs (missed assignments). I think the biggest thing was us being able to play in a real-game atmosphere together, getting the vibe of each other and then playing together like we did."

The Buccaneers jumped out to a 10-0 lead before Pollard's touchdown, which capped an 11-play, 65-yard drive that took 6:38 off the clock.

Ward's first completion was a 27-yard pass to Ridley, and he also found Ridley open for completions of 10 and 13 yards. Ward also completed a seven-yard pass to Lockett, and a 10-yard pass to Okonkwo on third and nine from the 24-yard line to continue the drive and set up Pollard's touchdown run.

Ward was replaced by Brandon Allen on the team's third possession. Quarterback Tim Boyle finished the game for Tennessee.

The Buccaneers led 13-7 at the half on a two-yard run by Sean Tucker and a 23-yard field goal by kicker Chase McLaughlin.

The Buccaneers extended their lead in the second half with a Ryan Coe field goal and a 15-yard rushing touchdown by Owen Wright before a late defensive touchdown.

The Titans are scheduled to practice against the Falcons on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week before a preseason contest against the two teams on Friday night.

###

SIX THINGS THAT STOOD OUT FOR THE TITANS IN SATURDAY NIGHT'S PRESEASON LOSS TO THE BUCCANEERS

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
AUGUST 9, 2025

The Titans lost 29-7 to the Buccaneers on Saturday night at Raymond James Stadium.

Here's a look at six things that stood out in the contest:

Cam's Debut

Titans quarterback Cam Ward had a nice showing in his first NFL contest, when he completed 5-of-8 passes for 67 yards, with a passer rating of 89.1. After a pair of incompletions on the team's first possession, Ward went 5-of-6 when the Titans got the ball back and drove the team to a second quarter touchdown. After a solid performance in a joint practice with the Buccaneers on Thursday, Ward carried his momentum in the game. "It felt good operation-wise," Ward said. "We really didn't have any MAs (missed assignments). I think the biggest thing was us being able to play in a real-game atmosphere together, getting the vibe of each other and then playing together like we did."

Ridley Connection

Ward and receiver Calvin Ridley have developed nice chemistry in training camp, and that was on full display on Saturday night. Ward connected with Ridley for completions of 10, 13 and 27 yards on the scoring drive, delivering a strike down the middle of the field, and some nice sideline throws. The three catches for 50 yards was a 16.7-yard average that offered even more optimism about this tandem for 2025.

James Williams Sr.

Second-year linebacker James Williams Sr. made his presence

known right from the start when he delivered a big hit on the opening kickoff. Williams then made a nice play on a third-down play, ending a Tampa Bay possession by sniffing out a screen, and stopping it short of a first down. Williams was credited with seven tackles in the contest, including one TFL. Williams continues to make a strong case for himself to be the starter alongside Cody Barton.

Shaky Run Defense

Neither Jeffery Simmons nor T'Vondre Sweat played a snap. And, the team's starters on Saturday night didn't play a whole lot. Nonetheless, the performance from the run defense wasn't great against the Buccaneers, who ran for 178 yards and two touchdowns on 41 carries against the Titans. It came on an average of 4.3 yards per carry.

Tyjae Spears Injury

The sight of Titans running back Tyjae Spears being carted off the field at Raymond James Stadium wasn't what anyone wanted to see. Unfortunately, Spears was injured late in the first half, and left the field with the training staff. The team will have a better idea on his status in the coming days. "Further evaluation," Coach Brian Callahan said after the contest. "It's probably an ankle, but we'll see what the severity is as we evaluate him a little bit further. I'll have news on that on probably another day."

Turnovers

The Titans turned the ball over three times against the Buccaneers, including interceptions thrown by back-up quarterbacks Brandon Allen and Tim Boyle. The latter of the two was returned for a touchdown, which accounted for the final margin. "(We have to) clean up the turnovers," Callahan said. "It got sloppy late, which was disappointing to see. But we did some good things, and (there's) plenty to correct."

**WARD SOLID IN NFL
PRESEASON DEBUT,
LEADING ONE SCORING
DRIVE IN TITANS' 29-7
LOSS TO BUCCANEERS**

**BY FRED GOODALL
ASSOCIATED PRESS
AUGUST 9, 2025**

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Cam Ward's pro debut was solid, if unspectacular.

The first overall pick in this year's NFL draft completed five of eight passes for 67 yards, but more importantly was composed and looked comfortable running Tennessee's offense in the Titans' 29-7 preseason-opening loss to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Saturday night.

Two days after working against the Bucs defense in a joint practice at Tampa Bay's training facility, Ward played two offensive series, including an impressive second-quarter touchdown drive that gave the Titans a glimpse of what the franchise is counting on to be a bright future with him at quarterback.

The 6-foot-2, 219-pound rookie completed three passes to Calvin Ridley to account for all but 15 yards on the 11-play, 65-yard TD drive Tony Pollard finished with a 1-yard scoring run. That came after the Tennessee offense spent more than 14 minutes of the opening quarter on the sideline while Tampa Bay was building a 10-0 lead and a whopping 143-5 advantage in total yardage while running 22 plays to Tennessee's 3.

"I thought Cam played well, the two series that he got," Titans second-year coach Brian Callahan said. "It was kind of a weird first half with three possessions. He had one three and out, then came back with a touchdown drive. He started to feel comfortable and was begging to go back in, but that was not in the cards tonight."

Ward felt good about the abbreviated debut.

"It was a lot guys first time playing together, but it felt good to come up with points," after failing to move the ball on the Titans' first possession," the rookie said.

"I wanted to go out for a third (series) ... but Coach Callahan has a plan for us," Ward conceded. "We'll stick to his plan."

Ward began his team's only scoring drive with a 27-yard completion over the middle to a wide-open Ridley and later led his target cutting across the middle again with a nice throw for a 13-yard gain into Tampa Bay territory. The rookie got away with his worst throw of the night when Bucs cornerback Josh Hayes made a nice adjustment on a sideline throw intended for receiver Elic Ayomanor but was unable to hang on to the ball for an interception.

Ward, who had no turnovers and was not sacked, left the game after getting the Titans into the end zone. Backup Brandon Allen and third-stringer Tim Boyle, who threw an interception that was returned for a late touchdown, shared playing time the rest of the way.

With Baker Mayfield and the rest of Tampa Bay's regulars either given the night off or playing sparingly, Kyle Trask started at quarterback for the Bucs. While he's listed No. 2 on the depth chart behind Mayfield, the team has signed 32-year-old Teddy Bridgewater as potential insurance for the four-time defending NFC South champions.

Trask, who's thrown just 11 regular-season passes since entering the NFL as a second-round draft pick in 2021, led the team to Sean Tucker's 2-yard TD run and two field goals in the first half. He completed 12 of 16 passes for 129 yards without an interception before being replaced by rookie free agent Connor Bazelak.

"I thought he played very well. He made some timely throws down the

field. He was poised in the pocket," Bucs coach Todd Bowles said. "Practice wasn't as sharp the past week, but he played well in the game."

Good first impression

First-round draft pick Emeka Egbuka started at wide receiver for the Bucs with Mike Evans resting and the team's other star veteran, Chris Godwin, still recovering from an injury that sidelined him much of last season.

Egbuka had one catch — a leaping grab in tight coverage — for 21 yards.

Injuries

Titans: NT T'Vondre Sweat did not play after having his tonsils removed. ... ILB Anfernee Orji also missed the game after injuring a knee during Thursday's joint practice against the Bucs.

Buccaneers: RB Rachaad White (groin) and WR Dennis Houston (groin) left the game in the first quarter and did not return.

Up next

Titans: Remain on the road for another week, moving on to Atlanta for two joint practices followed by a game Aug. 15 against the Falcons.

Buccaneers: Travel to Pittsburgh mid-week for a joint practice and game against the Steelers next Saturday.

###

CAM WARD SHOWS WHY THE TITANS TOOK HIM AT NO. 1 OVERALL IN HIS PRESEASON DEBUT

BY TERESA M. WALKER
ASSOCIATED PRESS
AUGUST 10, 2025

The Tennessee Titans are the first to point out that rookie Cam Ward has room for improvement, even as the No. 1 overall draft pick provided plenty of optimism for the future.

Ward didn't connect on his first two passes. Then he completed five of his next six for 67 yards and drove the Titans 65 yards on 11 plays, using up 6 minutes, 38 seconds of a 29-7 loss to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

"It was a good start for him," coach Brian Callahan said Sunday. "Encouraging, was productive. But yeah, there's a couple of things that we're going to keep kind of grinding on I think. Still working on getting the ball out fast, still working on the timing part of it ... But overall pretty good."

Ward showed the chemistry he's been building with wide receiver Calvin Ridley, connecting with the veteran three times for 50 yards.

Best for the Titans is the pocket a revamped offensive line provided for the rookie. Tennessee gave up 52 sacks in 2024 — only Houston and Seattle (54), Cleveland (66) and Chicago (68) allowed more.

That's why the Titans signed veteran Dan Moore Jr. to be their new left tackle, moving JC Latham over to right tackle after his rookie season. They also brought in 13-year veteran right guard Kevin Zeitler.

Center Lloyd Cushenberry III is on the physically unable to perform list, and the Titans held Zeitler out of the preseason opener. But center Corey Levin and guard Andrew Rucich both helped show how much this unit has improved working under assistant coach Bill Callahan.

"Again, there's a lot of work still to be done and there's a lot of other rushers that are yet to be faced, so we'll build on a first positive first step, but definitely have a lot to keep going," Callahan said.

Injury update

Callahan said running back Tyjae Spears will miss a couple of weeks with an injured ankle that had him taken by cart to the locker room during the second quarter of the preseason opener. Spears was seen by reporters with a walking boot on his right foot and using crutches after the game.

Callahan said they're waiting on a final word on some things: "But he will definitely miss some time."

Cushenberry is expected to start practicing this week. He started eight games before hurting his Achilles tendon in November. DT T'Vondre Sweat likely will need a week to recover from a tonsillectomy.

Run D woes

With Sweat and three-time Pro Bowl defensive lineman Jeffery Simmons both out against the Buccaneers, the Titans struggled like it was 2024 to defend the run. The Titans ranked 26th last season in allowing an average of 133.9 yards per game and gave up 178 to Tampa Bay.

Three different Bucs had a long run of 12 yards or longer as Tampa Bay averaged 4.3 yards per carry.

"Not the number we're looking for, and that's got to get improved," Callahan said.

Road trip continues

The Titans got to their hotel in Georgia around 4 a.m. Sunday. They practice against the Atlanta Falcons on Tuesday and Wednesday before Friday night's exhibition.

TITANS DEPTH CHART: 5 PLAYERS WHO IMPROVED THEIR STOCK IN PRESEASON GAME VS BUCCANEERS

BY NICK SUSS
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
AUGUST 9, 2025

TAMPA, FL — The NFL preseason is an evolving organism. Playing well in the first game doesn't guarantee a roster spot in September, and struggling in it doesn't condemn a player to a fall spent applying for jobs selling insurance.

But in the case of the Tennessee Titans, following their 29-7 loss against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Aug. 9, a few important trends popped through. A handful of players asserted their edges in key position battles; some played more prominent roles than expected; and a select few made notable mistakes that could set them back.

Here are five players who The Tennessean believes helped improve their stock on the Titans' depth chart after the Aug. 9 game.

LB James Williams Sr.

Williams has been the clear front-runner for the No. 2 linebacker job since the spring, and he played like someone who has no intention of giving up that status. He registered six tackles, including one on the game's opening kickoff. He's starting to play downhill in a more instinctive way. Throw in the fact that his competition, Cedric Gray, whiffed on a few tackles, and Williams' lead only seems to be growing.

DT Isaiah Raikes

Raikes, the 310-pound undrafted rookie nose tackle, didn't start with T'Vondre Sweat (tonsils) out. That distinction belonged to veteran Timmy Horne, who played well in his own right. But Raikes came in with the subs and started making his presence felt with a pass breakup

and a nice run stuff at the line of scrimmage. The competition for defensive line depth is far from over, but Raikes has looked good throughout camp and deserves to be remembered in the battle.

###

Also worth noting: Fellow UDFA defensive tackle Cam Horsley had a nice QB pressure that led to a sack in the first quarter, but he didn't flash as much after that point.

WR/KR/PR James Proche II

It's not going to show up on the stat sheet because of a penalty, but Proche gave the Titans an explosive punt return, taking the ball 33 yards into Tampa Bay territory before a Mason Kinsey holding penalty brought the ball backward. Proche didn't make the offensive difference he has had a knack for in practices, but if he can be a difference-maker as a return specialist, that merits a roster spot.

OL Andrew Rucpich

Starting guard Kevin Zeitler didn't play, making space for Rucpich to start in his place. The Titans drafted an interior offensive lineman in the fifth round this year, ostensibly to learn behind Zeitler. But Rucpich got the call instead of Jackson Slater, and the first-team offensive line kept Cam Ward clean the entire time he was out there. Call that a win for one of the longer-tenured Titans.

WR Chimere Dike

There isn't much doubt about Dike's chances to make this team, but in a crowded receiver room, he might have played his way into some more time on the field, at least. Dike had a nice kickoff return early in the second half and broke wide open on a deep corner route two plays later, but quarterback Brandon Allen succumbed to pressure and couldn't get him the ball.

On a night where Dike, Elic Ayomanor, Bryce Oliver and Xavier Restrepo combined for two catches, there really wasn't much separation, but Dike's versatility is a bonus.

CAM WARD ARRIVES EARLY, DELIVERS EARLY IN TITANS' PRESEASON DEBUT

BY PAUL KUHARSKY
PAULKUHARSKY.COM
AUGUST 9, 2025

TAMPA, Fla. – The Cam Ward Encouragement Index registered well in his first preseason game, when he showed up six and a half hours before kickoff and engineered a solid touchdown drive in his second series before sitting down.

Ward threw passes of 27, 10 and 13 yards to his top target Calvin Ridley to get things going and also hit Chig Okonkwo for 10 yards to convert a third-and-9 and Tyler Lockett for 7 yards to convert a third-and-6.

The Titans lost 29-7 at Raymond James Stadium, on a night when the Bucs played one replacement starter and Tennessee's defense allowed the hosts to stay on the field too much, almost 35 minutes.

Ward finished five of eight for 67 yards and an 89.1 passer rating. He was unbothered in those eight drop-backs.

The Titans had three starters in Dan Moore, Peter Skoronski and JC Latham as well as Corey Levin who may start the season for Lloyd Cushenberry, who's completing rehabilitation from a torn Achilles. Veteran Kevin Zeitler didn't play with Andrew Ruppich in his place at right guard.

The Bucs' pass rush was not coming from Calijah Kancey, Vita Vea, Logan Hall or Yaya Diaby, who combined for 24.5 sacks a year ago, but Adam Gotsis, Greg Gaines, C.J. Brewer and Anthony Nelson, a four-pack who combined for seven sacks in 2024.

Those were the four rushers who the Titans held off when Ward was clean and fully stepped into his first throw of the second possession, the 27-yarder to Ridley. The receiver was facing Ward, open by 6 yards,

standing on the right between the midfield logo and the numbers.

Everything worked correctly and he made the play you'd expect of him, and it was a great one to get the confidence up and set things in motion.

"That's exactly what you hope for," Brian Callahan said of all that went right on the longest play of the game. "The pass protection for most of the game was pretty good. Kalel Mullings gave up one (sack) on a one-on-one pickup in the second half, but for the most part the offensive line part of it was solid. That was good to see. And that play went about as good as you can ask for unless you would have scored, it might have gone a little better."

Latham called it something for the unit to build on and found some issues with his own performance – he said on the first play he got turned a little bit coming out of an aggressive set and he was late with his hands on a play on the second drive.

As for the level of the competition...

"Chris Braswell was a second-round pick out of Alabama last year," JC Latham said. "So twos? Yes. Good player? Definitely. You look at it as far as the talent goes and what you see, he'll be playing this year, a good role for that team so it's not like he's some random guy off the bench or that any of them are. He'll play more of a prevalent role off the bench."

Ward said he really liked the chance to vibe with his teammates and get some rhythm and said the offensive line "had the mindset to go get it."

"They were the reason why we finished off that drive with points," he said.

After a run on his first play, he threw incomplete to Van Jefferson and then threw the ball away on a third-and-5 after rolling right when it appeared Jefferson had cut across the field with him giving him a viable option.

"The timing wasn't there from the standpoint of what it's always been, but in a game that's when you've got to be reactive," he said. "I got out of the pocket too early; I could have painted the ball to Rid and (Tyler) Lockett once I looked at the film. But that's just stuff I have to get better at, just being able to play post-snap."

Ward showed up to the stadium at 1:00 p.m. but had no trouble passing the time to get to the 7:30 kickoff. He viewed part of the new John Cena movie, "Freelance." Ward didn't finish it, so his review is pending.

He expects to arrive four hours before the Titans' noon games.

The Titans headed for buses after the game that would take them to the airport for a flight to Atlanta, where they will continue their road trip. They'll be off Sunday, have a light day Monday and practice against the Falcons Tuesday and Wednesday ahead of Friday night's game against the Falcons.

Callahan said starters will play in that one, too. Odds are it won't be more than this.

The defensive game performance by the twos and threes didn't get it done, with an interception by Brandon Allen and two by Tim Boyle, one returned for a touchdown, helping make things more difficult.

As for Ward, he had a solid practice and a good drive and is in a good spot to build from.

"The second drive I think he took advantage of every opportunity, made some great throws to Rid, got us driving the ball down, I mean that's very promising," Lockett said. "That's what you want to see."

###

TENNESSEE TITANS

FEATURE CLIPS



**RIVALRY VS TEXANS
MATTERS TO AMY
ADAMS STRUNK. TITANS
MADE SURE TO
DEDICATE WIN TO HER**

**BY NICK SUSS
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
NOVEMBER 24, 2024**

HOUSTON — Moments after securing the first AFC South win and first sack of his NFL career, Tennessee Titans rookie defensive tackle T'Vondre Sweat came running into the locker room from the playing field at NRG Stadium, one emotion on his lips.

"This one was for Miss Amy," Sweat screamed, drawing applause from a small gaggle of fans gathered in the tunnel.

Sweat and the Titans bested their rival Houston Texans 32-27 on Sunday, the team's first win over the Texans in two years and the first in coach Brian Callahan's Titans tenure. After the game, owner Amy Adams Strunk addressed the team in the locker room, and players said she got emotional in doing so.

Callahan downplayed the narrative in the week leading up to the game, but after the win, he admitted that Adams Strunk and her family have some extra personal feelings about games against and in Houston, the city where her father founded the Titans franchise and the home of the organization until 1996.

"She was thrilled. Mainly because we won the game. But it's OK to admit that these things sometimes mean more," Callahan said. "I know it does for her and it does for us. We wanted to make sure that we put on a great performance down here. We had a chance to win the game and we did. I think she's more than anything else just proud of our football team and the way they came down here and fought and played."

The Texans swept the Titans in 2023, including an embarrassing loss in Nashville where the Titans wore their Houston Oilers

throwback uniforms but lost 19-16 in overtime to a Texans team that was missing its starting quarterback.

Now the Titans are 1-0 against the division-leading Texans in 2024, doing so in electric fashion with touchdowns of 38 and 70 yards, plus two interceptions and four sacks, one of which registered two points for a safety. The Titans outgained the Texans by more than 100 yards, snapped running back Joe Mixon's six-game touchdown streak by holding him to 22 yards on 14 carries, and bullied the Texans' impressive rush defense with 132 ground yards on 33 carries.

Even the young players who haven't been in the organization long came to appreciate why this rivalry game matters so much.

"Our coach gave us the speech this week about how much it meant to (Adams Strunk) and her family," rookie cornerback Jarvis Brownlee Jr. said. "Just told us the history about it. That was the main goal. This game is a little more personal. Not just because of the rivalry, but because of Miss Amy, too, as well. We just wanted to go out here and give it our all. For Nashville, for Miss Amy and for everybody that's a part of this organization. They deserve it."

###

THE DEAL BEHIND THE DOME: AMY ADAMS STRUNK AND HER STADIUM-WINNING DRIVE

BY JULIA MASTERS
NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL
AUGUST 24, 2023

According to those who know her, Amy Adams Strunk takes a small-business leader's approach to her role as controlling owner of the Tennessee Titans. She asks questions, identifies strong leaders and loves hanging out with fans enjoying a hot dog at a tailgate.

Since becoming controlling owner in 2015, her leadership style has seen six winning seasons, an AFC Championship appearance and contributed to Nashville playing host to the 2019 NFL Draft. In what may be the biggest accomplishment of her tenure, state and city leaders, after protracted debate, this year approved a \$2.1 billion domed stadium for the team, which is expected to be completed in 2027.

Set to anchor Nashville's reimagined East Bank, the stadium is poised to become one of Music City's most transformative projects — prospects that are as concerning to some residents as they are exciting to others.

Adams Strunk made few public remarks throughout the approval process, allowing Titans president and CEO Burke Nihill to be the primary face of the project. Now, she shares her behind the scenes view of the deal in an email interview with the Business Journal. The following has been edited for length and clarity.

When the deal got approved, what was that feeling like, and where were you? Who was the first person you called? I was with my family, and Burke was keeping me updated throughout the evening. My first feeling when the stadium was approved was overwhelming gratitude. We moved here in the

mid-1990s, and we're so humbled by the support this city and state has showed our team since day one. It's such a great feeling to know the Titans will be a part of this incredible community for another generation.

What excites you the most about bringing this deal to Nashville and Titans fans? What does it mean to the city? I'm thrilled that Titans fans will have a new home with the great fan experience they deserve. I'm also excited to see the biggest events in the world pass through Nashville's new stadium. But it has always been hard for me to think about this project without being most excited about what it means for Nashville as a whole. We've been a part of the conversations about the future of the East Bank for the past several years. While it won't be without its challenges, I've always supported the city's vision to transform the stadium property into something truly special for the city. Having seen the planning work, I truly believe the East Bank will be a celebrated area of Nashville for generations to come. To think the city's beautiful stadium building will be a part of that neighborhood ... it's all so exciting.

How will you evaluate the success of the new stadium? How should the public evaluate its success? There will be things we will track that I'm excited to see, like the success of our events and how many new jobs and opportunities the stadium will bring. But I'm also the kind of person who likes to go directly to the fans and hear what they think. I like visiting with them before our events and listening to their real, direct feedback. We've engaged a lot with fans during this process and are continuing to do that now, and their feedback has been really helpful in shaping our vision for the new stadium.

What do you hope the East Bank looks like in five years? The future of the East Bank makes me so excited for Nashville. I love that we'll have large, beautiful parks, especially on the riverfront. I love the idea that the former stadium site

will be used for transportation. From everything I've seen, I think the East Bank will be a place where everyone in Nashville will want to spend time. We've said before that we want the area around the stadium to feel like a neighborhood with a stadium in it, and not a stadium with a neighborhood built around it, and we look forward to being partners in that vision.

Initial renderings for a proposed Tennessee Titans stadium show outdoor terraces.

What was the most important thing to you during this process? The most important thing to me during the process was finding a long-term answer, and not dedicate resources to a short-term one that we'd just have to address again in a few years.

Was there something you did compromise on? All of the groups involved — the mayor's office, the state of Tennessee and so many others — were such great partners through this whole process. Negotiating a 30-year agreement takes a lot of time, and there was compromise during negotiation from everyone. I'm so glad we landed on a solution that resulted in a win for all involved.

How do you see your job differently now? Did the process reveal anything or teach you anything new about the Titans' business? I'm focused on helping our football team and organization perform at our best, and that will never change. That's the great thing about our mission statement, "Win, Serve, Entertain," because it's our North Star regardless of what's right in front of us at the time. Stadium construction is new to most of us in the organization, but we have a great team of people with a lot of experience working to make sure we get it right.

What lesson from your dad [Bud Adams, the team's late founder] stuck with you throughout this process? My dad loved this city, and I thought about him often throughout this process. I know he would be proud to know the team he

founded so many years ago will be a part of this community for decades to come. I want to honor his legacy and make this city proud.

What does it mean to you to be a female owner in the NFL, and how have you navigated that space? I talk with other female owners about how it would be amazing one day to have two female NFL owners playing against each other in the Super Bowl. At the end of the day, it's the same for any team owner, male or female — we just want to beat each other. It's important to me to support other women who are interested in getting involved in the NFL. We started the Amy Adams Strunk Women in Football internship a few years back, which is a program aimed at recruiting more women in sports operations roles. Our first two interns were so outstanding that we extended their time with us, then we eventually hired Mical Johnson full-time as a scouting assistant. We've also grown girls flag football here in several counties around Middle Tennessee, and this year the athletes from [Metro Nashville Public Schools] participated in a panel where they got to talk directly with some of our female leaders about different career paths in sports. We have nine women in vice president roles in our organization across a variety of departments, and I'm very proud of our progress in that area.

At what point did you feel the most confident in the deal? When were you most worried? Getting to a final agreement was a long, diligent process, but it needed to be to make sure we came to the right solution. We certainly encountered challenges along the way, but everyone involved recognized that old deal didn't make sense anymore and that we needed a new, long-term deal that made sense for all parties.

If you encounter a skeptic of the stadium, what is your message to them? I'm looking forward to making them proud of how we serve this community over the next 30 years and beyond. Again, this has always been bigger than just building a stadium. The new agreement secures our home in

Nashville for the next several decades, and we take that commitment very seriously. We understand we have a platform here, and we're going to use it to make our community a better place and we're all partners in that.

###

THE STORY BEHIND THE TITANS UNVEILING OILERS THROWBACK UNIFORMS

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JULY 23, 2023

NASHVILLE – "Oilers history is Titans history."

Those are the words of Titans controlling owner Amy Adams Strunk from a year ago, when the organization was exploring the possibility of wearing Oilers throwback uniforms, with the classic oil derrick logo on the helmets.

The possibility has turned into reality, and now fans of the organization can see them for themselves.

The Titans will wear the same uniforms the Houston Oilers wore for nearly two decades in Houston, until 1998, when the franchise also wore them as the Tennessee Oilers. The uniforms represent the longest span of Oilers uniforms in franchise history, and arguably the most beloved uniform.

The uniforms will pay homage to the Luv Ya' Blue era.

"It allows us to honor as many players as we can, because it covers so much time," said Surf Melendez, Vice President and Executive Creative Director for the Titans. "It also represented our transition to Tennessee, because we wore these uniforms in Tennessee as well."

The Titans will wear the uniforms in two games this fall, both at home. The organization inquired about wearing them for a road game in Miami as well, but it doesn't appear that will come to fruition.

The light blue Oilers throwbacks will replace the light blue "Titans" jerseys as the third jersey, joining the navy and the white uniforms.

Amy Adams Strunk said last year the team wanted to continue paying homage to the franchise's history. The organization has honored Houston Oilers players at alumni events in years past, and a number of Oilers are in the franchise's Ring of Honor.

The Oilers left Houston for Tennessee after the 1996 season and played a year in Memphis, in 1997, before playing in Nashville at Vanderbilt Stadium in 1998. The Tennessee Oilers became the Tennessee Titans in time for the 1999 season.

"Oilers history is Titans history," Strunk said last year. "We know our fans feel passionately about showcasing that legacy on game day, and we're actively working on making throwback jerseys possible in the near future. Stay tuned!"

Those who stay tuned will see this:

- "Columbia Blue" jerseys with red around white on the numbers, and names on the back, with a red, white and light blue band on the sleeves.

- White helmets, with the famed oil derrick, with red facemasks and red stripes outside of a thicker light blue stripe on the top.

- White pants, or britches, with red stripes on each side of a thicker light blue stripe down the side.

- Red and white stripes on light blue and white socks.

The words 'Luv Ya Blue' will be on the back neckline of the jerseys.

Players will have the option of wearing red sleeves, red gloves, and red cleats to add to the look.

Current Titans Derrick Henry, safety Kevin Byard, defensive lineman Jeffery Simmons and quarterback Ryan Tannehill have already worn them – they took part in a photo shoot earlier this offseason.

"They loved them," Melendez said of the current Titans. "They really loved them."

Former Oilers have also seen them – Warren Moon, Robert Brazile and Elvin Bethea were given a sneak peek when they were in Nashville for an alumni event last year.

"They looooooved them, and it took them back," Melendez said of the former Oilers. "The guys who wore the uniform, it took them back. And they were able to speak to the significance of wearing that uniform. This was an original AFL team, so there's a rich tradition there and now people are going to see this, and they are going to be reminded of this rich history."

Melendez knows fans are excited. The team has had Oilers merchandise available for two seasons and there has been an increased demand over the years.

Oilers jerseys are now on sale, and new merchandise will be available in the team store at Nissan Stadium.

"Amy is passionate about this, and we are lucky," Melendez said. "She loves Nashville, she loves Houston, and she loves those people. She lived it, and she's passionate about the Oilers history."

###

'EVERY DETAIL MATTERS': HOW AMY ADAMS STRUNK REINVENTED THE TENNESSEE TITANS

**BY DENNIS FERRIER
FOX 17
FEBRUARY 1, 2022**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (WZTV) — When we think of what makes a pro football team great, we always talk about star players and coaches. But when it comes to the Tennessee Titans and their remarkable six-year streak of excellence, you have to leave the field to understand what has happened here.

It's 2015. The Tennessee Titans are the worst team in football. Their organization is small and, let's be nice here, not admired.

In walks Amy Adams Strunk—a woman with no experience in the NFL. The daughter of an eccentric billionaire. What are the chances she would be anything but more of the same old, same old?

"She took the first six months that she was in charge and just stayed in the back," said Titans announcer Mike Keith. "She wouldn't do interviews. She didn't get out in front with anything. She wanted to learn as much as she possibly could."

When she was ready, it was nothing short of a reinvention of the entire organization.

"Strip it down, challenge everything we value that just overhauled the culture both on the football team and on the business side of the organization," said Titans president Burke Nihill.

Nihill was one of her outside-of-the-box hires. A lawyer in retail and tech with no NFL background.

"I do think that professional sports lends itself to a wash, rinse, repeat cycle," said Nihill. "Every season you can kind of do the same things for a while and get away with it.

And her mentality is 'Let's act like a start up, let's challenge everything, let's expect our best in every category of the business.'"

Although he won't take credit, Nihill was the one who decided to let Waverly High School play at Nissan Stadium after devastated floods gripped the community. That was a decision beyond inconvenient—a bold, impulsive act of service.

"When do we do it, it's the weekend after the first game," Keith said. "We played the home opener, we are going to Seattle the next weekend so everybody is going to travel. You've got the home opener and then you are going to the west coast and the organization does this on that Thursday night, Waverly is playing at Nissan stadium and we are going to make it happen. And I don't know anybody in the organization that just didn't pitch it. It was just one of the proudest moments that I've ever had of this entire organization."

Keep in mind this would have been unthinkable in the old days, you would have been laughed right out of the meeting.

"The service piece is really what has increasingly defined the people who work in this organization," said Nihill. "It's our heartbeat. It may sound cheesy, but the people who have come to our doors for whatever reason, it matters to them on a deeper level. We have paid a lot more attention to how we can leverage our platform, our resources to make Nashville a better place to live," said Nihill.

There's a famous story told around here. At a big staff meeting, Amy Adams Strunk said, "We have ugly tickets, and we will never go to the Super Bowl with ugly tickets." It was dead quiet in the room, maybe some skepticism. But now they believe everything matters.

Of course, none of it matters if you don't win football games. If you lose, you are viewed as a failure whatever you do for the community.

That might not be fair, but it is an ugly truth.

Adams' first big hire was General Manager John Robinson. You know the winning streak started the same day as that hire.

And while it's pretty obvious he is a good judge of football players, their potential, what they have left in the tank, their value as a piece of the puzzle. What you don't know is his complete buy-in to the Titans culture.

"Everything matters, it's one of our mantras: everything matters," said Nihill. "Every bit of design around the stadium, our tickets, every detail matters. It also carries over to the football team. I have watched him walk around our practice field and pick up little pieces of athletic tape to make it so everything about everything we do is first class."

Even with the crushing loss to the Bengals. Even with a Super Bowl goal defeated for another year. The Titans will be back. Because it's just what they do.

"I tell people all the time, these are the good old days," added Keith. "Enjoy this because what you are seeing on and off the field from our organization, this is the best we have ever been in 23 years."

###

MEET BILLIONAIRE TENNESSEE TITANS OWNER AMY ADAMS STRUNK—AND NINE OTHER WOMEN CHANGING THE GAME IN THE NFL

**BY AMY FELDMAN
FORBES
SEPTEMBER 23, 2022**

Most female owners inherit a team from a father, husband or brother. Now some are buying their way into football. The Titans' titan goes deep on what it all means for the league.

Before the Tennessee Titans kicked off their NFL season with a home game against the New York Giants on September 11, team owner Amy Adams Strunk spent nearly two hours with tailgaters outside Nashville's Nissan Stadium. "Omigod, it's her," one young woman shouted, before asking for the requisite photos.

The fans, Adams Strunk says, are her favorite part of owning the team, which her late father Bud Adams founded (as the Houston Oilers in 1960) and of which she has been the controlling shareholder since 2015. "Our fans, to me, are not a statistic," she says. "I'm going to be the owner that comes up to you and thanks you."

At 66, Adams Strunk is worth \$1.6 billion from her 50% stake in the Titans and is one of a growing number of women who own NFL teams: 18 of the league's 32 franchises are at least partially female-owned, with 10 listing women as majority owners or co-owners. Most inherited teams from their fathers, brothers or husbands—or, like the Buffalo Bills' Kim Pegula and the Cleveland Browns' Dee Haslam, bought into them with their husbands.

But there are signs of change—this summer, Ariel Investments' Melody Hobson bought a 5.5% stake in the Denver Broncos for

\$245 million as part of the Waltons' ownership group that also brought in Carrie Walton Penner, granddaughter of Walmart founder Sam Walton, with a 30% stake.

"Fifty percent of our fans are women," says Adams Strunk, who is known as "Mom" to the Titans' faithful. "Even though we've never played the game, that doesn't mean we don't know the game. And we have some unique perspectives on reaching women that we can bring to the table."

While some female owners who inherited NFL teams are hands-off, Adams Strunk not only runs the Titans but has also delivered a stunning turnaround. Since 2016, the squad has had six winning seasons. More important, she helped bring the NFL draft to Nashville three years ago and has high hopes for the city to host a Super Bowl.

It's a vision her father could not have foreseen. Bud Adams, who died in 2013 at age 90, was a legend in professional football. A member of the Cherokee nation who made his fortune in oil, he was instrumental in founding the American Football League and started the Oilers for just \$25,000. In 1997, when Houston wouldn't pony up cash to replace the aging Astrodome, he relocated the team to Nashville and its new 69,000-seat stadium.

"It was a game-changing moment for this city," recalls Butch Spyridon, CEO of the Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp. "It shocked the entire sports world, and Nashville started to believe in itself a little more."

But Bud Adams' death also led to a leadership struggle for the Titans as the team's losses piled up. Its ownership was split between his two daughters, Adams Strunk and Susie Adams Smith, and the wife and children of their brother, Kenneth Adams III, who died of suicide at 29 in 1987.

After a family scrum—which saw the ousting of her brother-in-law as CEO—Adams Strunk and her nephews wrested control of the team in 2015. "It was a hard decision," she says, "but my dad's legacy was very important to me and the boys."

Adams Strunk had grown up in football, but her father had never wanted his daughters working for the team. She had spent time as owner of a few of the family's car dealerships and oil interests, and raising horses (she still has a few dozen on the family ranch in Texas, along with plenty of rescue dogs). "I never thought—ever—that I would be running the football team," she says.

After she took over the Titans, she worked closely with her nephew, Kenneth Adams IV, who had worked for the team under her father since 2007, as well as with Steve Underwood, who she brought back from retirement as the team's top executive. Kenneth Adams, who is 38 and a Titans board member, says that having his aunt and other female owners running NFL teams makes a difference: "I think it's good for the NFL and we need it. It was a long time coming."

Adams Strunk brought in a new general manager, Jon Robinson, who was blunt about the team's problems on the field, and spent money on new facilities (including a new indoor training center) and new uniforms. "When you know you need to fix something you want someone telling you the brutal honest truth," Adams Strunk says. "Nothing is going to get solved if you don't know what needs to be done."

The willingness to spend money differentiated Adams Strunk from her frugal father. And while she could be tough when fixing problems, Jevon Kearse, the Titans' former defensive end, says it is her warmth that makes her a different kind of owner. "She's one of the first people to come up and give me a hug," he says. "Some of the owners come around for the

money. She gives it a little bit more love.”

And all of that love has paid off. The value of the Titans’ has more than doubled since 2015, to \$3.5 billion from \$1.5 billion, as revenue reached \$481 million, according to Forbes’ estimates. Even so, with the average NFL team now worth \$4.5 billion and the Dallas Cowboys reaching a record \$8 billion this year, the Titans remain No. 27 (of 32) on the list of most valuable NFL franchises.

Adams Strunk credits her success to having no preconceived notions about how to run a team. “Just because something has been done a certain way forever doesn’t make it the right way anymore,” she says, adding that it’s often easier to come in with big ideas as an outsider. “We talk a lot about being a 60-year-old startup,” says the team’s CEO, Burke Nihill, who took over two years ago. “Amy has encouraged us to challenge everything.”

Next up is the issue that vexed her father: a new stadium. While it is expected to cost more than \$2 billion and the city has yet to sign off amid questions over taxpayer funding, Forbes has estimated that it could increase the Titans’ value by \$300 million. To pay for their share of the new stadium—the team ownership and an NFL loan are expected to cover at least \$700 million—the family will sell some of its other assets. Adams Strunk believes a new stadium, which would be fully enclosed, could host not only the Titans but also concerts and, yes, that big game with the \$7 million commercials.

Super Bowl aside, Adams Strunk thinks her father would be a fan of the job she’s done. “I think if he was looking down now,” she says, “he’d be super proud.”

###

TITANS ROOKIE MADE IT TO THE NFL THE HARD WAY (AND HE'S JUST GETTING WARMED UP)

BY JUSTIN MELO
TITAN SIZED
JULY 23, 2025

Making it to the NFL is a longshot. Making it to the NFL when you hail from Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada is borderline statistically impossible. Rookie wide receiver Elic Ayomanor defied those odds when the Tennessee Titans drafted him with a fourth-round selection in April. Despite his background, it wasn't a massive surprise. In fact, Ayomanor was considered a potential second-round pick who slid further than expected.

Ayomanor's origin story tells the unlikely tale of a kid from Medicine Hat, a town roughly 90 miles north of the Canadian border, who faced an uphill battle. Research indicates Ayomanor is just the second Medicine Hat native to go pro in the NFL. Offensive tackle Daniel Federkeil played four NFL seasons with the Indianapolis Colts after going undrafted in 2006, even winning a Super Bowl. Federkeil went on to enjoy a lengthier stint in the Canadian Football League (CFL) with the Calgary Stampeders.

It was Justin Dillon, owner of 730 Scouting, who first discovered Ayomanor's budding talents. Dillon runs a Canadian-based scouting service that succeeds in getting Canadian-born players to U.S. programs. He relies on "spotters" in every major Canadian province to initially place prospects on his radar.

Dillon has played a sizable role in ensuring Canadian talents don't go unnoticed across the border. His resume is star-studded, including Josh Palmer, Chase Brown, Sydney Brown, Nathan Shepherd, Isaiah Adams (Arizona Cardinals, 2024 third-round pick), and dozens more.

Academics, character, and skill are some must-have traits Dillon looks for. Ayomanor popped immediately.

Ayomanor is Dillon's latest success story.

Dillon and Ayomanor recently spoke exclusively with Titan Sized to detail the initial scouting process, the adversities encountered when making the move from Canada to the U.S., and more.

This is the Elic Ayomanor story.

"I knew right away"

"When I was first introduced to Justin [Dillon], I was told he'd help get me in front of U.S. coaches," Ayomanor exclusively told Titan Sized. "It was an opportunity to be seen by D-I coaches. I didn't need to hear much more than that. Because I was so young, the conversations with Justin were being spearheaded by my mom [Pam Weiterman] to fully understand the process."

"Elic Ayomanor was as impressive as any Canadian kid I've ever scouted," Dillon told Titan Sized. "There's been a handful of times where I watched a few plays on film and knew right away. I didn't need to watch the entire film. I was a handful of plays in and I already knew he would acclimate to the U.S. game."

Canadian high-school football follows CFL rules — including 12 men on the field, three downs (instead of four), larger goalposts, and other notable differences. For Dillon, it's crucial to evaluate certain traits that indicate a seamless transition could be made to the U.S.

"I've had great success with wide receivers," Dillon said. "I worked with Josh Palmer and Jared Wayne (2023 Houston Texans undrafted free agent). You have to look for movement skills, whether or not he's a natural hands catcher. Speed is the key. The U.S. game loves speed. Is he shifty in space? It's a long checklist. Elic Ayomanor checked every box."

"Like most Canadians, I started playing hockey and basketball and running track at a young age,"

Ayomanor told me during a previous conversation. "At some point, one of my best friends introduced me to football. The more I played football, the more I fell in love with its intricacies."

Though Ayomanor possessed the profile of a moldable talent from a young age, naturally, there were areas of his game that required sharpening and attention to detail. Lacking the resources of a U.S.-born prospect, Ayomanor was particularly raw as a route runner. Dillon compared him to Palmer, who he called "the best Canadian Football player I've ever seen." Palmer, a 2021 third-round pick, has produced 2,287 receiving yards in four seasons, and recently signed a lucrative contract with the Super Bowl-contending Buffalo Bills.

Ayomanor wasn't initially on Palmer's level, but Dillon saw the potential.

"Elic Ayomanor was as raw as raw gets, but the athletic ability was there"

"The biggest knock on Canadians is they don't run good routes," Dillon noted. "It's not their fault. They're not taught the nuance of running complete routes at a young age. Elic Ayomanor was raw as raw gets, but the athletic ability, the speed, it was way above average, even at that age. You saw burst and explosiveness. You could already see his ability to make people miss in a phone booth."

Realizing that Ayomanor, who paired athleticism with character, could play in the U.S., Dillon played a role in getting him to the The Peddie School in New Jersey, a college preparatory school located in Hightstown, Mercer County, which was coached by former Northwestern quarterback Chris Malleo at the time.

Ayomanor displayed the necessary motivation when he made his big move at just 14 years old. "He was hungry," Dillon said. "He was locked in and 100% willing to make the sacrifices."

"At that point, I was just hungry for the opportunity," Ayomanor added. "I grew up watching these videos of American football, kids who went D-I and stuff like that. To me, I felt like it was my time, my opportunity to shine. I didn't think twice about it. I wanted to make the move. I didn't even see it as a sacrifice, to be honest with you. I saw it as an opportunity I was blessed to have."

"I sent his film to every prep school," Dillon added. "It came down to Deerfield Academy and Peddie. He chose Peddie because they were one of the top [prep] programs at the time."

"My goal was to someday play in the NFL"

"The day that I decided to move to New Jersey for my sophomore year was the day that I began taking football very seriously as my future goal," Ayomanor said. "Right then and there, my goal was to someday play in the NFL."

Ayomanor quickly realized the roadblocks ahead. Known as a big-time prospect back in Canada, he joined a top-notch program at Peddie that would eventually produce D-I athletes at every position. Ayomanor had to technically refine the rougher edges of his game to fit in appropriately. Dillon encouraged the staff at Peddie to take a patient approach with his development. It paid off. Despite the challenges and competition, he got off to a good start as a sophomore before breaking his collarbone.

"That first year was especially hard for me," Ayomanor said. "I was used to being the best player on every team I'd ever played on. When I got to Peddie, I was easily the worst player on the team in my opinion. We had 26 guys on the team and all of them went D-I. At that point, I was the worst player there. It was a shock to the system. I also dealt with the culture shock of moving from Canada to the U.S. That was a tough year. I needed to get better in a lot of

areas. I put my head down and went to work."

The following year, fresh off an injury, Ayomanor decided to reopen his recruiting when Coach Malleo left Peddie. As fate would have it, he chose Deerfield, the top contender when he initially committed to Peddie. Coach Brian Barbato would be key to Ayomanor's development, but new challenges would present themselves. His junior season was canceled due to COVID, and his senior season was shortened because of a knee injury.

Ayomanor had to get creative.

"The phone wouldn't stop ringing"

"Together, Elic Ayomanor, myself, and Coach Brian Barbato put together a route tree video," Dillon said. "That route tree video went viral within the coaching community. We didn't put it out publicly. Coach Barbato and I tapped into our contacts. We sent it everywhere. The phone started ringing right away."

"It was a compilation video of me running routes versus open air, or against one of our defensive backs who had a bunch of D-I offers at the time," Ayomanor added. "We posted it on social media and tagged a bunch of people. I think my mom tagged every D-I coach (laughs). I started getting offers out of nowhere. My stock exploded."

The offers began rolling in for a Canadian-born prospect who played nine high school games in the U.S. Athleticism, size, and speed were evident on tape. Ayomanor received offers from the likes of Notre Dame, Tennessee, Duke, Kentucky, Virginia, Ole Miss, Cal, Penn State, and others.

"They saw what I had been seeing for a long time," Dillon said. "It felt like the offers would keep rolling in forever."

A dream realized

Ayomanor took multiple recruiting visits, to Cal, Tennessee, and Duke,

among others, but had his sights set on a specific program dating back to being a bug-eyed kid dreaming about his NFL prospects.

"The first time I ever spoke with Elic and his mom [Pam Weiterman], they expressed their interest in attending Stanford," Dillon recalled. "At the time, I had a Canadian at Stanford by the name of Wesley Annan. I always remember that. They wanted Stanford from the beginning."

A past relationship paid off. Dillon's first-ever client was Tevaun Smith, who attended Iowa under wide receivers coach Bobby Kennedy (Smith would go on to play professional football both in the NFL and CFL). As fortune had it, Coach Kennedy landed at Stanford at the opportune time.

"I sent Coach Kennedy Elic's tape, including that route tree video. My phone pinged two minutes later (laughs). Who the hell is this kid? That's Elic Ayomanor, a top wide receiver."

When preparation meets talent

"When I moved to the U.S. and figured out what college football was all about, I immediately made Stanford my goal," Ayomanor added. "My mom was big on academics. I wanted to pair academics with athletics. To me, Stanford and Notre Dame are the premier programs in the nation when it comes to that. I got offers from both of them, but Stanford was my dream school."

Ayomanor lived out his dream, choosing Stanford out of the mass list of potential suitors. Despite taking another step in his illustrious journey, adversity just wouldn't stop rearing its head for Ayomanor. He suffered a severe knee injury — tearing his ACL, MCL and meniscus — before his freshman season of 2022, forcing a redshirt year.

As per usual, Ayomanor overcame that adversity. Across the next two campaigns, he'd establish himself as one of the most productive, reliable

wideouts in college football. Ayomanor recorded a combined 125 receptions for 1,844 yards and 12 touchdowns in 2023 and 2024 before announcing his intention to enter the 2025 NFL Draft.

"Everything came together for me at Stanford, but a lot of preparation went into that success," Ayomanor added.

The Titans selected him with the 136th selection and he's heading into training camp in a unique situation for a fourth-round pick. Ayomanor possesses a realistic path to a starting role, with the Titans searching for someone to play the "X" position in Brian Callahan's offense for No. 1 overall quarterback Cam Ward.

From 2020 to 2024, a total of 79 wide receivers were selected on Day 3 of the NFL Draft. Only six of them surpassed 500 receiving yards in their rookie campaign. Ayomanor's potential path to meaningful snaps could make him the seventh.

"I can play every wide receiver position, but I'm definitely a bigger guy," Ayomanor said about playing X receiver. "I'm very fluid in and out of my breaks. I think I can play in the slot if that's what I'm asked to do, but I definitely have the size and traits to play X receiver."

Ayomanor is prepared for the challenges ahead. He's no stranger to adversity. Work ethic and sheer determination took Ayomanor from Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada to two decorated prep programs before Stanford. Now in Tennessee with the Titans, he'll continue attacking the process with the same will and vigor.

"I'm going to keep the same habits that got me here," Ayomanor concluded. "I'm going to do what I know, and that's working hard. I respect the process. That's what I'm going to do throughout my entire career."

###

'WE KNEW HE WAS GOING TO BE SPECIAL': DEERFIELD ACADEMY ALUM ELIC AYOMANOR SET TO HEAR HIS NAME CALLED DURING 2025 NFL DRAFT

**BY THOMAS JOHNSTON
GREENFIELD RECORDER
APRIL 24, 2025**

The Deerfield Academy football program has turned into a power under Brian Barbato, sending numerous players to compete at the Division I level.

Now, those players are starting to get looks at the highest level of football.

For the second time in four years, a Deerfield Academy alum is expected to have his name called during the NFL Draft, which begins Thursday in Green Bay and runs through the weekend.

DA alum Hunter Long was selected in the third round of the 2021 draft, and this year, former Big Green player Elic Ayomanor is next in line to be selected into the league.

Ayomanor, who plays wide receiver at Stanford, spent his final two years of high school at Deerfield, graduating in 2022. He's expected to hear his name called at some point over next few days.

"It's always so cool to be part of their journeys," Barbato said. "Whether they end up in the NFL or the Ivy League, however their story goes, it's just great to see kids from DA reach the highest levels."

It wasn't the easiest of journeys that led Ayomanor to the Div. I level.

Ayomanor grew up in Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada and began playing football when he was 13 years old. After playing well for Team Alberta in the U16 Western Regional Challenge, he made his way to America, joining The Peddie School in New Jersey.

"I saw right away that he was a baller," Kwame Osei, who helped train Ayomanor in Canada, told ESPN in a story that ran last month. "He was faster than the other kids, he had soft hands, jumped out of the gym. He just looked the part.

"Everything I taught him, he really soaked in, and just asked the next question," Osei continued. "... What sets the good from the great apart is the appetite to learn more."

After an injury that cut his season short, Ayomanor came to Deerfield to play for the Big Green. His junior season was a wash due to COVID-19, as Deerfield had to wait a year to see his talent on the field.

During his brief tenure, he was everything he was hyped up to be. Ayomanor had a big game in the season opener against Lawrence Academy, but after scoring a pair of touchdowns against Williston in the Big Green's second game of the season, went down with a torn PCL that ended his season.

In all, he played just nine games in three years at the U.S. high school level and just over six quarters of football with DA. Still, Barbato knew the kind of talent he had, not just the physical talent but the mental makeup always pushing to be great.

"We knew he was going to be special," Barbato said. "He did some great things and did them consistently. He's fluid and has a skill set that he has continued to lean into, work on and develop. Deerfield is between a rock and a river and it's a slice of heaven here. This was his studio to work and improve. He spent countless hours on the field, on the turf, with our jugs machine, playing basketball, doing all the things you need to do to get better. This didn't happen by accident. He wants to be great. Talent is just one piece of that."

Despite his limited time on the field, Ayomanor had plenty of interest at the college level thanks to his natural talent. A 3-star recruit, 247Sports listed Ayomanor as

holding 26 offers out of high school, including from Power Four programs Stanford, Cal, Notre Dame, Tennessee, Vanderbilt, Arizona, Boston College, Duke, Iowa, Kentucky, Ole Miss, Penn State, Virginia and West Virginia.

Barbato noted that David Shaw — Stanford's head coach at the time — wanted Ayomanor to come out to a camp to see him in person before giving him a scholarship offer.

Already holding numerous offers, Ayomanor didn't hesitate. He went to California and played well, earning the scholarship offer. He ultimately chose to attend Stanford.

"Stanford wanted him to go to their camp and he said 'I'll go earn the scholarship,'" Barbato said. "Most guys would take it as an insult but he didn't. I laugh when NFL scouts call and ask about him. I tell them if you like his measurables, just wait until you meet him and see what kind of person he is."

After redshirting his first year due to injury, Ayomanor broke onto the scene by catching 62 passes for 1,013 yards and six touchdowns as a redshirt freshman in 2023. He became a household name after he went off for 13 catches, 294 yards and three touchdowns in a primetime victory against future Heisman Trophy winner Travis Hunter and the Colorado Buffaloes. Stanford won the game, 46-43, in double OT after trailing 29-0 at halftime.

That performance on the national stage made him a household name in college football, though Barbato wasn't surprised at all to see his pupil rise to the occasion.

"I would say it was such a cool, unbelievable thing to see but it was also very believable," Barbato said. "Those who know him knew he had this in him. There was no doubt in our minds that he had greatness in him. To see it happen overnight on a national scale, it really was unbelievable but believable. He's destined for big things."

His numbers took a bit of a step back in 2024, as he hauled in 62 passes for 831 yards and six touchdowns on a struggling Cardinal offense. He declared for the draft as a 21-year-old redshirt sophomore.

Ayomanor measured in at 6-foot-2, 206 pounds at the NFL Scouting Combine in February, running a 4.44-second 40-yard dash. He hit 38½ inches in the vertical jump and measured a 10 foot, 7 inch leap in the broad jump, showcasing the athleticism that made him a star athlete on the track growing up.

“We would show up to colleges and beforehand, coaches would ask how tall he was,” Barbato said. “It’s amazing how many guys saw him in person and were in awe. In a day and age of underdelivering, he always overdelivers. He says he’s 6-foot-2 and he’s 6-foot-2 and a bit. He says he’s going to run a 4.5 and he runs a 4.44. He just always overdelivers. You see so many kids who say they’re 6-2 and you find out they’re really 6-1. Coaches anticipate that stuff with this generation. Not Elic. He overdelivers every single time.”

Ayomanor still keeps in contact with his coaches and some faculty at Deerfield. Barbato said everyone on campus has been impressed with his mindset and professionalism.

“He could have been an Olympic-level decathlete or sprinter,” Barbato said. “He developed a friendship with the head of our history department and they still talk and swap books to read on a regular basis. He was training for the Combine and she’s telling him about a book he needs to read and he goes down to the library to read it.

“It’s humbling knowing he has this thirst for knowledge. When you talk about transitioning to the NFL, it’s those things that make him such a good choice.”

It’s those type of intangibles that Barbato said makes him such a strong NFL prospect.

“He impacted this community and my family,” Barbato said. “My kids

are always talking about Elic. He set a high bar here. The touchdown catches, the big plays, they’re all important. Where these kids go and how they impact the community they’re in are more important. That’s something that Elic epitomized. The character he has, who is in the classroom... people loved teaching him. He’s a sponge for information.”

Where will Ayomanor get selected? NFL.com has him projected to go in either the third or fourth round, while ESPN’s Mel Kiper has him as his 79th ranked player overall in the draft. The Athletic’s Dane Brugler has Ayomanor as his 89th ranked player so expect him to hear his name called Friday night during the second and third round of the draft, or early on Saturday when the fourth round kicks off.

No matter where he ends up, Barbato is confident he’ll find success.

“I’d love to see him here with the Patriots,” Barbato said. “No matter where he goes, he’s going to do big things.”

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NFL DRAFT: INSIDE ELIC AYOMANOR'S VIRAL NIGHT, JOURNEY FROM CANADA

BY ADAM RITTENBERG
ESPN.COM
MARCH 28, 2025

Just about everyone in Elic Ayomanor's life remembers where they were on the night of Oct. 13, 2023.

The wide receiver from Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada -- now an NFL draft prospect -- had waited more than a year for his breakthrough at Stanford. That night, he would face Colorado and Travis Hunter, the two-way star who would win the Heisman Trophy the following season.

At halftime, Stanford trailed 29-0 and Ayomanor had zero receptions. Then, something magical happened. After Stanford got on the board and forced a Colorado punt, Ayomanor caught a quick in-route, cut upfield and ran 97 yards for a touchdown. Following another Colorado punt, Ayomanor caught a back-shoulder pass in front of a bewildered Hunter and sliced across the field for a 60-yard score.

The ball kept going to Ayomanor, and Stanford kept scoring. The Cardinal sent the game to overtime, then extended it after Ayomanor's 30-yard touchdown. Stanford prevailed 46-43 in the second overtime, completing the largest comeback in team history.

Ayomanor's final stat line: 13 receptions, 294 yards, three touchdowns. He set a Stanford single-game receiving yards record and came within 51 yards of the Pac-12 mark.

"I remember being really tired because of the altitude," Ayomanor told ESPN. "Like, after every single play, I'm coming back to the sideline and I'm like, 'Where's the oxygen? Whoever has the oxygen, let me know right now, because I need it.'"

The performance reached the group of people who helped Ayomanor get to the big stage.

Kwame Osei, who helped train Ayomanor in Canada, watched the game from a bar at the Las Vegas airport.

"I literally got up, I'm screaming, I'm cheering," Osei said. "I was filled with joy. I had tears in my eyes, just because I knew that this is it, this is the moment that's going to set him up for the next stage."

Justin Dillon, the scout who had helped recruit Ayomanor to the U.S., watched in an Ontario bar that became glued to an American college football game.

"The majority of these people, they didn't understand," Dillon said. "I kept saying, 'He's doing this against [who] they say is the best athlete in the NCAA.'"

This was the culmination of an odyssey that began in a place where hockey rules. It continued with Canadian All-Star teams and prep schools in New Jersey and Massachusetts and, finally, Stanford.

Canada has produced NFL players before. Thirty players from Canada appeared in an NFL game last season. Recent draft picks include John Metchie III, Chase and Sydney Brown, Chuba Hubbard, Jevon Holland and Chase Claypool. In the Canadian Football League, Doug Flutie won league MVP multiple times and parlayed it into an NFL career. But those around Ayomanor, a potential Day 2 pick next month, think he has a chance to be special - and help pave the path for those after him.

"Elic can be the face for football in Canada," Dillon said.

Although Ayomanor's mother, Pam Weiterman, didn't push her kids into sports, she encouraged them, with a caveat: If you start an activity, you need to finish it. Elic cried through his first time in hockey because he

hated skating. He switched to football at 13 and was hooked.

Osei, a former CFL player who has coached at multiple levels in Canada, first heard about Ayomanor while coaching receivers for Football Alberta's under-16 team in 2018. When he arrived in Edmonton for training, everyone was buzzing about the receiver from Medicine Hat.

"I saw right away that he was a baller," Osei said. "He was faster than the other kids, he had soft hands, jumped out of the gym. He just looked the part."

Ayomanor (10) took part in all-star events in Canada before coming to the United States. Pam Weiterman

Ayomanor's inquisitiveness convinced Osei he could have a different type of trajectory.

"Everything I taught him, he really soaked in, and just asked the next question," Osei said. "... What sets the good from the great apart is the appetite to learn more."

Ayomanor shined as Team Alberta won the Western Challenge, a competition against teams from other provinces, scoring three touchdowns in the third quarter of the championship against Manitoba. Osei pulled Ayomanor aside afterward, and Ayomanor told him he wanted to play in the NFL. When Osei told Ayomanor that it could mean finishing high school in the U.S. to generate recruiting attention, the 15-year-old didn't flinch.

"Our country is hockey," Dillon said. "The best football players play in the U.S., and they have schools out there that are good academic schools that will facilitate international kids. So why are we not using this to help and make it easier for NCAA schools to recruit you?"

Weierman didn't know anything about the path to major American college football or the NFL. Osei contacted Dillon, whose 730 Scouting service helps place top

Canadian players with U.S. high schools. A week after the Western Challenge, Dillon called Weiterman and made his case.

The opposing argument came via a "six-page email" Weiterman received from members of the Alberta football community outlining why Ayomanor should stay in Canada. Promising Canadian players had moved directly from their home country to major college programs.

"I've been telling him for years to think outside the box," Weiterman said of allowing her son to go to the U.S. "No parent wants to miss any years of their kid's life, but you will sacrifice that if it's for the betterment of that child. You want them to follow their dreams."

In 2019, then 16-year-old Ayomanor enrolled at The Peddie School in New Jersey, where Metchie played. Ayomanor played the first half of his sophomore season before breaking his collarbone. After a coaching change, he transferred to Deerfield Academy in western Massachusetts, another prep school. Then, COVID-19 wiped out his junior season.

He didn't let the time go to waste, though. He tried to master every receiver spot, even training with a 5-foot-8 teammate.

"That's extremely unusual for a high school kid to lean in and say, 'I want to do the things maybe I'm not as good at right now,'" Deerfield coach Brian Barbato said. "He's not just going to sit there and catch deep balls because that's what he does best. He was a sponge."

Ayomanor was set to play in 2021, but sustained a season-ending knee injury in Deerfield's second game. His American football odyssey had yielded nine games over three years.

"I had to go to a few camps and post some practice film," he said. "It was fun. I love competing, so I was super happy and eager to go wherever I had to go to compete and prove my worth."

Although Ayomanor lacked game film, he had a workout video where he looked the part of a Power 4 recruit.

Ayomanor had more than 20 offers by late spring of 2021, but he wanted to hear from his dream school: Stanford. Dillon reached out to Bobby Kennedy, then Stanford's wide receivers coach, who had coached Tevaun Smith, another of Dillon's Canadian prospects, while at Iowa. Kennedy said he started digging into Ayomanor's background and liked what he saw, even with limited film.

Kennedy wanted to extend an offer, but then-Stanford coach David Shaw required Ayomanor to attend the team's camp. Kennedy worried about whether a player with offers from Notre Dame, Tennessee and others would want to do that.

"He goes 'Coach, I'll come to camp. If that's what I need to earn a scholarship at Stanford, then I'll do it,'" Kennedy recalled.

About 10 minutes into Ayomanor's workout at Stanford, Shaw approached Kennedy with the scholarship green light.

His journey from Medicine Hat to major college football was complete, but the wait to showcase his talents would continue. He redshirted his freshman season in 2022 after tearing his meniscus, and began the fall of 2023 practicing with a brace on his knee.

It would come off the week of the Colorado game.

Weiterman usually watches Ayomanor's games alone. She gets too worked up.

By halftime of the Colorado game, she started getting ready for bed. She came downstairs in her pajamas for the third quarter and saw Ayomanor streaking across the TV. Her phone began blowing up with every big catch and touchdown.

She didn't get to bed until 4 a.m., after speaking with her son.

"I was just like, 'You showed them, Elic. This was your day, this was your time,'" Weiterman said. "And what better day? Like, prime time! It was in his cards, it had to be in his cards."

Ayomanor's breakout game lit a spark. Two weeks later, he had 146 receiving yards against Washington and, later in the season, put up 122 yards against No. 12 Oregon State and 116 against Notre Dame. He finished with 1,013 yards on 62 receptions, and earned honorable mention all-league honors. He received the Jon Cornish Trophy, given to the top Canadian college football player.

This past season, Ayomanor had similar numbers -- 63 receptions, 831 yards, six touchdowns -- and was a second-team All-ACC selection. Stanford once again missed the postseason, and after only 24 college games, he elected to enter the NFL draft.

"For me to decide to go to the NFL, it's similar to the reason why I left my hometown in the first place," he said. "I've always wanted to pursue more difficult and challenging environments, so I can grow faster."

The 6-foot-2 Ayomanor has spent the past few months immersed in NFL draft prep. He had solid numbers at the combine earlier this month, running a 4.44-second 40-yard dash and putting up a 38.5-inch vertical, which ranked seventh among all wideouts in the class. Scouts believe he has the ability to see early playing time as a rookie. In ESPN analyst Matt Miller's recent seven-round mock draft, Ayomanor was projected to the New England Patriots at No. 69 overall.

Wherever Ayomanor lands it will be the next mile marker on his journey and a destination many around him knew he was capable of.

As Dillon left the bar in Ontario well after midnight the night of the Colorado game, he thought to himself, "You're going to the NFL,

young man. You punched your
ticket."

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GRAVEL ROAD TO GREATNESS

BY DAVID KIEFER
GOSTANFORD.COM
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EACH WEEK DURING the football season, Elic Ayomanor is introduced in some way – to a television audience, in a game program, on a flipcard distributed in a press box.

He is a redshirt sophomore wide receiver from Stanford, and one of the best in college football. His major is computer science. And he's from Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada.

But where is someone from exactly? Is it their birthplace? The town where they grew up? Or is it the place they feel they belong?

Medicine Hat is Ayomanor's point of origin. It's where he grew up, where his mother raised him, where his dreams sprouted. But where does he belong? Maybe it's a remote farm on a gravel road, a prep school in the countryside, or a green swath 100 yards long under bright lights.

'Medicine Hat' is the simple answer. The long answer is not so simple

THE CLOUDS PASSED in front of Edmonton's high summer sun as Team Alberta, an all-star football team of 15- and 16-year-olds from the Canadian province, struggled in a tournament game. The special teams weren't helping and Kwame Osei, an assistant coach, found himself taking glances at his injured receiver.

Finally, a frustrated Osei couldn't help himself and asked Ayomanor, "Can you return kicks?"

Though he'd never done so on this team, Ayomanor replied "sure" without hesitation, and jogged onto the field.

"We were behind," Osei recalled. "I see this athlete right beside me and we're not using him ..."

Ayomanor caught the first punt at the 45-yard line, accelerated up the left sideline, cut inside a defender at the 25, broke a tackle at the 4, and kept his balance as he was knocked backward at the goal line. Touchdown.

Moments later, Ayomanor caught another punt, this time at his own 51 on Canada's 110-yard field. He found room again up the left side, stiff-armed a defender at the 10, and scored again. Later, he caught a touchdown pass as his team rallied to win. Ayomanor was named tournament MVP.

This was the validation Osei was looking for. As a 'spotter' for a service called 730 Scouting run by Justin Dillon, Osei kept an eye out for promising players from his province who had high goals in the game and would benefit from exposure in America.

Ayomanor made an impression on Osei with his great athletic ability, but what set him apart in Osei's mind was his inquisitiveness. "He seemed thirsty and hungry to know more about the game," Osei said.

In this instance, Ayomanor couldn't practice because of a hyperextended elbow, but remained engaged in everything around him, asking questions about alignments, positioning, game situations, and strategy. But game film was the catalyst.

Osei approached Elic afterward and asked what he wanted from football.

"To play in the NFL," he said.

"Then you need to go to the States," Osei replied.

Osei wanted that thought to marinate for a few days and, if truly interested, Elic could call back and bring his mother into the conversation.

Two days later, Ayomanor called. He was on board, but his mother was hesitant.

"I don't blame her," Osei said. "Single mom. This is her only son. He's young. Letting him go to America ... It was risky."

PAMELA WEITERMAN split from Elic's father when her son was an infant. A farm girl growing up, Weiterman settled in Medicine Hat, a small prairie city of 63,000 along the South Saskatchewan River. It's known as the "The Gas City," for its natural gas reserves, and "The Sunniest City in Canada," belying the fact that temperatures dip to minus-40 Fahrenheit during the winter. And it's a hockey town, home of the Medicine Hat Tigers, a major junior team in the Western Hockey League.

Pam has two kids, Elic and Jill, the oldest by seven years. She spent half the time with her father. Mostly, it was Pam and Elic, a name created as a compromise between each parent's choice, Alek and Eric.

"He really just had me," Pam said. "I was the mom and the dad."

She raised Elic with structure and rules and an uncompromising style. If you're going to run the race, you'd better run to win. If you're going to take a class, you'd better try to get an 'A.' Quitting? Don't even think about it.

While most kids in town start playing hockey at 3 or 4, Elic didn't show interest until he was 6, and begged to try out like his friends.

"I didn't even know how to skate yet," he said.

Predictably, it did not go well. Elic didn't want to play anymore and Pam was having none of it.

"Once you start something, you finish it," she said. So, Elic returned and, in one day, taught himself how to skate. That moment was a revelation.

"Something just clicked," he said. "It sparked a certain type of competitiveness. I just kept going. I learned to really love figuring out a way to get to where I wanted to be."

When things don't go quite right, Elic reminds himself of that time and where he came from.

"Our family name is Weiterman, and there's a certain characteristic that comes with being a Weiterman, a certain grit," he said. "You know that person's a Weiterman, for sure. And a Weiterman definitely does not quit on anything."

ACCORDING TO Google Maps, the drive from Medicine Hat to Kincaid, Saskatchewan, is 313 kilometers (194 miles) and takes 3 hours and 16 minutes.

"They don't know the backroads," he said. "It's more like 2 ½ if you know the right way."

Pavement is overrated in southern Saskatchewan. If you want to get anywhere, it's gravel you need to take.

Kincaid is a 'village' of 120. It has a grain elevator, indoor rink, school, store, and Bouvier's Berry Basket (open all summer). Three miles outside on, you guessed it, a gravel road, is the Weiterman homestead.

The property once spanned 2,560 acres and the farm ran 100-150 cattle. Crops rotated among barley, canola, durum, flax, hay, lentils, mustard, oats, peas, and wheat. There's a well, but the water is undrinkable. Drinking water is brought home in five-gallon jugs. And there is no wi-fi. Too expensive in the Rural Municipality of Pinto Creek No. 75.

This is the home of Jack and Theresa Weiterman, Elic's grandparents. They're retired now. The last cow has been sold, and they're down to 160 acres. But this is the destination for every major holiday, family gathering, and summer vacation.

"Kincaid is in the middle of nowhere," Elic said. "And they live even more in the middle of nowhere."

Elic learned to ride a bike there. He drove go-karts and quads. There were races of every sort and countless competitions among family. There is a massive egg hunt at Easter, and at Christmas every year, they rent the entire Kincaid rink for 100 friends and relatives, with skating, food, and gifts.

The family brand was the Flying J and during branding season, Elic helped tag calves and hold them down while their ears were clipped.

Elic witnessed the difficulties of calving season, when pregnant cows need to be checked frequently, including in the middle of the night in the coldest of winters. If a mother was in trouble, Jack would have to pull the calf out, sometimes even bottle feeding until they were strong enough to return to the mother, who sometimes would reject it.

"They were long days, but that was farm life," Pam said. "We grew up as strong kids because we worked. We really worked."

How strong? Pam was known for arm wrestling. Jack would think nothing of pitting shy 11-year-old Pam against his friends. And she would win.

Her one regret is not knowing when to stop. For the first 13 years of Elic's life, Pam was undefeated against her son.

"One day, he came and said, 'let's arm wrestle,'" she said. "He was getting stronger, but I thought, let's do it. And he beat me. I knew I would never beat him again. I should not have said yes ... Damn. Too late."

Childhood for her, when she wasn't working, was carefree. It meant walking an hour to town on her own, spending the day catching frogs, making mudcakes with twigs as candles, swimming in ponds while pulling leeches off her skin without a thought.

"To regular kids, that sounds disgusting," Pamela said. "But in your mind, you're just adventuring.

You're outside in nature. You're making memories."

From the house, you can turn any direction and just see land. It seems to go on forever.

"There's no judgment on the farm," Pamela said. "You can just be you."

But as she got older, Pam itched for something different. "I wanted out," she said. "I was not going to do that with my life. But, now, looking back, those were the best days."

Elic would say the same.

"Farm kids are just tough," he said. "That's just how it is."

I could see it ... People ask me, 'how do you know?' I see something in them that is needed to take it to the next level. I knew this guy was different. There was hard work instilled in this young man. He realizes where he came from. This is not a suburban kid.

Justin Dillon

730 Scouting

DILLON SAID IT took three plays on film to be sold on Ayomanor.

"I could see it," Dillon said. "People ask me, 'how do you know?' I see something in them that is needed to take it to the next level. I knew this guy was different. There was hard work instilled in this young man. He realizes where he came from. This is not a suburban kid."

With Dillon's backing, prep school coaches began making house calls to Medicine Hat. From those who showed interest, Elic narrowed it down to The Peddie School in Hightstown, New Jersey, and Deerfield Academy in Deerfield, Massachusetts, for his sophomore year.

While visiting, Pam realized these were the best schools anywhere. Football or no football, they had just won the lottery.

"I was sold," she said.

After choosing The Peddie School, they applied for and were granted financial aid to cover costs that were more than Pam's annual salary.

Though the roster at Peddie was small, Elic quickly came to the conclusion that "I was the worst player on the team. Probably 90 percent of the players ended up playing Division I football," he said. "But the way I responded to being the worst player is the reason I got into Stanford in the first place."

Elic rarely watched sports growing up, with the exception of a shootout compilation by his favorite hockey player, Patrick Kane of the Chicago Blackhawks. And though Elic was a hard worker on the football field, it wasn't purposeful. But at prep school, he was exposed to players like him, with big goals. He was there to be the best, to reach the NFL. He now had a motive, a why, and a destination.

Ayomanor played seven games before breaking his collarbone, catching 17 passes for 253 yards and three touchdowns during an 8-0 season for the Mid-Atlantic Prep champions. It would be the most action he would see in a high school season.

A coaching change at Peddie prompted Ayomanor to transfer to Deerfield as a junior, but his season was wiped out by the COVID-19 pandemic. His senior season was wiped out by a knee injury in the second game.

Three years of American high school football amounted to only nine games and very little film, leaving little to show college recruiters.

"When I tell people I've got a kid from Alberta, they're like, 'OK, where is he from?' And I go, 'Medicine Hat,'" Dillon said. "Canadians, let alone Americans, go, 'What? From where? He plays football?'"

AS A SINGLE working mom, Pam was conscious of outside influences

and tried to keep Elic as busy as possible. That meant signing up for every sport imaginable.

His middle school doubled as a hockey academy and each day Elic alternated between a day of classes and a day of hockey. There were camps, trips, and games in whatever the sport and because Medicine Hat was so remote, Elic and his friends spent much of their time in Pam's car, traversing across the emptiness of the northern plains.

This was where Pam felt like she really got to know her son. She could hear his conversations, learn his music.

"Those were some of my best memories," she said. "At home, I'm busy. But when we're in that car, it's just us. I hear them talk about boy stuff or kid stuff, and I get to be part of it."

Pam does not tolerate swearing, but at the end of one trip, when someone cursed, Pam pulled into the driveway, turned to the kids and said, "'Here's the rule: The only time you can swear is if we're in this car in this driveway. I don't want to hear it any other time.' So, we sat in that driveway and just swore for five minutes straight. It was the funniest thing."

These were the moments that made her conversation with Osei even harder.

Born in Ghana, Osei was raised in Toronto with no guarantee he would escape the gangs, drugs, and violence of his neighborhood. Osei felt no one cared, not even his coaches. But there was a teacher who did. That teacher saw Kwame for who he was and invested time and effort into him. Osei grew in confidence, and would go on to play college football, earn two degrees, and become a gifted public speaker, mentor, and teacher.

"I understand that every child is one caring adult away from becoming a successful story," Osei said. That's why he needed to talk to Elic.

"I saw a kid who needed guidance," he said.

When Kwame got on the phone with Pam, her first reaction was, "I don't think so."

"You're always very proud of your kids," Pam said "At the same time, I didn't know how I would let him go. He was going to be in a different country, with people I didn't know, doing stuff I didn't know. As a parent, you just worry about every damn thing.

"I said, 'We're not doing it.' But Elic kept insisting. In the end, I believed in Elic.

"For a full year, I just cried."

If everyone is on board, Osei sends film to Dillon, who evaluates a player's Division I potential. If good enough, Dillon uses his connections to find a U.S. boarding school with a strong football program to attract a major-college scholarship and perhaps blaze a path to the NFL.

Complicating these conversations was pushback from the Medicine Hat football community who heard rumors of Elic's departure and felt he was being set up to fail. He was better off in Canada, they said. Meanwhile, Osei kept his involvement secret for fear of backlash, and Pam was hearing the talk too.

Pam was skeptical of Dillon's motives, but quickly realized that Dillon had Elic's best interests at heart and was someone they could trust.

"I realized he wasn't that guy at all," she said. "I was a lot calmer after that."

Ayomanor never wavered. "Justin has been doing right by us from the very beginning," he said. "He really just wants to get Canadians the opportunities Americans have. He always says to me, his goal is to flood the NFL with Canadians."

Elic saw no precedent for a path to football success from his home

province as there was for hockey. Two examples he could think of were Chuba Hubbard and Ajoie Ajoie. Hubbard, a running back, stayed at home, got a scholarship to Oklahoma State and now plays for the NFL's Carolina Panthers. Ajoie, a receiver, transferred to a Florida boarding school, played at Clemson and South Florida, and now plays for the Canadian Football League's Saskatchewan Roughriders.

"There's not a lot of respect in recruiting for Canadian athletes," Ayomanor said. "If I had stayed in Canada, I maybe would have gone to an FCS school, but probably not even that. I probably would be playing Canadian college football right now."

FROM THE MINUTE Ayomanor met Deerfield teammate Geoffrey Jamiel, they became fast friends. They were like-minded receivers determined to be the best they could be.

Jamiel came from a football family. His father, Joe Jamiel, was one of Brown University's all-time greats as a running back and kick returner. Two older brothers, JoJo and Andrew, played receiver in college.

"Being from Canada, Elic hadn't really been exposed to football in the sense that I had – I grew up with a football in my hand 24/7," said Geoffrey, now a junior receiver at Lehigh. "I knew Elic had untapped potential, and he knew it too. And he was obsessed with getting better and unlocking that potential."

One difference between the two: Jamiel was 5-foot-8 and 180 pounds while Elic was 6-3 ½, 215 pounds. Jamiel knew that with his size, his shot at playing receiver in Division I depended on mastering technique, running precise routes, and catching the ball cleanly. But for a big receiver like Elic, route running typically wasn't a priority.

But Elic realized that if he also mastered route-running, and combined with his size and athleticism, he could be the perfect receiver.

They trained together every day, even while quarantined during COVID at the Jamiels' Cape Cod home. Andrew Jamiel sent professional level coaching plans. And Joe, a longtime youth and high school coach, offered his input.

"Elic didn't have a season, so he knew getting film out there was the most important thing," Geoffrey said. "We tried a ton of stuff. We tweeted videos of us lifting, sprinting, running routes and catching passes, and playing in intrasquad games. Anyone who knows anything about football could see how smooth and fluid of a route-runner he was."

One video of Elic running a route tree attracted particular attention. How could someone that size run the routes of a smaller receiver? In the COVID recruiting world, the video went viral and the offers started to come in.

Early on, Dillon put Stanford out there as the ultimate goal, the epitome of all that Elic and Pamela valued. Dillon had a Stanford connection through Wesley Annan, a 6-4, 275-pound defensive tackle from Whitby, Ontario, who Dillon steered through Lake Forest (Ill.) Academy to The Farm. Though Annan never played at Stanford because of injuries, he graduated with a human biology degree in 2019. That connection helped Dillon get the attention of Cardinal coaches, especially David Shaw's receivers coach, Bobby Kennedy.

After sending video to Kennedy, Dillon's declaration was being put to the test. Dillon, his wife and mother-in-law were on the way to visit relatives when a call came to Dillon's cell. It was Kennedy, who had just watched a compilation that Dillon provided the night before.

"I love this kid," Kennedy said. "This guy's going to be special."

The others in the car could sense this was a monumental and emotional moment. Dillon's mother-in-law

said, "It looks like you did something big for a kid there."

"I did," Dillon replied. "I did something huge. You don't understand, this is what I told him in the beginning. I want this more than Christmas. I want this more than anything for this young man. Because I know if he gets this offer, it's over for him."

Ayomanor was invited to a Stanford camp and made a lasting impression by asking to be matched up for his final rep against the camp's best defensive back. Ayomanor beat him down the sideline and caught a deep pass on a fade. That afternoon, Shaw offered Elic a scholarship.

ON A FRIDAY NIGHT in Boulder, Colorado, Ayomanor was presented to the world. It was Game Six of the 2023 season. Ayomanor missed the 2022 season with injury, and was eager to make an impact.

With an ESPN audience, Stanford fell behind Colorado, 29-0, by halftime and Ayomanor had nary a catch. But in the second half, he exploded for touchdowns of 97 and 60 yards as Stanford rallied to force overtime.

The Buffaloes pulled ahead once again, but Stanford countered with a spectacular catch from Ayomanor, who gathered a pass from Ashton Daniels by pinning the ball on the back of cornerback Travis Hunter for a 30-yard touchdown – the signature play in Stanford's 46-43 victory. Ayomanor caught 13 passes for a school-record 294 yards.

Jamiel watched the first quarter, and not an especially good one for Ayomanor, before going to bed early to rest for a game against Georgetown the following day. When Jamiel woke up, his phone was blowing up. "Did you see your boy?!" "Your boy's going off!"

"I shot out of bed," Jamiel said. "I watched all the highlights. I texted Elic at 5 a.m. and he was still awake from the night before. It was surprising for everyone else, but not

for me. I knew it was a matter of time.”

Ayomanor felt the same.

“Truthfully, in my college football career, there was going to be a game where I did that, just because of the level of play I’m at,” he said. “I just ended up doing it where there was the most media and against the most tracked team of the year.”

Though Stanford has endured an uneven 2024 season, Ayomanor knows he’s even better than he was last year when he earned the Jon Cornish Trophy as the top Canadian in college football.

“My route running is better,” he said. “My endurance is better. My feel for the game is better. I play faster because I’m more sure of myself. I see things quicker. I’m just better at everything.”

The one-handed grab at the pylon for a 17-yard touchdown in the 26-24 ACC-opening victory at Syracuse?

“Instinctual,” Ayomanor said. “But how you make it instinctual is by working, by catching hundreds of balls and running hundreds of routes, and catching it at different angles a bunch of different times. The play is instinctual, but the work isn’t.”

IN THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES, “you don’t need the highway,” Pam says. “We’re taking the gravel roads.”

The same could be said for Ayomanor. Be wary of smooth. Be wary of easy.

“I’m a product of the values I was raised with,” he said.

You’re your mom’s son. You don’t quit, and you don’t let her beat you in arm wrestling. Flash is unnecessary with dirt under your fingernails and miles of empty land in front of you.

“Authentic and genuine,” says Mom. “That’s how we grow up here.”

###

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW: TITANS CB DARRELL BAKER JR. ON MAXIMIZING OPPORTUNITY

BY JUSTIN MELO
BROADWAY SPORTS
MEDIA
NOVEMBER 13, 2024

Tennessee Titans cornerback Darrell Baker Jr. has been one of the defense's bigger surprise performers this season. Claimed off waivers in late August after initial 53-man rosters were finalized, Baker Jr. was supposed to join Tennessee as a depth cornerback. Injuries to L'Jarius Sneed and Chido Awuzie have instead catapulted him into the starting lineup, where he's played good football for a secondary leading the NFL in defensive passing yards allowed per game (156.7).

Baker Jr. recently spoke exclusively with Broadway Sports. Baker Jr. discussed joining the Titans via the waiver wire, preparing to play in Dennard Wilson's defensive system, what he's seen from rookie corner Jarvis Brownlee Jr., and so much more.

JM: I want to start at the beginning of this season. What was that weekend like when the Tennessee Titans claimed you off waivers? Navigating that 53-man roster stuff has to be a little hectic. Did it remind you of being an undrafted free agent again?

Darrell Baker Jr.: It kinda did remind me of being undrafted again. Being released by the Indianapolis Colts caught me by surprise after previously making their 53. After they made that decision, my fiancée and I were talking about our options. It's funny, we actually talked about the possibility of landing in Nashville, Tennessee.

The next day came, it had been about 24 hours since the Colts released me. I was actually getting set to sign back to the [Colts'] practice squad when my agent

texted me telling me I had been claimed. I was like by who?!? My fiancée and I laughed when he said Tennessee.

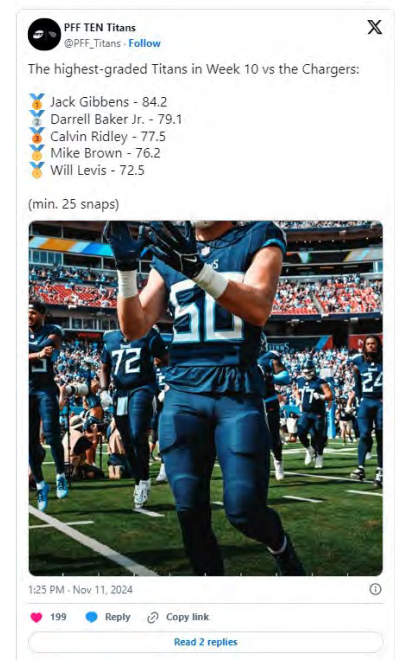
My agent and I hadn't spoken to any teams throughout that process. The Titans decided to make that move and it put a huge smile on my face. I spoke to one of the [Titans'] local scouts. I hopped on the road and drove right up to Tennessee.

JM: You come in and you're supposed to be a reserve behind guys like L'Jarius Sneed and Chido Awuzie. Fast forward to today and you've played more than 40 percent of all defensive snaps. You've been a boundary starter for multiple games in a row. What do you think it was about your mindset that allowed you to contribute right away?

Darrell Baker Jr.: I just prepare every day like I'm a starter. I was doing that when Sneed and Awuzie were healthy. You have to be ready when somebody goes down. I didn't want the coaching staff to feel like there was a drop off when I had to come into the lineup.

One of our coaches told me, "even when you're not a starter, you're still a starter because you're one play away from being one." They expected me to make plays when I entered the lineup. I've been trying to bring a burst of energy to the defense.

Ever said our coaching staff said they didn't expect a drop off, I've been living by that.



JM: Defensive coordinator Dennard Wilson blitzes a lot and plays a lot of man coverage. Corners have to play on an island in this scheme. How do you think coach Wilson's system suits your skill set?

Darrell Baker Jr.: I love playing in coach Wilson's system because I have terrific length to play man coverage. I love getting my hands on guys at the line of scrimmage. I've been encouraged to be a bit more physical than I was at my last spot.

We know we have guys up front that can get after the passer. That allows me to play physically at the line of scrimmage. Our staff has done an incredible job keeping me prepared and making sure I know what to expect. I'm staying on top of my game throughout this process.

JM: It's also not like coach Wilson made changes to his scheme to accommodate the injuries. He's shown a lot of confidence in you to execute what Sneed and Awuzie execute. What has that confidence in your game meant to you?

Darrell Baker Jr.: I love it. We play a difficult position. As a cornerback, I have to go out there and play with confidence no matter what. I'm always trying to stay true to myself out there. I have to make those plays when the ball is thrown my way.

JM: You also have three pass breakups this season in a few starts. You had seven with the Colts last year. What is it about your mentality that allows you to make plays on the ball?

Darrell Baker Jr.: My goal every game, every season, is to not allow any catches when the ball is thrown in my direction. I always bust my tail off for the guys in front of me. I play hard for everybody on our sideline, everybody in our organization.

JM: Who would you credit as being the leader in the secondary? Either the vocal one, or one that leads by example.

Darrell Baker Jr.: Amani Hooker has been here for a few years. He's done a great job catching me up on a lot of things. We're always talking and communicating on the field. We recently lost Quandre Diggs to an injury. He was a terrific resource for me as well. He was that voice for us, that veteran leader. We know we could depend on him, and I'm working hard to ensure he knows he could depend on me.

I would say we have a great combination in our defensive back room. Coming here on short notice, all of my teammates helped push me to get to this level. They helped catch me up on the playbook. They got me to a point where I feel extremely comfortable out here.

JM: You're a young corner, but you've played a lot of football. What have you seen from Jarvis Brownlee Jr. as a rookie? You guys have been the starters on the outside lately due to injuries, and you're the vet and he's the rookie.

Darrell Baker Jr.: Jarvis Brownlee Jr. is an extremely physical and feisty cornerback. I love the way he plays the game. There's nothing he can't do defensively. He can handle every assignment, every responsibility. I've loved watching him grow every single week. He's come in and played so well for us as a rookie.

It's been amazing to see. I'm not sure I've seen that from anybody at my previous stops. Credit to everybody in our defensive back room for helping get Jarvis ready for his opportunity. He's been doing his thing because he's well prepared.

JM: We've appreciated your time today, Darrell. This has been outstanding. In closing, what are your goals for the remainder of this season?

Darrell Baker Jr.: I'm trying to get at least two interceptions (laughs). That's a personal goal of mine. As far as our team goes, we're trying to finish strong. We believe we're better than our record indicates and we want to prove that before the 2024 season ends.

Let the chips fall where they may.

###

**SALUTE TO SERVICE:
TITANS CB DARRELL
BAKER JR. PROUD OF
LESSONS LEARNED FROM
HIS PARENTS, BOTH
RETIRED U.S. ARMY
VETERANS**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
NOVEMBER 14, 2024**

NASHVILLE – As a young boy, Darrell Baker Jr. found out what it was like to grow up in a military family.

Both of his parents served in the U.S. Army.

There was discipline, and the example of hard work set for him to follow.

Baker found out what it meant to sacrifice, even if he didn't truly understand it until he got older.

It will be a proud moment for Baker, a cornerback with the Titans, when his parents are recognized as the Honorary 12th Titans for Sunday's game against the Vikings at Nissan Stadium.

It will be part of the team's Veterans Day celebration during Salute to Service month across the NFL.

Darrell Baker Sr. and Johnetta Dixon, retired U.S. Army veterans, served stints in Baghdad, Iraq, and Kuwait, among other locations overseas. Darrell Baker Jr. was born on March 27, 1998, in Panama City, Panama, when his parents were stationed there.

Baker's parents moved to Georgia when he was young, and he was surrounded by six siblings as his parents were stationed in Fort Benning and Fort Gordon. There were times when his parents had to leave for months at a time, his father a contractor in the Army, his mom a cook.

"I remember when we'd get a surprise, and go to the airport to pick

them up," Baker said with a smile. "That day was like heaven on earth."

It wasn't always easy, Baker Jr. said.

"We weren't the most wealthy family in the neighborhood," Baker said. "But my parents made sacrifices, and they did what they could to make sure all of us were fed, and taken care of."

And, there was discipline.

"It wasn't like crazy strict, but there was discipline in the household, doing chores all the time, having to clean," Baker said. "Little still you don't notice when you are younger, making up your bed, ironing your clothes, little stuff that matters today as an adult.

"When you get around new people, especially as you enter college, you realize not everybody was raised like you were. You see those differences it can make."

There are also some things Baker doesn't know about the emotional toll of being in war.

"As I got older, just seeing their reaction when asked about it," he said, "I didn't really want to talk about it with them."

Baker said he once considered going into the Marines, but he fell in love with sports, and football, instead.

Playing in the NFL became his dream.

Over the years, the toughness and perseverance he learned from his parents helped push him as he found his way.

Baker had zero scholarship offers for football out of high school at Hephzibah (Georgia).

After playing in college at Georgia Southern, he was not invited to the NFL combine

Baker signed with the Arizona Cardinals as an undrafted free agent following the 2022 NFL Draft, but he was waived by the team three

months later. That's when he was signed by the Indianapolis Colts, where he earned a starting job with the team in 2023 after paying his dues on the practice squad most of the 2022 season.

When Baker was released by the Colts back in August, the Titans signed him. Baker has stepped in and played well for the Titans this year, playing in eight games, with three starts.

On Sunday, Baker and his parents, who live in Augusta, Georgia, will all be on the NFL field together, when his mother and father will be recognized for their service to the county, and their commitment.

Teams across the NFL are celebrating Salute to Service throughout November, a dedicated time to recognize and pay tribute to the courageous men and women who have served or are currently serving our country. Salute to Service is the NFL's year-round initiative that focuses on honoring, empowering and connecting with service members, veterans and their families.

"Salute to Service is just a lot of respect shown to them, to the military," Baker Jr. said. "They go overseas, across the world, to fight to make sure everybody here in America is safe. You see the wars in Iran and things that take place in Palestine. ... Those that serve our country go over there and risk their lives, and we get protected in turn.

"I'm very blessed to have my parents, very proud of them. And, very blessed to still have them, because there are so many people who don't make it out of those wars, and they are two people God put His hand over and I'm very thankful for that."

###

HOW CORNERBACK DARRELL BAKER JR. MET HIS SON ON THE COLTS' FLIGHT TO GERMANY

BY NATE ATKINS
INDIANAPOLIS STAR
DECEMBER 1, 2023

FRANKFURT, GERMANY -- Darrell Baker Jr. slid into his seat on a plane headed for Germany, pulled out his phone and began punching in numbers as quickly as his heart could race.

The Colts starting cornerback needed to pay for high-speed WiFi so he could make the most important video call of his life. More than a thousand miles away, a distance increasing by the minute, his fiancé was headed into labor.

So he kept typing in his credit card info, only for an error message to pop up. The minutes crept by, and soon the lights would go out in the cabin so his teammates could get a night of sleep on the way to play the Patriots in Frankfurt.

As the plane soared, he feared a moment slipping away.

Finally, his phone connected and there she was on the other line: Jade Falcon, the woman he asked to marry him in the preseason. She was ready to give birth to the boy they'd name Dallas in honor of the impossible journey they'd taken to parenthood.

"You've got this!" Baker shouted in a plane of passed-out Colts. "Breathe! Push!"

Darrell Baker Jr. first met his son on the Colts' bye week after watching his birth from the team's flight to Germany.

An NFL-style romance

Baker has played less than two seasons in the NFL, but he already owns a story that peaks at 30,000 feet and plunges to depths most players would never come back from. This is the season that will

shape his life – from engagement to fatherhood, in and out of a starting NFL defense, through a controversial loss to the Browns and into that heart-throbbing space in the clouds.

Just two years ago, Baker was in his sixth and final season at Georgia Southern, where he initially walked on, when a photo of a young woman from Tampa Bay popped up on his Twitter timeline. He followed her. She followed back. He waited four months to build up the courage to send a direct message.

She didn't respond, but she did send another tweet: "Chase the bag, not the boys."

So he sent another message: "How about we chase the bag together?"

That one got a response.

"I was like, 'Man, she looks good, and if I can get this one, I'm not letting her slip at all,'" Baker said. "As soon as she (direct messaged) me back and said what she said, I was like, 'Oh yeah, it's over with now.'"

This was Baker's hyper-competitive side coming out, the one that would later latch him onto the Colts in 2022 as an undrafted player. But in football and in love, he was chasing long odds. The NFL didn't invite this sixth-year cornerback from the Sun Belt Conference to the scouting combine, and the woman he met online didn't want a long-distance relationship.

Darrell Baker Jr. and his fiancé, Jade Falcon, have had a journey since meeting on Twitter in 2021.

So for three months, he didn't even tell her he played football. Not until he invited her to Dallas, and she asked why he was there. She put off the first date they planned, but after a month, she found the courage to go.

What she found was the kind and calm person she'd gotten to know through FaceTime, but she also saw his determination. He had an

itinerary for the weekend, as they bounced from tacos at the mall to Go-Kart racing to riding a Ferris Wheel. They ended with dinner at a rooftop restaurant where a server brought an ice cream to the table with a card that read, "Will you be my girlfriend?"

He'd found the idea by reading her old tweets.

"How could I say no?" Falcon said later.

The first dream was in motion, but the second needed a destination. He went undrafted into the NFL but received a tryout with the Cardinals and made the offseason roster. He and Falcon moved in together for the first time, living for four months until she had to leave for Tampa Bay to finish up her master's degree. Shortly after she left, Baker got injured and was released.

He had two tryouts after that, and Indianapolis offered him a spot on the practice squad.

After appearing in three games as a special teamer in 2022, he and Falcon continued to fly back and forth from Indianapolis to Tampa Bay to see each other. In March, a pregnancy test came back, and it was positive.

His mind shifted to the future -- and about finding one in football.

"It was like, now we have to go all-in," he said. "Every day, give it everything we've got no matter what."

Darrell Baker Jr. proposed to Jade Falcon in Sept., days after making the Colts roster.

He planned a proposal for that fall. He found a rental house for the three of them to live in. He built a crib. They picked out baby names, too: They'd name a girl Indy and a boy Dallas, in honor of two cities where the match was lit.

To that point, "Dallas," was the name Falcon always called Baker.

To all her friends, he was “the boy from Dallas.”

But before he could pass along a name, he needed to make a team so he could afford this life for them. He attacked the weight room, meeting room and practice field like a man with a few names to fight for. He began the spring eighth on the cornerback depth chart, but after Isaiah Rodgers Sr. was released following a gambling suspension, Baker was suddenly in the mix in one of the youngest position groups in the league.

Two months later, he was a roster lock and on the first line of the depth chart.

“My mindset is, ‘Either I’m gonna win the rep or I’m gonna win the rep, period,’” Baker said. “I always say if I’m going up against somebody 10 times, I’m winning 12 of those.

“... I don’t just want to be good in this league. I want to be great.”

Darrell Baker Jr. made the Colts roster for the second year in a row.

Confidence had fueled every step of his journey to that point, from a baby born in Panama to members of the army to a kid in a Georgia town of less than 4,000 people to a walk-on at Georgia Southern to a man direct messaging a girl he didn’t know in a state he didn’t live in.

And now, that girl was here in Indianapolis, building this life with him by multiplying that positive energy and packaging it into a human due in a few months.

“We are literally one,” he’d say later. “I can say that’s my best friend in the world.”

They’d need each other, too, because at the highest level of football, momentum often builds half as fast as it falls apart.

Darrell Baker Jr. was at the center of two controversial penalties against the Cleveland Browns.

A nightmare against the Browns

Nineteen days before his son was born, Baker crouched into his stance and stared into the soul of Amari Cooper with less than a minute left in the game.

He dropped back as Cooper engaged with his chest, right as E.J. Speed was obliterating P.J. Walker for a strip-sack to win the game – except it didn’t. Baker was called for illegal contact.

One flag on Baker left him rattled. The second would leave him hurt. The Browns had a first-and-goal when Walker lofted a ball to the back right corner of the end zone; Baker’s head was turned to the receiver as the ball flew well out of reach. Another flag came out. Pass interference.

Baker punched the air and screamed.

The ball moved inside the 1, and three plays later, the Browns punched it in for a 39-38 victory.

Afterward, Baker would face the cameras and say he believed he’d done his job. Soon, the NFL would inform the Colts that that at least one of the calls was incorrect, according to team owner Jim Irsay. A few teammates seethed about a game stolen from them by officials.

MORE: ‘They’re both uncatchable’: Colts CB Darrell Baker Jr. disputes game-changing penalties

The next week, the Colts sent Baker to the bench.

“A lot to say, but I’ll keep it professional,” Baker posted to Instagram after the game.

Falcon called her best friend to game plan how best to comfort him.

“Sometimes he doesn’t even know that he’s stressing,” Falcon said. “It takes for somebody to tell him, ‘Hey, you’re losing weight. Are you OK?’ And he’s like, ‘Dang, I didn’t even realize.’”

Colts fans began direct messaging her, which was the place she first met Baker. She read enough of the nasty ones until she broke down to him.

“‘I’ve never experienced this. I’m not even the one that’s on the field. Are you OK? How are you dealing with this?’” Falcon recalls telling Baker. “And he’s like, ‘Listen, this is what comes with it. This is how it is.’”

“So at this point, I’m the one that’s crying because people are saying things and I want to say things back and I’m just like, I can’t say anything back because I’m a reflection of you and he’s like, ‘It’s OK. It’s fine. We’ll get through it.’ And I’m like, ‘Wow, I’m glad you’re the one in this position dealing with this and not me because they would have canceled me.’”

As an outside cornerback, Baker can’t let himself believe otherwise.

And this isn’t just a game to him.

Darrell Baker Jr. has worked his way up from the practice squad to becoming one of the Colts’ starting cornerbacks.

“I obsess over the idea of being able to dominate and impose my will against somebody,” Baker said. “It’s the idea that no matter what they do, I have an answer for everything. It’s an obsession.”

The leaders of the Colts defense checked in. This was Baker’s second benching.

“I told him, ‘We still need you. You’re still a part of this team. We still need you to perform, whether that’s on special teams or when the opportunity comes again,’” said linebacker Zaire Franklin, a former seventh-round pick. “‘I’m no stranger to getting an opportunity and not taking advantage of it the first time around. Just make sure you don’t miss it again.’”

Said cornerback Kenny Moore II, who went undrafted and was cut by the Patriots, “If you think it’s going

to be perfect, then don't play at all. The good will be the good and the bad will be the bad, but you've got to keep pushing through both to be your best."

Baker was forced to take a step back the next week, as he didn't practice with the first-team defense or see a single snap in the game.

The flags against the Browns felt like a nightmare, but when he would lay down to sleep next to Falcon, the dreams had a different ending. In them, he's out there at Lucas Oil Stadium shaking as a quarterback throws his way. But this time, he's staring at the ball, leaping at just the right moment and making the play.

"The stuff people say they dream of," Baker said, "I literally dream of."

Meeting Dallas

By the time he boarded the flight to Germany to face the Patriots, Baker had already rebounded. His starting job returned, thanks to a 38-27 loss to the Saints that featured 500 yards allowed without him. He'd just held his own against the Panthers, the Colts won 27-13 on two Moore interceptions.

Doctors told Baker and Falcon to expect the baby to arrive the following Wednesday, which would be the middle of the bye week. But she was induced nine days early, and he was on a dark plane in the middle of the night, somewhere over the Atlantic Ocean.

At one point, Falcon rolled backward in pain as tears streamed down her face. Baker spoke through the phone to the nurse, asking her to sit Falcon upright.

"I literally felt like he was there without him physically being there," Falcon said.

Then an infant started to cry. And as Baker stared into the white light illuminating his face, he felt two tears roll down his cheeks.

With most of the cabin passed out, Tyquan Lewis caught a glance at what was on the phone.

"Congrats," he said.

A flight attendant grabbed the intercom and announced that Baker was a father to a baby boy named Dallas, and the whole team burst into applause.

Some knew how this would change his life in the game.

"When your kid's six weeks and your wife or fiancé is getting up every night and being with him, you're missing those moments," said Zaire Franklin, who has a 2-year-old son. "You can't come in here and not take what you're doing serious."

Baker never slept on the flight over, and then the coaches had the players stay up the full day to adjust to the six-hour time difference. He called Falcon on every break to check in and say hi to his son.

By Sunday, he was starting at outside cornerback and held his own as the Colts defense dominated the Patriots for a 10-6 victory.

"It gives me that extra push," Baker said of fatherhood. "If I'm tired, immediately that's my go-to thought. It's everything that drives me to make the right decisions on the field and off the field."

Darrell Baker Jr. has regained his starting cornerback position, at least for now, after getting benched twice this season.

The next day, Baker arrived at the hospital in Tampa Bay — Falcon temporarily returned to Florida with Baker on the road — and held his son in his arms for the first time.

The new family of three got six days together before Dallas' daddy had to fly back for work.

His fiancé and son will be here in mid-December. Dallas' first game will be against the Raiders. Baker has to earn his playing time in it with

second-round rookie JuJu Brents due back from a quad injury.

When Baker said goodbye that day from the airport, he and Falcon cried together.

The next time she saw him was on a TV screen the next Sunday, when the Colts hosted the Buccaneers. It was another game at Lucas Oil Stadium where an opponent was driving to come back and nearing the goal line. This time, a receiver cut across Baker's face but he followed the crossing route like a shadow, causing Baker Mayfield to pull the ball down and take a sack in a 27-20 Colts win.

Down in Tampa Bay, Falcon cheered but in silence this time.

She didn't want to wake the baby asleep on her chest.

###

CODY BARTON

NEW TITANS LB CODY BARTON USING PAST EXPERIENCES TO HIS ADVANTAGE IN TENNESSEE

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
MAY 22, 2025

NASHVILLE – Cody Barton is on his fourth NFL team in seven years.

Bouncing around hasn't been easy, the new Titans linebacker said.

But Barton has used it to his advantage.

"It's cool experiences, you know," Barton said with a smile. "I have been able to learn from coaches and teammates from these different teams and gather these experiences. And, I've felt that has helped me as a player, learning from these different schemes so when I go to the next team it is nothing new. The lingo is new, I guess.

"But I don't look at it as a bad thing. I look at it as a positive thing, and the things I've learned from each experience helped me grow as a player."

A third-round draft pick of the Seahawks in 2019, Barton has played in 95 games, with 43 games, in his career, including 38 games in the last three seasons for Seattle, Washington and Denver.

Over the last three seasons, Barton is one of only five NFL linebackers (Fred Warner, Tremaine Edmunds, Roquan Smith and Logan Wilson) to post 100+ tackles each season and total 5 or more interceptions over that timeframe.

Barton tallied a career-high 136 tackles in 2022 before recording 121 tackles in 2023 and 106 in 2024 while in Denver.

The Titans signed Barton back in March, and he's been working with his new coaches and teammates during Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the offseason program. Next week, the

team will move into Phase 3, when the defense will compete with the offense for the first time.

Barton said he's thrilled the Titans believed in him, and signed him to a multi-year contract.

"It felt really good," Barton said. "Me and my wife are very blessed to be here. We actually bought a house last week. It does feel secure, but at the same time, nothing is ever really secure in this league. You have to be able to perform on Sundays.

"But it is definitely a blessing. I think back in my career and ... moving around was tough, the moving itself was. But to feel valued here and to find a home, we are very grateful. Hard work pays off.

"I tell the young guys – if you keep working hard and stay disciplined, at some point it is going to pay off," Barton continued. "I feel like the Titans wanted me to come here and be a part of this team. They signed me to a three-year deal, and it's a testament that if you stay true to yourself it will pay off."

A six-year pro, Barton racked up over 100 tackles for the third straight season last year for the Broncos.

Barton said he loves the look of the defense in Tennessee, and how the team will play.

He's already on the same wavelength as defensive coordinator Dennard Wilson.

"The style of defense, it's aggressive, similar to last year's scheme I was in," Barton said. "The biggest this is the aggressiveness of it.

"(Dennard) is a great coach, leader, demands a lot, is very intense. I feel like he just brings out the best of the group individually and as a whole. I am excited about where this defense is headed."

Barton said he likes what he has seen around him, from the young

guys competing next to him at inside linebacker.

Now with a new team, he's ready to help lead the way.

"I've always prided myself in being a leader, someone who can get guys lined up and take command vocally on the field," he said. "I am not going to change anything, I am going to continue to be who I am and just let it flourish here.

"There is no perfect player, but I try to be perfect. It's about always looking for ways to improve, not just focusing on run or pass, but being dominant in both."

Barton will make his Titans debut in Week 1 against his old team.

The Titans travel to face the Broncos on September 7.

"I am excited, very excited," he said. "But I am not going to make it bigger than what it is – at the end of the day it is a football game. But definitely excited to play against the team I was with last year. I am real excited to go back."

###

HOW CODY BARTON WENT FROM BEING THE "RUNT OF THE LITTER" TO A STARTING LINEBACKER IN THE NFL, NOW WITH THE TITANS

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
MAY 7, 2025**

NASHVILLE – Cody Barton kept the faith.

As a 5-foot-8, 160-pound sophomore – when he was dwarfed by a 6-foot-4, 290-pound brother who was just a year older – he always felt like his time would come.

From an early age, his athletic parents had Barton and his three siblings believing hard work would make anything possible.

The mindset resulted in him developing from the "runt of the litter" to a prep star, and earning a college scholarship. It also paved the way for him to earn an opportunity in the NFL, and it eventually led him to Tennessee, where the Titans are counting on the inside linebacker to be a key piece in the middle of their defense in 2025.

"My dad always told us: Hard work is the only recipe," said Barton, who joined the Titans as free agent back in March after playing previously with the Seahawks, Commanders and Broncos. "The thing my dad always taught me, and he would tell me personally, being that I was the late bloomer in the family: 'The cream always rises to the top.'"

"And I've always applied that to my career. No matter what, always keep working and just outwork the competition, and eventually the cream is going to rise to the top."

Barton, who is 6-foot-2, 237 pounds these days, put the work in to get to where he is today.

It turns out Barton has been on a mission since he was 10 years old,

after receiving a pep talk from his father, and then being put on a strict regimen with his siblings.

Playing sports, you see, is what the Bartons do.

Father Paul Barton, who is 6-6, played football and baseball at the University of Utah, and he had a brief stint in the minor leagues with the Toronto Blue Jays. Mother Mikki-Kane Barton, who is six-foot, played volleyball and basketball at Utah, and is a member of the school's Crimson Club Hall of Fame.

Jackson Barton, the oldest son, played on the offensive line at Utah and has spent time with five NFL clubs, most recently the Arizona Cardinals. Cody Barton came along 15 months later, then came sister Dani, a former member of the U.S. women's national volleyball team who was an All-America performer at Utah. Baby brother Jackson is currently a senior on the football team at Utah.

Cody Barton said his father trained all the children – mentally and physically -- to earn their way. His mother provided encouragement and support, resulting in what Barton, with a smile, a "good cop, bad cop" scenario.

"My dad said: I'm going to do everything I can to help you guys get a full scholarship at the University of Utah, and go pro," Cody Barton recalled. "He's like, if you guys are committed to that, I am going to do everything I can. He was like, 'You're not going to like me, but ..."

"As a 10-year-old, I was like: 'Let's do it.'"

Cody Barton remembers waking up every morning with his 11-year-old brother Jackson, initially doing jump rope, planks, wall sits, and running. As they got older, they began lifting weights.

"My dad would push us," Barton said. "It was more about teaching us the power of the mind, and when

you're tired, you can really go a lot further than you think. Us getting up at 5 a.m., it was more learning the discipline of getting up at 5. No one wants to get up at 5. So, it was teaching us the power of discipline and hard work and how far that can get you."

All the Barton children earned scholarships to Utah, even though it took Cody until his second semester of his freshman year. He's still motivated by that.

The hard work continued as Cody Barton got older.

Barton's father and uncle are first generation ranchers – they started a ranch in Duchesne, Utah in 2002.

Cody Barton grew up working on the ranch, moving water lines, baling hay, fixing fences and other chores with horses, cows, chickens, turkeys, and other wildlife around him.

Barton admits when he returns to the ranch these days, he's more interested in fishing, riding horses and looking for deer and elk horns.

But he's still all about the hard work, especially on the football field.

A six-year pro, Barton racked up over 100 tackles for the third straight season last year for the Broncos.

A third-round draft pick of the Seahawks in 2019, Barton has started 43 games in his career, including 38 games in the last three seasons for Seattle, Washington and Denver.

Over the last three seasons, Barton is one of only five NFL linebackers (Fred Warner, Tremaine Edmunds, Roquan Smith and Logan Wilson) to post 100+ tackles each season and total 5 or more interceptions over that timeframe.

Barton tallied a career-high 136 tackles in 2022 before recording 121 tackles in 2023 and 106 in 2024 while in Denver.

In Tennessee, he's ready to do his part in a new defense, in a city he'd never visited prior to signing. When he drives his massive dually truck around Nashville, he still wonders why the residential roads aren't wider.

Yet he feels like his timing is perfect here.

Back in high school, Barton didn't play his first three years because he was a late bloomer, but he finally started on varsity as a senior.

In college at Utah, he wasn't a starter his first three years, only stepping into the starting lineup when others got hurt. In his final college season, however, he started all 14 games and led the team with 116 tackles, along with four sacks and an interception.

In the NFL, Barton paid his dues his first three years in the league on special teams, while playing behind some good, veteran players on defense. But his career took off in year four, and he's been a highly productive player ever since.

Barton, whose middle name Likeke is of Hawaiian origin and means "courageous chief," feels like he's in Tennessee at just the right time.

He's ready to lead, and produce.

"Even when I was younger, I knew at some point it was going to be my time," Barton said. "I've always been a pretty positive, optimistic person. I always have that belief it's going to happen. If you really believe in something, it's going to happen.

"I feel like I'm very blessed, and feel very fortunate to be here. And I am looking forward to growing this thing, growing the culture, growing the wins, and just keep going. Everyone is hungry, and so am I."

###

**OWNER CLARK HUNT
SAYS NEW TENNESSEE
TITANS GM MIKE
BORGONZI HAD 'BIG
PART' IN CHIEFS'
SUCCESS**

***BY NICK GRAY
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
FEBRUARY 4, 2025***

Kansas City Chiefs chairman and CEO Clark Hunt shared some kind words about new Tennessee Titans general manager Mike Borgonzi during Super Bowl opening night on Monday.

While the Chiefs were in the middle of yet another playoff run, the Titans hired Borgonzi. He had spent 16 years working in the Chiefs' front office, building his résumé up from a scouting role all the way to assistant general manager. With Kansas City aiming for its third straight Super Bowl trophy and fourth in six seasons, Hunt took some time to reflect on what Borgonzi meant to his organization.

"First of all, I'm so excited that Mike's going to have an opportunity to be a general manager," Hunt told The Tennessean. "He's deserved the opportunity for a long time. He's somebody who worked his way up the personnel department, has had a variety of roles both on the college and the pro side. He's somebody who's a very good talent evaluator, which I think is critical for anybody who's in the general manager role. I just want to congratulate him and wish him all the success."

Borgonzi takes over the front office of a team that went 3-14 last season. He joins president of football operations Chad Brinker among the highest roles in the organization, and in his brief tenure, he already has hired former general managers Dave Ziegler and Reggie McKenzie as assistant general manager and vice president/football adviser, respectively.

The Titans own the No. 1 pick in the 2025 NFL Draft and are estimated to own more than \$50 million in salary cap space for the offseason.

Situations like these are relatively unfamiliar territory for Borgonzi, who spent the better part of the past decade helping the Chiefs compete for championships.

Hunt didn't want to give Borgonzi specific credit, but he did admit one thing about his longtime employee.

"I think you can look at the success that we're having and it's obviously a team effort," Hunt said. "But he was a big part of that team and I have no doubt that we wouldn't be where we are today without him."

###

NEW TITANS GM MIKE BORGONZI SHARES HIS VISION TO BUILD A WINNER

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JANUARY 22, 2025

NASHVILLE – Mike Borgonzi got the job.

Now, the new General Manager of the Tennessee Titans is ready to get to work building a winner.

But first, during his introductory press conference on Wednesday at Ascension Saint Thomas Sports Park, Borgonzi took a few minutes to let fans of the team know a little bit about him, and his vision.

"So, who am I?," Borgonzi said. "What are my beliefs and visions for this organization? First off, I'm a little bit of anomaly – I'm a Northeast guy with a funny Boston accent that loves country music. I am a proud husband and father that believes in the power of love and connection. I have a passion for the game of football. I have a passion for people. I have a passion for doing things the right way through the values of character, connection, commitment and communication.

"The identity of my leadership will be connected, it will be disciplined, and it will be detailed. I believe in what I like to call an "us" culture – unity over self in everything that we do. We will put the team above individual agendas and make the best decisions for the Titans. I believe in the power of alignment, and teamwork, throughout the entire organization, where ownership, management, coaching and scouting are all rowing in the same direction. If it's not, it simply won't work.

"My vision as a team-builder is to draft and develop," Borgonzi continued. "We want to build a foundation of home-grown talent, and reward those players that meet our standards. We will be relentless in our pursuit of building competition throughout the roster,

whether that is the draft, free agency, waiver claims or trades. And I think it's imperative that we build the right 53 on this roster as well, and not just collect talent. We need the right mixture of talent and character in order to build a championship-caliber team. We want a big, physical team in the trenches that is fast and violent on the football field. We want players that love the game of football, that are tough, smart and dependable, and they believe in unity. ... I am excited to finally start the process of building and sustaining a championship team here."

During a 40-minute press conference on Wednesday, Borgonzi thanked a long list of individuals who have influenced him over the years, while thanking those involved in the process of hiring him.

"To the people of Tennessee," Borgonzi said. "We will do everything within our power to represent you the right way and make you proud to be a Titans fan."

Borgonzi, hired last week, arrives in Tennessee with 16 years of experience with the Kansas City Chiefs. For the last four seasons, he served as Kansas City's Assistant General Manager. Prior to his promotion to Assistant General Manager, Borgonzi served as Director of Football Operations (2018-20), Director of Player Personnel (2017), Co-Director of Player Personnel (2015-16), Assistant Director of Pro Scouting (2013-14), Pro Personnel Scout (2011-12) and Manager of Football Operations (2010). He joined the Chiefs in 2009 as the club's College Scouting Administrator.

During Borgonzi's time in Kansas City, he contributed to 12 playoff seasons and three Super Bowl championships (2019, 2022-23).

In Tennessee, he takes over a team coming off a 3-14 season, with a 9-25 mark over the past two seasons.

"There is some talent on this roster, but we're a three-win football team

right now, so that's not good enough," Borgonzi said. "So, we're going to have to look everywhere to improve it, whether that's upgrading starters, upgrading depth. I'll get to sit down more here with the coaches and get a better understanding of all the players.

"There's some talent on this roster, but we're going to have to upgrade some positions, though."

Borgonzi said the team will fill some holes in free agency, but he made it clear his plan is to build the team moving forward primarily with draft picks.

He'll work alongside Chad Brinker, President of Football Operations with the Titans, and head coach Brian Callahan to do it.

"Look, I know the urgency to win in this league, no matter where you are," Borgonzi said. "We're going to be disciplined in what we do. We're not going to make rash decisions to try and try and improve the roster in ways we don't think should happen. We'll supplement in free agency, but we want to build through the draft. We need to build that core foundation of players to really change the culture, and that takes a little bit of time."

###

TITANS HIRE FORMER CHIEFS ASSISTANT GM MIKE BORGONZI AS THE TEAM'S NEXT GENERAL MANAGER

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JANUARY 17, 2025

NASHVILLE – Mike Borgonzi has been hired as the next General Manager of the Tennessee Titans.

Borgonzi, who previously served as Assistant General Manager with the Kansas City Chiefs, will arrive in Tennessee with an impressive background and great reputation.

On Friday, the team officially agreed to terms with Borgonzi, who has spent the past 16 seasons with the Chiefs.

The hire comes after a thorough search that included interviews with ten candidates, including six interviews done in-person this week at Ascension Saint Thomas Sports Park.

A press conference is expected early next week in Nashville.

"Mike's experience speaks for itself: he has been part of the core team that delivered four AFC championships and three Super Bowls over the past five seasons," said Titans Controlling Owner Amy Adams Strunk. "It's the type of standard I want to build here in Tennessee. I know we have a lot of work ahead of us, and I'm excited for Mike to get started."

Ultimately, the pairing of Borgonzi with Titans President of Football Operations Chad Brinker was viewed as a perfect fit moving forward as the franchise aims to regain its footing following a tough stretch.

"During Mike's 16 years in the league, he has been a key part of transforming the Chiefs from a two-win team to a three-time Super Bowl champion," Brinker said. "During our meetings, he articulated a clear

plan to build a championship standard in Nashville through consistency, discipline, and hard work. I've admired him for many years and I'm thrilled to add him to the team as our general manager."

Strunk and Brinker, along with President and CEO Burke Nihill, head coach Brian Callahan and others on the football staff, met with Borgonzi in Nashville earlier this week as the team conducted its search to replace Ran Carthon, who was dismissed at the end of the 2024 season.

During his interview with the team, Borgonzi shared his vision to help build and sustain a winning culture in Tennessee, doing so with a draft and free agency strategy aimed to create an identity focused on character, and commitment. His plan is to help build a championship roster in Tennessee.

Borgonzi comes from a Kansas City organization which has shown the ability to have sustained success. He's played a role in putting together three Super Bowl winning rosters, including back-to-back Super Bowl teams (LVII and LVIII). The Chiefs have participated in four of the last five Super Bowls (LIV, LV, LVII and LVIII) while winning eight-straight AFC West titles and appearing in six AFC Championship Games.

In an interview with TennesseeTitans.com on Friday, Brinker raved about Borgonzi's preparedness, and shared vision.

"He's literally thought through everything you could possibly think through as a general manager," Brinker said of Borgonzi. "He's mapped out the entire plan from everything he believes in, which is the same thing we believe in here, the draft, develop and retain model. From that to everything about being a general manager, in particular when it comes to the evaluation from pro to college, the calendar, what that looks like, the meetings ... to his plan on working with the coaching staff to the player development side of it, player

engagement, sports medicine. He literally had a plan for everything. And then he's also been at a place that's been able to execute that plan at a high level."

With the Chiefs, Borgonzi worked his way up through the ranks.

In 2021, Borgonzi was promoted to Assistant General Manager of the Chiefs after serving three seasons as the club's Director of Football Operations (2018-20) and three seasons as the club's Director of Player Personnel (2017)/Co-Director of Player Personnel (2015-16).

According to the Chiefs, Borgonzi supervised and directed the club's college and professional scouting operations while closely supporting and advising General Manager Brett Veach with the club's roster management and player acquisition via the NFL Draft, NFL free agency, street free agency, waiver claims and trades.

Prior to his current role, Borgonzi spent one year as Director of Football Operations in Kansas City. Before then, he took on the entirety of the Director of Player Personnel position in 2017 after serving alongside Veach as Co-Director of Player Personnel for two years (2015-16).

Borgonzi served as the club's Assistant Director of Pro Scouting (2013-14) and as the club's Pro Personnel Scout (2011-12) where he evaluated all professional players, recommended free agents, oversaw free agent workouts, evaluated college players and assisted the coaching staff with advance scouting reports for the teams' upcoming opponents. In 2010, he served as the club's Manager of Football Operations. Borgonzi joined the Chiefs in 2009, serving as the club's College Scouting Administrator.

Prior to joining the Chiefs, Borgonzi served two seasons as the Assistant Recruiting Coordinator at Boston College (2007-08).

Brinker noted when Borgonzi arrived in Kansas City the Chiefs were coming off a 2-14 season in 2008. Another 4-12 season then followed. But the results, and culture, ultimately changed.

"Our goal is to build a consistent winning football team that ultimately will bring a championship to Nashville," Brinker said. "And, hopefully every year we can be one of those four to eight teams that is competing for championships, that is ultimately what we'd like to get to. And, Mike has been a part of that.

"So, hopefully he can bring that with him here, and we'll work together."

In addition to Borgonzi, the Titans also conducted interviews with Dolphins Senior Personnel Executive Reggie McKenzie, former Falcons GM Thomas Dimitroff, Buccaneers Assistant General Manager John Spytek, Seahawks Senior Director of Player Personnel Matt Berry, Colts Assistant GM Ed Dodds, Bills Director of Player Personnel Terrance Gray, Browns Assistant GM & VP of Football Operations Catherine Hickman, Bears Assistant General Manager Ian Cunningham and Packers Vice President of Player Personnel Jon-Eric Sullivan.

But it was Borgonzi who landed the job.

"Mike should have been a general manager two years ago. He is ready for this job. ... And this was the place that he wanted to be," Brinker said. "When he came in the building, he said it just felt like a family here, and it reminded him a little bit of Kansas City and what they have been able to build there.

"Now we still have a lot to do from a culture perspective in our building, but he can see there's some good bones here. We have some really good people in this building, and he's looking forward to getting in here and helping us start turning the culture around and start turning over this roster and really working side-by-side with me and others. ...

He just said he felt something special when he left this building, and he felt like it was the right place for him."

"We're really excited to get him," Brinker added. "I think this will be a great partnership, that's what this is. And there's a humility to him that I love, and what he represents and who he is as a human being. I believe this will be a really good partnership."

#

COAL MINER'S SON: HOW CHAD BRINKER WORKED HIS WAY FROM MARTINS FERRY, OHIO, TO THE NFL

BY JON GREENBERG
THE ATHLETIC
DECEMBER 28, 2023

Football roads lead to football destinations so if you're wondering how someone gets to the NFL from Martins Ferry, Ohio, you start on Lou Groza Highway.

Groza is the famous son of Martins Ferry, a river town that was once busting at its seams with football and steel. Lou took his toe to Cleveland and eventually, Canton. So, as they do in small towns, they named a strip of Route 7 after him in 1986.

If you take Lou Groza Highway north alongside the Ohio River, you can find your way to Pittsburgh and that's where we find another of Martins Ferry's favorite sons, Chad Brinker, at a Thursday night football game in early November.

Brinker is in his first year as the assistant GM of the visiting Tennessee Titans and he's walking on the field at Acrisure Stadium with his boss, the impeccably dressed Titans GM Ran Carthon. But it's Brinker who's getting the attention.

It's Brinker who has a TV reporter following him around and who is greeting friends on the field and in the stands.



"Oh, yeah, you know we gave him s— for that," Carthon said later in a phone conversation. "The big homecoming of the great Brinker. ... All jokes aside, it's a cool moment just to show you where the game can take people, you know what I mean? Chad's a coal miner's son, comes from a very small town, and we've had these talks about where do you think you would be if it weren't for the game of football."

Where would the 44-year-old Brinker be without football? He's thankful he doesn't know.

"For whatever reason, God made me the way he made me," Brinker said. "And I'm meant to be in football."

There's a poem about Martins Ferry. You might've read it in the epigram of the book "Friday Night Lights." It's titled "Autumn Begins In Martins Ferry, Ohio." It's written by a native son, Pulitzer Prize winner James Wright, and it's a haunting ode to small-town life.

The ending is worth highlighting:

Therefore,

Their sons grow suicidally beautiful

At the beginning of October,

And gallop terribly against each other's bodies.

There aren't many poems about football, said Denison University professor emeritus David Baker, who recently spoke at a James Wright poetry festival in Martins Ferry. Part of the reason for that, he thinks, is how football involves a sublimation of individuality. The players are ensconced in helmets and pads. And notice, there are no names in the poem, just descriptions of the ethnicities of people in a steel town.

"This is a kind of brutal, sacrificial sport," Baker said. "And, you know, James Wright's heart was with the working-class people. I mean, his dad worked in the steel factories and his family were farmers. That was

part of his material and part of the specialness of his material. He's speaking for a group of people that aren't often or haven't often been woven into lyric poetry."

Brinker's father, Chuck, was a coal miner (he finally retired in recent years), but Chad's life in Martins Ferry wasn't bleak. He didn't play football to escape his fortunes, but he knew that football could provide a path to something greater. And boy did he "gallop terribly" as a Purple Rider running back.

"He is the best player that I ever coached and the best person I've ever coached," said Brinker's coach at Martins Ferry, Dave Bruney.

Bruney is football royalty in this slice of the Ohio Valley. Not only did he coach there for 39 years, but he has a connection to the NFL. His uncle Fred, who passed away in 2016, was employed in the NFL (or AFL) from 1953 to 1997, which was believed to have been a record until it was broken by Dick LeBeau. Fred Bruney was credited with developing the safety blitz.

Martins Ferry had its share of famous (or locally famous) athletes — the Niekro brothers and John Havilcek are from there and went to nearby Bridgeport High School, for instance — and when Brinker was a high school freshman he first wanted No. 7 because of Joey Galloway, who starred at nearby Bellaire High School. He then decided on No. 21. Bruney told him it was retired for record-setting running back Jimmy Johnson, who played in the late 1970s.

"I don't remember saying this because it doesn't sound like my personality," Brinker said, "but he claims that I sat there for a second and I said, 'Well, you can give me 32 and just go ahead and get prepared to retire that one too when I get done.' And then sure enough, they retired 32 when I got done."

Nearly 4,000 rushing yards and 51 touchdowns later, Brinker proved his younger self prescient. In his senior year, he ran for a whopping

2,024 yards and his coach remembers two games in particular, one from Brinker's junior year and one from his senior season.

As a junior playing against Indian Valley on a rainy night, Brinker's helmet popped off as he was fighting for yards and he got popped in the face by a defender's helmet. His face was ripped open under one cheek and he was rushed to a nearby hospital for stitches. When he returned, the game was in overtime and Martins Ferry was near the end zone.

"He walks up to me on the sideline, his whole face was swollen, and he said, 'Coach, if I can get my helmet on, put me in right here and I'll end the game,'" Bruney said. "And I said, 'There ain't anybody in the stadium who wants you in the game more than me right now, but I can't do it. I wouldn't do it to my son. I'm certainly not going to do it to you.'"

Indian Valley won the game, and the next year, when Martins Ferry faced that same team again, Brinker rushed for 319 yards and seven touchdowns in just over two quarters in a 71-6 win.

"I sent somebody in for him and he didn't want to come out," Bruney said. "And he said, 'Coach just let me finish one more drive because I owe these guys.'"

It was around this time that Jim Grobe, the new coach at Ohio University — where Bruney played in the 1970s — was building a program based on the triple-option offense he learned at the Air Force Academy. He made time to drive to Purple Rider Stadium for a game.

Purple Rider Stadium is set across the road from the town in the middle of an industrial park along the Ohio River. On Friday nights, it was the place to be, as Grobe, a native of Huntington, W.Va., found out.

"I was so impressed the first time I went, watched him play," Grobe said. "They had the gates (to the stadium) closed and they would open the gates and everybody would

sprint to get their seats. It was the wildest thing I'd ever seen. You're talking about standing room only. I guess, the bottom line was football was really important to the community."

Brinker went on to Ohio University, where he anchored Grobe's triple option for two years before the coach left for Wake Forest. In his redshirt sophomore year, he pulled off a touchdown trifecta (running, catching and throwing) in an upset win at Minnesota, something a former Ohio beat writer reminded him of one day when Brinker was at the Metrodome scouting for the Packers.

"Well, we didn't have anybody who could outwork him," Grobe said. "He was one of those guys that was always early for everything and late leaving. You had to almost run him off the practice field. Just great work ethic and, of course, great ability. He was, if not the fastest guy on the football team, he was one of the fastest guys."

As a redshirt junior, Brinker was racking up yardage but he was also waking up with headaches, blurred vision. He didn't want to tell the team doctors so he trudged to the student health center, where a well-meaning doctor told him he might be having panic attacks. Brinker threw away his prescription on his way out of the building and kept playing.

"Where we're from, you're not raised to say anything," Brinker said. "You're supposed to be tough and you gut it out. You think my dad, he's retired now but he went in the coal mines for over 40 years, you think he felt good being in the coal mines every day?"

In the fourth game of the season, Ohio was at home against Toledo and Brinker couldn't tough it out anymore.

"I remember losing peripheral vision and just having the excruciating pain in my head and I guess I was forgetting plays and stuff," he said. "So my teammates

are the ones that told the doctor that 'I think Chad's concussed, there's something wrong with him.' And then the doctor got a hold of me. And I think that was the first time I was a little scared."

Ohio's team doctor sent him in for a CAT scan.

"And that's when they found the mass on my brain," he said. An arachnoid cyst, to be exact.

Earlier that season, Ohio had played at West Virginia and on the sideline was Dr. Julian Bailes, a neurologist who had previously been a Steelers doctor. As Brinker was figuring out his next step from a medical standpoint, his mom happened to run into Bailes, the chair of the university's neurosurgery department, at the hospital she worked at in Wheeling, W.Va. Bailes remembered Brinker and agreed to meet with him and then perform surgery.

What could've happened if Brinker kept playing?

"First of all, he could've had sudden enlargement or swelling," Bailes said. "The cystic tumor could have bled, it could have hemorrhaged and anything can happen when that occurs and including someone having a stroke or dying. A lot of times people don't know they have something in their brain until something happens. His fortunately was headaches, but not many people are playing D-I football as a running back."

Bailes wound up removing the cyst that was lodged between Brinker's brain and his skull. The craniotomy wasn't a particularly memorable surgery for Bailes, but what happened next was a first for the neurosurgeon.

"The thing that made it unusual was his young age," Bailes said. "And the fact that he was a football player

and he wanted to go back to playing football.”

Bailes approved of Brinker’s return for his senior season because the skull had healed and he felt Brinker’s brain would be stable enough to take hits. But there wasn’t much precedent to go on.

“There have not been many people after brain surgery who returned to play football at a high level,” Bailes said. “I don’t know of anybody who’s had brain surgery and then gone on to play in the NFL. It is very likely it has happened, but I’ve never heard of it.”

But to prove it’s possible, a picture of Brinker in a New York Jets uniform hangs up in Bailes’ Chicago-area office.

After a scary recovery, Brinker started running track for Ohio University in the winter and returned to the football field the next year for his senior season. He rushed for a career-high 1,099 yards and 10 touchdowns.

After finishing with 2,826 yards and 27 rushing touchdowns, Brinker went undrafted and was invited to the Jets training camp, where he was a late cut. The next stop was NFL Europe but not for long.

It was 2004 and Brinker was in Birmingham, Ala. Back then, when you got injured in NFL Europe, you got sent there to do your medical rehab.

Brinker was with his wife, Rachele, and he was bored. They were at a bookstore and he picked up a copy of “Moneyball,” the Michael Lewis blockbuster about Billy Beane and the statistical revolution in baseball. Brinker was hooked. Here was this guy who grew up in the cradle of smash-mouth, three-yards-and-a-cloud-of-dust football, where collision is poetry, and he’s transfixed by the idea of arbitrage in sports.

“It was really interesting to me and it kind of sparked my interest in analytics on a small scale, because I

didn’t know how it would fit in football because football was so interdependent,” he said. “And over time, obviously, the interest grew and you started to see where analytics could help in football.”

But before that happened, Brinker went into medical sales and dealt with the usual post-football doldrums.

“I wasn’t clinically diagnosed with depression, but I was going through some things, you know, just struggling to find out who I was, what am I gonna do next,” he said.

The years went by, he was doing well in work in the medical sales business, and he decided to help coach high school football in the Columbus area with some friends. In 2008, he made a trip to the University of Cincinnati for a game against South Florida. He was on the sideline when he ran into Terry Bradway, the former GM of the Jets, and they got to talking about a potential future in football.

Brinker said he didn’t really want to coach, so Bradway brought up a front-office job and started introducing him to scouts.

It was Packers assistant director of college scouting Shaun Herock, who had scouted Brinker in college, who recommended he try getting into the Green Bay scouting internship program.

Brinker moved his family to Green Bay and found himself in football heaven. Ted Thompson was the GM. John Schneider, Reggie McKenzie, Russ Ball and John Dorsey worked under him. Future Packers GM Brian Gutekunst was a scout and Eliot Wolf was a rising star and his dad, Ron, was still a big influence.

“I did not realize until later how special that place was,” Brinker said.

Brinker started as a scouting assistant in 2010 and worked in both pro and college scouting. Then he was promoted to a pro scout.

Green Bay’s approach was to teach its football executives how to embrace scouting and player acquisition from a holistic approach. Scouting pro and college players, learning about the salary cap, delving into analytics, they learn a little bit about everything. But in the end, scouting is about making educated guesses, right?

“Ron Wolf said something like, sure, you can teach people what to look for in players, the different attributes and different position specifics, and teach them how to watch film and all the things that go with it, but there is an instinct to what we do,” Brinker said. “He said that we’re in the prediction business. We’re trying to predict human beings, right?”

He found that his football experience helped him trust his instincts. But beyond hitting the road to evaluate talent, Brinker also worked with his mentor Russ Ball, now the executive vice president and director of football operations, on the salary cap in Green Bay. He was getting a Ph.D. in football, but by this point, the Moneyball era had fully hit football, with new owners taking over teams and looking for the NFL’s version of Theo Epstein. Ex-jocks now had to compete with Ivy Leaguers for jobs.

“I thought I was missing some formal training, so to speak, and I wanted to accelerate my growth,” Brinker said. “Now, the ‘school of hard knocks’ works because Russ Ball is the poster child for it. The guy was a strength coach and he’s considered arguably one of the best football personnel/salary cap people in the league. So I could have learned from Russ and I was learning the practical experience and all that, but I wanted some formal education.”

In wanting to differentiate himself, Brinker, who already had a master’s in sports administration from Ohio University, applied to get his MBA part-time at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern. He surprised himself by getting in and his bosses not only agreed to him

doing the program, but they offered him time off to complete the grueling two-year program. Instead, Brinker didn't slow down, juggling a full workload in Green Bay, classes and a wife and three kids at home.

It sounded hard, but it beat working in the coal mines.

"I used to talk about his schedule, and what it was like at that point in time, and it was pretty grueling," Ball said. "So he's definitely made a commitment to his craft and to try to be the best he can with his opportunity. And I think it's going to pay dividends."

Carthon knew Brinker from the scouting circuit and trusted him as a contact. So when Carthon got the Titans GM job, he reached out to him for the assistant GM job. Funny enough, he didn't even know about Brinker's MBA, the thing that was supposed to differentiate him from other candidates. Carthon just knew he wanted him around to help build something in Tennessee.

"He had this unique background, you know," Carthon said. "Former player, he has a scouting background, has an analytics background, has a cap background. It was just unique. I thought he would provide really good insight for myself."

So after 13 years in Green Bay, he left. Brinker's focus as assistant GM is on strategy, from roster construction to working on the kind of statistical analysis that will help the front office and the coaching staff. The Titans are 5-10 going into the last two weeks of the season and headed for a top-10 draft pick.

"He's also helping us build out our analytics department here, which is going to be a robust project," Carthon said. "He's heading that up. He also works alongside Vin Marino from the salary cap standpoint, right, while also maintaining his background as a scout. He's a man of many hats."

Brinker wants to be a GM one day, but first, he has a job to do in Tennessee.

So, how do you get from Martins Ferry to the NFL? Just like with anything else in life, you make your own road.

###

**TITANS ROOKIE JARVIS
BROWNLEE JR.
PERSEVERES AFTER
BEING HIT IN DRIVE-BY
SHOOTING AS CHILD**

BY LAUREN WALSH
WSMV
JUNE 11, 2024

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (WSMV) - On the last day of the Tennessee Titans' offseason program, a bulk of rookies spoke to the media after practice.

Tennessee's 2024 fifth-round draft pick, cornerback Jarvis Brownlee Jr., was candid in sharing why he approaches earning a roster spot with such optimism and motivation.

"Since I was young, I've been through a lot," Brownlee Jr. reflected. "Starting with me getting grazed, getting shot in the third grade, I think it just all plays a part, and it all played a part in my career as well."

Brownlee Jr. shared he was hit by a bullet while riding in a car on his way to get food from Burger King, just in the third grade.

As he pursued his dream of playing football, he started his career at what he calls his dream school, Florida State. After three seasons playing for the Seminoles, he transferred to Louisville. Dealing with injuries along the way, Brownlee Jr. never waived in his pursuit of making it to the NFL, because he has been through worse.

"I think I just have that mindset to where, when adversity hits, embrace it," Brownlee Jr. said. "Just always keep working and never give up. Things happen. Everybody's not perfect. We all make mistakes, but it's all about how can you correct them and how you go about that next day and go about that next thing, so for me, it's just about keeping a short-term memory and just being the best version of me."

In his final collegiate season with Louisville, Brownlee Jr. recorded 30 tackles, six pass breakups, and an

interception, despite missing some games due to a foot injury. He said he draws his drive from what he made it through as a young child, that's helped shape who he is today.

"I think I was traumatized for a little," Brownlee Jr. said. "I was young, so it was something that I never talked about, but for me I think it changed my mindset on life and what I wanted to do with it, and ever since then, that's when I started believing in God and I just always had this vision to what I wanted to do in my life, and that was to make it to the NFL."

Brownlee Jr. and the Titans will resume practicing when training camp begins in late July.

###

**TITANS ROOKIE CB
JARVIS BROWNLEE JR.
GETTING HIS SWAGGER
BACK**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JUNE 12, 2024**

NASHVILLE – Jarvis Brownlee Jr. ended OTAs with a bang on Tuesday.

Just four plays into a 7-on-7 period, the rookie cornerback stepped in front of a pass thrown by quarterback Will Levis, and he picked it off.

Brownlee's defensive teammates celebrated as he raced the other way, capping off the biggest play of his offseason so far.

Brownlee, however, wasn't able to celebrate long.

Later in the period, he found himself on the ground doing push-ups after getting beat for a touchdown by receiver Nick Westbrook-Ikhine, who tossed the ball toward him as a reminder of the play he'd just given up.

"It's always about that short-term memory," Brownlee with a slight smile. "Just because I made a play doesn't mean I can give up the next one, or I can slack on the next play. For me, it's just working on that consistency and making sure I am keeping my technique the same and staying into it. And just knowing I have to have better eyes – that's why I got beat on that play. ... It's about consistency and staying into it."

The Titans drafted Brownlee in the fifth round of the 2024 NFL Draft.

A 5-foot-10, 194-pounder, Brownlee played his last two college seasons at Louisville after playing his first three seasons at Florida State. Brownlee played in 48 career college games, with 37 starts, and he tallied 174 tackles, six interceptions, and 7.5 tackles for a loss.

His first few months on the job have been a learning experience.

"He's a rookie, and that sums it up," Titans secondary coach Steve Jackson said of Brownlee. "This is new to him, what is expected of him. He is continuing to progress."

Brownlee, who played in 11 games, with nine starts, at Louisville in 2023, when he totaled 30 tackles, and an interception, admits it hasn't been easy.

"At first, I came out here, and had a lot to learn. I was still struggling with simple things," Brownlee said. "But as the days have gone on, I started getting better. I started getting in my playbook more, I started asking getting comfortable, asking more questions. And for me, my confidence is way up from when I came out here day one. I feel great, and I am finally getting my swagger back. I feel good."

Brownlee said he's picked the brains of the veterans in the room, from L'Jarius Sneed to Chidobe Awuzie to Roger McCreary, and he said he's learned a ton from them.

"Guys like Chido and Sneed, man," Brownlee said, "those are guys that I watched before I got into this league. So for me to be on the same team as those guys, it is a dream come true and I am grateful to have those two. I just try and take up all the knowledge that they can give me, and it's been helping me with my game. I have been learning a lot when it comes to formations and releases that I am getting, and those guys have been helping a lot with that."

Brownlee said he knows now he's on his own during the break until training camp.

Players will head their separate ways on Wednesday as the offseason program is now over, and they're not scheduled to report to training camp until July 23, with the first practice scheduled for July 24.

Brownlee vowed to be ready.

"I'm grinding," he said. "I'm grinding from here on out, that's the main thing. My goal is to come back in as great of shape as I've ever been in for training camp. And come with a chip on my shoulder and play with that edge, and have that confidence, that energy. I just (want to) be the best version of myself."

###

**JARVIS BROWNLEE JR.
MAKING STRIDES AS A
PLAYER AND LEADER
FOR LOUISVILLE**

**MATTHEW MCGAVICAUG
SPORTS ILLUSTRATED
AUGUST 4, 2023**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. - Coming over from Florida State last offseason, Jarvis Brownlee Jr. had a solid first season with the Louisville football program.

Despite some inconsistencies when it came to his play in coverage, the cornerback actually finished as one of the top statistical defenders for the Cardinals. He logged the third-most tackles on the team with 66, tied for the second-most interceptions with two, and tied for the second-most pass breakups in the ACC with 12.

Even with how well Brownlee performed at an individual level, it wasn't enough for him. He entered spring ball not only with a desire to improve his own game, but make strides as a leader and challenge players to match his energy.

At this point in the offseason, it seems that Brownlee has made significant progress in both areas.

"He's a guy that has a unique trait in that he can catch the ball, he's physical and he's tough," cornerbacks coach Steve Ellis said. "I think he has done an unbelievable job in the weight room this summer. I think he's up to 192 (pounds) right now, so he's really invested in his body. From an explosive standpoint, just from spring until now, he's better."

Ellis isn't just hyping Brownlee up. In spring ball earlier this year, the 6-foot-0 and 190-pound cornerback was routinely one of the best defensive backs during the open practices. Not only was he as physical as ever against both wide receivers and running backs alike, but he appeared to make good progress when it came to his play in coverage. He was a lot more

consistent when staying locked on a receiver in man coverage, and limited the amount of times he was burnt down the field.

This progression in his game has also been apparent over the first two days of fall camp. No matter who he has lined up against in 1-on-1's, 7-on-7's or in 11-on-11's, he has regularly locked down his receiver in man coverage or that side of the field in zone coverage. The only receiver to have any sort of sustained success against him so far has been Jamari Thrash, who was one of the most explosive receivers in college football last season.

In fact, Brownlee has done so well that he has teammates trying to emulate his game. Or at the very least, trying to add parts of his game to their own.

"I piggyback off of JB," cornerback Quincy Riley said. "He's a physical guy, so I took some of his game and put it into mine. Last year, I wasn't so violent with breaking on the ball and my punch attack. But this year, I said I'm going to play more physical and play bigger. I just watch him, and how he'll go towards the ball, how he makes contact, and I'm like, 'I gotta play into that more.' I think that has helped me take strides in my game. I already have ball skills, now I just need that second part."

So far, adding bits and pieces of Brownlee's game to his own has worked out for Riley. On the second day of fall camp alone, Riley had multiple pass breakups, and was one of the top performers overall in the practice.

Related: Notes and Observations from Louisville's Second Open Fall Camp Practice

As far as progressing as a leader goes, that has also been evident to everyone around him. Ellis even points back to a kids camp that Louisville hosted over the summer, and Brownlee was out there for all three days trying to make an impact on the campers.

"From sun up to sun down, he's teaching the five and six-year-olds how to catch the football, how to run routes, how to tackle, because he's a guy that loves ball," Ellis said.

Ellis challenged Brownlee to "establish the standard" not long after joining head coach Jeff Brohm's staff, and Brownlee has taken that to heart. He said he has always felt like a leader due to his status as an older player, but isn't trying to be the commanding type, but instead someone that everyone on the team can look up to and come to.

"Honestly, my role is just be the best player I can be for this team, and to put us in a winning position," he said. "Yeah, I'm a leader, we all know that. But I don't try to take it like that. I just try to be a brother, and a guy that just leads by example and makes sure everybody on the right path. That's really my role."

Of course, he's also striving to become the best on-field player he can be. With how physical he already is, that mainly revolves around becoming more consistent, whether that be in pass coverage or in any other facet of his game.

"Basically, I just work on being consistent," he said. "I know if I be consistent, nobody could beat me on my game. I know if I'm consistent, I'm gonna be the best player that this team needs."

###

**TITANS HC BRIAN
CALLAHAN THANKFUL
TO HAVE HIS FATHER,
BILL, ON COACHING
STAFF**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
FEBRUARY 16, 2024**

NASHVILLE – New Titans head coach Brian Callahan won't have to look far for valuable advice on just about anything.

He hired his dad, veteran coach Bill Callahan, as the team's offensive line coach, and he arrived with quite a reputation.

"He has been the gold standard in this business," NFL Network analyst Brian Baldinger, a former NFL offensive lineman, said of Bill Callahan. "He knows how to develop players, develop a line. He's an amazing offensive line coach. You couldn't get a better hire."

Bill Callahan brings 46 years of coaching experience to the Titans, including 25 years in the NFL and six as a head coach (two at Oakland and four at the University of Nebraska).

Callahan joined the Titans after four seasons (2020-23) as the offensive line coach for the Browns. During his time in Cleveland, the Browns qualified for the playoffs twice and in 2022, the team recorded the third-highest rushing total (2,490) in franchise history. In 2021, the Browns led the NFL in rushing average with a 5.09 mark, which was the highest by a Browns team since 1966.

"I learned a lot from him, not only technique and fundamentals, but also how to be a pro," Browns guard Wyatt Teller said of Callahan, from the Pro Bowl. "He's a hard, hard coach, so they're getting their work worth down there. ... Those guys are going to be getting a lot of work, but I know it's going to pay off."

Brian Callahan on Wednesday discussed hiring his father publicly for the first time.

He thanked the Browns for allowing his father to leave, considering he was still under contract.

"I wasn't sure he would be, contractually allowed to," Callahan said. "But they were aware enough to know the uniqueness of the situation and allow it to continue to go down that road. So appreciative of that perspective from them and allowing it to happen."

When the Browns freed up Bill Callahan to leave, Bill made it clear he wanted to join his son in Tennessee.

Bill Callahan was the Head Coach for the University of Nebraska for four seasons (2004-07), and he spent six seasons (1998-03) with the Oakland Raiders, including his final two seasons as Head Coach.

During his time in the NFL, he has spent 22 seasons coaching the offensive line and seven years as offensive coordinator. He has guided 14 offensive linemen to a total of 35 Pro Bowl selections.

"I would say, as far as experience goes, there's not really anybody that has more in all the different facets of an organization," Brian Callahan said of his father. "He's been a head coach in college and the NFL. He's called plays in the NFL. He's been arguably, in my opinion, the best offensive line coach in football for a long time. His experience and his wealth of knowledge. He's probably forgotten more football than I know. And so, it's a huge asset to us to have him. And again, not just because that's my father, but because of his experience as a football coach. And again, there's not many better out there. Nick (Holz) worked for him a long time ago. I would argue that they're probably both very different people at this point. My dad in particular. But just the ability to have that knowledge, experience, wisdom, perspective, on all the things that go on from top-to-bottom in the football process, not just the

coaching. And so, to have that available to us is huge, and trust me, he'll have quite a bit of input and ability to help us along the process."

###

**TITANS ASSISTANT BILL
CALLAHAN SELECTED AS
PFWA 2024 PAUL "DR. Z"
ZIMMERMAN AWARD
WINNER**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JUNE 4, 2024**

NASHVILLE – Titans offensive line coach Bill Callahan has been selected as a 2024 Paul "Dr. Z" Zimmerman Award winner by the Professional Football Writers of America (PFWA).

Callahan and Chiefs defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo were both announced on Tuesday, and they became the 24th and 25th recipients of the Dr. Z Award, which was instituted by the PFWA in 2014.

The Dr. Z Award is given for lifetime achievement as an assistant coach in the NFL. The award is named for Zimmerman, who covered the NFL for 29 years as Sports Illustrated's lead pro football writer.

The veteran Callahan was hired as offensive line coach with the Titans earlier this offseason.

Callahan has coached 25 seasons in the NFL, and 46 seasons overall. During his time in the NFL, he has spent 22 seasons coaching the offensive line and seven years as offensive coordinator. Callahan has guided 14 offensive linemen to a total of 35 Pro Bowl selections.

Prior to joining the Titans, where he's serving on his son Brian's staff, Callahan spent the previous four seasons (2020-23) with Cleveland as the O-line coach. He also coached with Washington (2015-19), Dallas (2012-14), New York Jets (2008-11), Oakland (1998-2003; including 2002-03 as head coach), and he began his NFL career with Philadelphia (1995-97). He was head coach at Nebraska (2004-07) as part of a 15-season collegiate coaching career, and he also spent two seasons in the high school ranks.

PAUL "DR. Z" ZIMMERMAN
AWARD WINNERS (For lifetime achievement as an assistant coach in the NFL): 2014 – Jim Johnson, Howard Mudd, Fritz Shurmur and Ernie Zampese; 2015 – Dick LeBeau, Tom Moore and Dante Scarnecchia; 2016 – Monte Kiffin and Wade Phillips; 2017 – Bud Carson; 2018 – Joe Bugel and Emmitt Thomas; 2019 – Gunther Cunningham and Mike Westhoff; 2020 – Bill Arnsparger and Romeo Crennel; 2021 – Rod Marinelli and Bobby Turner; 2022 – Leslie Frazier and Greg Knapp; 2023 – Don "Wink" Martindale, Bobb McKittrick and John Mitchell; 2024 – Bill Callahan and Steve Spagnuolo

###

BRIAN CALLAHAN, ZAC TAYLOR SHARE RARE FOOTBALL JOURNEY: ‘WOULDN’T BE HERE WITHOUT YOU’

**BY PAUL DEHNER JR.
THE ATHLETIC
DECEMBER 11, 2024**

Hours before kickoff of his first game as a National Football League head coach, Brian Callahan sat alone in the head coach’s office inside the visiting locker room at Solider Field in Chicago.

When the 40-year-old accepted the Tennessee Titans head coach job on Jan. 24, his work and life transformed into a relentless firehose of questions and answers, schedules and schemes, people-managing and problem-solving.

Yet, for one moment on opening day, the chaos ceased.

Callahan was alone with his thoughts on the brink of beginning a defining chapter of his career.

He pulled out his phone. He needed to text Zac Taylor.

“Since I have found we get very rare moments of reflection, this lonely ass office on gameday is great for it,” Callahan wrote. “Appreciate everything you have done for me to help me get this opportunity. One of 32 head coaches. Good luck today. Rooting for you guys.”

The reply came quickly.

Bzzt.

“Love it,” Taylor wrote back. “Deserve it. Wouldn’t be here without you.”

Zac Taylor and Brian Callahan watch their team in their first minicamp as Bengals head coach and offensive coordinator in April of 2019. (John Minchillo / Associated Press)

Callahan served as Taylor’s offensive coordinator and closest

confidant for five years as the Cincinnati Bengals rose from organizational rubble to championship games. Their friendship was born during Callahan’s spring breaks from UCLA spent at spring practices at the University of Nebraska, where Taylor played quarterback under Brian’s father, Bill. It developed into a football friendship as rare as the Bengals making the Super Bowl.

Even just finding the text message from Sept. 8 took minutes last week as Callahan aggressively scrolled through hundreds of texts, tips, photos, rants and jokes swapped in the name of sanity over the last three months.

Both coaches are enduring uniquely frustrating and exhausting seasons as the Bengals and Titans meet Sunday at Nashville’s Nissan Stadium — the Bengals are 5-8 and have a minuscule shot at the playoffs while the Titans have struggled to 3-10. Even in the impossibly competitive NFL world, they’ve lifted each other up from afar, just as they did together in Cincinnati.

“When I am sitting in the locker room after a loss, no one texts you,” Taylor said. “Except for my mom and my wife. My brother, maybe. And then it will be Cally. Most people don’t know what to say or do. He knows exactly what I’m doing in the moment. He knows I’m sitting there staring at the table thinking about all the things that just went wrong trying to win the game. And then your phone lights up. You know it’s going to be him.”

‘I felt the care. I felt the patience.’

When Callahan stood behind the podium during his introduction as coach of the Titans he admitted after only a few words the emotions of this moment might be harder to suppress than he thought.

He appeared to collect himself, however, running through a list of people to thank and expressions of gratitude about arriving at this moment.

That was until he reached the topic of Bengals’ owner Mike Brown. A man often the punchline of jokes and target for vitriol from outsiders broke the levee of Callahan’s tears and brought the news conference to a temporary halt as he tried to collect himself.

Why was it Brown who drew out those feelings?

“It was the full-circle moment of having to be a head coach but reflecting back on him investing and trusting in us when I first got there,” Callahan said last week. “I was 34 years old and given an opportunity with a bunch of guys that were kind of green and didn’t know much. I always found Mike was generous with his wisdom.”

The Bengals went 6-25-1 in the first two years with Taylor and Callahan leading the ship. Underneath the losses, they saw the progress. They felt the culture was changing, the talent level rising, but understood what that record meant in 31 other cities.

Brown believed and allowed more time. The decision changed the course of Callahan’s career as the Bengals reached the final four in back-to-back seasons.

Cincinnati operates differently — a way often scrutinized — but for someone who went through it, the opportunity to be in the center circle of all the decisions, from scouting to free agency to regular conversations with ownership about the issues of the day, left a lasting impression on his development and his heart.

“I felt the investment,” Callahan said. “I felt the care. I felt the patience. It’s rare in the NFL anymore to have somebody have perspective and have patience. I always felt like there was joy in that for him, too, to see people grow. I thought that was awesome. He’s such a rarity, I think, in the NFL because of how long he has done it, the perspective from years and years and years of doing it. The pride he felt running the football team. I just

think there is something really cool about that.”

It was also part of what drew Callahan to family-owned Tennessee. The true differentiator, however, for Callahan was how Taylor took him behind the curtain of life as a head coach with complete transparency during their five years.

One day would be an issue with a player’s family. Injury developments. Maybe a trade request. An important interview. Practice schedule planning. An explosive conversation. A message from captains about the locker room. A player unhappy with his role. Potential coaching changes. Questions from the front office. Need for a discipline decision. Agents entering the fray. Work-life balance concerns. The list goes on.

“It was always funny because I would be in his office a lot, game planning, talking about things, you just realize the flow of people,” Callahan said. “There were people knocking at his door every five minutes. And you are like, ‘This is the most irritating s–t I have ever seen.’ But that’s the job. That’s what happens. There’s always people that need your time.”

In turn, Taylor needed Callahan’s time. For every problem, he needed somebody he could lean on. From Year 1 to the day the big issue of the moment was losing Callahan to Tennessee and working to retain Dan Pitcher as the new coordinator, Callahan was always nearly always the first ear to hear the process.

“He was the guy. If I was going through something, I was going right to his office and vent about it for a second,” Taylor said. “As a byproduct of that, he got to see exactly what I was going through and how I handled it.”

It often included a debrief of how a situation went wrong or a surprising source of frustration. How Taylor would do things differently next time. All of it ended up filling pages upon pages in Callahan’s Notability

app. Those notes are now referenced regularly as he’s morphed his note-taking philosophy into a near replica of Taylor’s exhaustive method.

Callahan coached on NFL staffs for seven head coaches with the Broncos, Lions, Raiders and Bengals. From his perspective, this was rare.

“I just think about the head coaches I’ve been around — who are phenomenal head coaches and great people — I never heard of our coordinators having the kind of consistent conversation that Zac and I would have,” he said. “And understanding what was happening in the organization. All the things as an assistant coach you never think about. You are not exposed to it. I was exposed to all of it. I’m not saying other guys haven’t done this in other places, I just think my relationship with Zac, our friendship first and foremost and like-mindedness, to really connect personally and professionally, he really invested in me. I wouldn’t have been ready for the job without Zac doing all those things. Not even close to ready.”

When Titans general manager Ran Carthon began introducing Callahan that day in January, he thanked a long list of members of the Tennessee Titans organization, rattling off nine names along with their entire business staff.

Then he paused.

“One person who is not a member of this organization I would like to thank is Zac Taylor,” Carthon said. “His ability to communicate with us about Brian is unmatched.”

Carthon reached out to Taylor during the interview process and the “unmatched” aspect of what transpired wasn’t all that strenuous in the eyes of the Bengals’ coach. He’d seen Callahan grow and command the offense, understand the operation, offer intricate knowledge of multiple schemes, leadership, quarterback play and every other aspect of being a head coach over the previous five years.

For him, this wasn’t hard. It was overdue.

“Ran reached out and asked if you had a couple minutes to talk, I’d love to do it,” Taylor said. “I appreciated that. You don’t feel like you are selling someone, I’m just talking about Brian and all the reasons why I think he’s ready.”

‘I know exactly what he is feeling right now’

Titans receiver Tyler Boyd spent the first eight seasons of his career in Cincinnati. When all financials ended up similar among the final three teams on his list as a free agent, it was an “easy pick for me” going to Nashville.

“Because Cally is my guy,” Boyd said last week.

Boyd knows as much as anyone about the culture Callahan wanted to instill in Tennessee and what transformed a dire situation in Cincinnati.

Many details are the same. The quarterbacks still play “Jeopardy!” on Saturday night. The practice and camp schedules are similar. The terminology is much the same, as they spent the offseason installing mostly Cincinnati base concepts before growing the attack around the personnel from there.

The language of the team mission statement isn’t identical, not the “Physical, Hungry, Accountable Teammate” line on the wall at Paycor Stadium that Boyd would rattle off instinctively by the end of his tenure.

But the theme is the same. Everything revolves around becoming a connected team.

That takes time. And can take losses and offseasons, both of which Taylor and Callahan navigated together in Cincinnati. At the end of the 2020 season, they saw a team start to turn the corner under the surface despite an ugly record and grow into a Super Bowl run the next

year. He sees the same signs of that with the Titans despite a 3-10 mark.

But this isn't Cincinnati South.

"Cally has his own unique coaching style and it's different than Cincinnati," said cornerback Chidobe Awuzie, who spent the previous three seasons with the Bengals before signing with the Titans in free agency. "He's a real fiery spirit."

Zac Taylor's relationship with Brian Callahan spawned from his days playing quarterback for Bill Callahan, right, at Nebraska. (Brian Bahr / Getty Images)

The spirit has stood out to those who know both places best.

"Cally was more the aggressor than Zac was," Boyd said. "I always knew he was going to never shy away from letting his voice be heard."

When Taylor comes across Callahan's fiery moments, whether sideline shots or postgame comments, he doesn't need to wait for his phone to buzz.

"I can tell watching his press conference after games exactly how he feels," Taylor said. "Just because of a little moment where it's like, 'Yep, I don't believe a word he is saying because I know exactly what he is feeling right now.' You can maybe only see it in myself and somebody else going through that situation."

This season's situation provided no shortage of fire, frustration and venting while Callahan grinded through the monstrous task of enduring Year 1 as a head coach. He knew this would test him like no other moment in his career and he was mentally prepared because he lived it with Taylor.

"If I had not seen that," he said, "that would hit you between the eyes."

That hasn't made the toughest moments any easier.

Bzzt.

"Football sucks," Callahan texted to Taylor after one loss, joking as a form of catharsis. "This is a miserable sport."

'I also want to beat their ass'

Upon returning to his office following a 41-24 victory against the Raiders on Nov. 3, Pitcher wanted to alert Callahan of a play he would appreciate.

It was a 47-yard touchdown pass to Mike Gesicki that faked an underneath screen against a nosy Raiders secondary and left the tight end all alone running free in the secondary for one of the easiest scores you'll see.

They loved those types of plays and hit one in a blowout win at Baltimore in 2021 to C.J. Uzomah.

Bzzt.

"I just said, 'Hey, I know you are a connoisseur of these types of plays. Check out the fourth quarter,'" Pitcher said. "He had already seen it."

Callahan's always watching what's happening in Cincinnati. He says if he can't win the Super Bowl, he wants the Bengals to win it. He wants Joe Burrow to break all the records if his team can't. He wants Pitcher — next in line on the Bengals' staff to potentially ascend to a head coach position — to enjoy the same success he did going through three years of growth navigating the coaching cycle.

That's why in the middle of the summer when Pitcher reached out for a debrief of Callahan's experience, they talked for two hours on the phone.

"I just wanted to know, 'What was it like for you? What did you feel most prepared for? What did you feel least prepared for?'" Pitcher said. "I took a lot of really good notes. I wanted to get him while it was fresh in his mind. I think as time goes on, I'm sure if you ask Zac about his

transition his first year he probably doesn't remember a lot of things that he dealt with. It just fades. So he was awesome and super gracious."

None of that was shocking considering the connection between everyone and gratitude connecting these two franchises and these two head coaches.

That makes this Sunday so unique. For them, it's not just another game, but also not a bitter cage match opening old wounds. Callahan went through it coaching against his father, Bill, for many years, even in the division with the Browns. They since have joined forces for the first time with his dad as offensive line coach in Tennessee for what Brian called "the coolest experience of my coaching career."

He knows Burrow will be trying to put up 50 and defensive coordinator Lou Anarumo will be dipping into his bag of tricks for schemes that worked in training camp against Callahan.

This week around both facilities will feature plenty of "they-know-that-I-know-that-they-know-but-do-they-know-that-I-know-they-know?" plotting.

"You just watch the tape, scheme it up," Taylor said. "There are things he's going to know about us and we know about him, see if it matters."

Friendships aside, Brian Callahan will try to go 1-0 against his old team on Sunday in Nashville. (Troy Taormina / Imagn Images)

When it ends, Taylor and Callahan will meet at midfield for a quick meeting, then retreat to that lonely coach's office, well aware of what will be coming across the stadium WiFi.

Bzzt.

"They are people I care about and root for," Callahan said. "It's different when it's somewhere that fired you. You want to burn the building down and go play them. You hope they lose by 100. That's

not how I feel with everyone there. I truly want success for all those guys, players, coaches, ownership, front office. Love those guys. I love them. That will be a little bit weird. I also want to beat their ass.”

#

NEW HEAD COACH BRIAN CALLAHAN FEELS LIKE HE FOUND THE PERFECT FIT WITH TITANS

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JANUARY 25, 2024

NASHVILLE – Brian Callahan got emotional.

At other points during Thursday's introductory press conference, the new Titans head coach showed some fire.

With plenty of questions about the team's roster, his coaching staff and the challenges ahead in turning the Titans into a contender again, Callahan made one thing clear when asked what he wants to see from his team on a consistent basis.

"Resilient and relentless," Callahan said. "You want your team to have those two qualities, and if you have those things, if you are resilient and can handle the ups and downs, the good and the bad, and you are relentless in how you approach every day at work, every day at practice, every game you play, your results, they'll come.

"If you turn on the tape and you watch the Tennessee Titans, I hope those are the two words that come to mind."

Callahan arrives in Tennessee after 14 years of NFL coaching experience, including the past five seasons as the offensive coordinator for the Cincinnati Bengals.

Callahan was a popular candidate on the NFL circuit, with trips planned for Carolina and Atlanta after his visit to Tennessee.

But the Titans convinced Callahan to stay in Nashville. Callahan said it became evident to him the Titans would be the best fit for him and his family, and the two sides struck a deal.

"It felt just like the place I was at (in Cincinnati)," Callahan said of the

Titans. "And I mean that in the most complimentary way possible, because I loved being there. You felt the atmosphere here, you felt the intensity, you felt the want to be great. And when I walked in here Monday for the interview, that's one of the things that stood out. There's a lot of passionate people here that want the Titans to be a great football team. I felt like, "That's where I want to be."

"I felt like this was the perfect fit for me."

Over the past three seasons (2021-23), when as Callahan served as offensive coordinator in Cincinnati, the Bengals offense ranked in the NFL's top 10 in several categories: sixth in scoring (24.9), seventh in passing (250.8 yards per game), seventh in red-zone efficiency (61.5 percent), 10th in third-down percentage (41.0) and sixth in time of possession (31:00).

Callahan played a key role in developing Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow, just like he had an influence at previous stops with the Raiders, Lions and Broncos with quarterbacks Derek Carr, Matthew Stafford and Peyton Manning.

On Thursday, Callahan discussed Titans quarterback Will Levis, saying he likes his competitive spirit, and ability.

But now he has an entire team to coach, and he'll do it his way.

"My coaching style is consistent, my demeanor is pretty consistent," Callahan said. "I pride myself on being a great teacher, that is first and foremost. As a coach, that is all you really care about is how well you can teach and articulate to the players what they need to do. I have plenty of intensity. I have a pretty laid-back demeanor most of the time, as you guys will see, but when it is time to make corrections and bring the energy that is necessary, I can do that. But my coaching style is a teaching coaching style.

"We're trying to make sure that our guys know exactly what to do, how

to do it, and they can go execute at a really high level and as fast as humanly possible."

###

**FROM THE NFL
COMBINE: BRIAN
CALLAHAN SETTLING IN
AS HEAD COACH OF THE
TITANS, EVEN IF THINGS
AREN'T SETTLING DOWN**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
FEBRUARY 28, 2024**

INDIANAPOLIS – Brian Callahan strolled out of his hotel lobby early on Wednesday morning, on the way to visit with some of the prospects in this year's NFL Draft.

Callahan barely made it out the door before Chargers coach Jim Harbaugh approached him, shook his hand, and congratulated him. Callahan, in turn, congratulated Harbaugh, for his championship season at Michigan, and his own new gig in the NFL.

The coaches then headed down the escalator and into the busy hallways at the Indianapolis Convention Center, here at the NFL Combine, en route to Lucas Oil Stadium.

Callahan has had countless interactions this week, his first combine as a head coach.

"Getting a lot of 'Congrats'," Callahan said with a smile, "and I appreciate it. It's been really cool, to see everyone's excitement for me, being happy for me and all that. It makes all of this even more exciting."

It's been just over a month since Callahan was introduced as the next head coach of the Tennessee Titans. His life has been a whirlwind since, as he's worked to hire his first coaching staff while also juggling tasks at the office, from meetings with coaches, scouts, players, other team officials, media, along with a few appearances with season ticket members.

Free agency, and the NFL Draft, of course, are two big events on the horizon.

Callahan keeps a running list in the Notes app on his phone when something pops in his head he could forget.

Along the way, he's received plenty of advice.

One exchange stuck out: It was with Colts General Manager Chris Ballard.

"Just make sure you enjoy it, and have fun," Callahan recalled Ballard telling him. "He told me, 'You are ready for it, you are prepared, so enjoy it.' And I have tried to do that – enjoy the process of it all. I have had fun, and I have enjoyed it. And, he also said: Take your time. Don't be in a rush, and don't feel like you have to get everything done in one day."

A long-time assistant, most recently as offensive coordinator with the Bengals, Callahan said he's learning the flow of his day is different as a head coach.

But he is having fun as he's settling in, and prepares for what's on the horizon.

Two men he worked with in Cincinnati – Bengals head coach Zac Taylor and Bengals Director of Player Personnel Duke Tobin – said here at the combine Callahan was clearly ready for the next step.

"They're getting a good coach and we're losing a good coach," Tobin said of Callahan, and the Titans. "They're getting a guy that is a hundred percent ready for the job. Brian has the exact personality that you want in that position. He's super bright. He's a people person. He relates well to players, to staff, to everyone in the building. He's grown up around football. He's got a tremendous amount of great ideas and thoughts. He's got the right demeanor and personality. So, it's a great hire for them and it's a big loss for us. We really enjoyed our time with Brian. I knew he was ready. I knew he had, it was just a matter of another team identifying that and they did and we're really happy for him."

When Titans General Manager Ran Carthon reached out to Taylor about Callahan, he gave him a strong endorsement as well.

"He sat right by my side for five years, and became one of my best friends," Taylor said of Callahan. "He was ready for the opportunity and was a big part of our success. And I'm confident he'll be a big part of their success in Tennessee."

Callahan's first month on the job has included a lot of work, away from his family. Callahan's wife and two kids remain in Cincinnati, so they try and connect via FaceTime either early in the morning or at night. His days have been so busy, in fact, some days fly by before he realizes he hasn't checked in. The entire Callahan family plans to move to Nashville after the current school year, when they'll find their new home.

For now, Callahan is living in an apartment in the West End area.

He's eaten at places like Kayne Prime Steakhouse and Pelato in Germantown.

"Been to a Predators game," he said, "and looking forward to going back. They're hot right now."

Callahan once took a stroll down Broadway to get a feel for the city. When he's been out, he's occasionally been recognized.

"I've been pretty anonymous, I think, but a few folks have come up, which is kind of new for me," he said. "Everyone has been very kind and welcoming. A lot of hellos, and 'Welcome to Nashville'. It's been a nice welcome."

Most of Callahan's time, however, has been spent at Ascension Saint Thomas Sports Park.

On most days, he's there early, and out the door at 9 p.m., which is closer to a regular season schedule than an offseason one.

But there's been work to do, and people to get to know.

At a recent staff meeting, Callahan put up pictures of four or five people with the team, and called on folks to see if they knew them.

"It's one of those things to remind people: Get to know people who work here," Callahan said. "I do it just as much for me as I do for them."

Callahan is still getting to know players returning from last season.

He's called a good number of them, but not all. Some have gone out of their way to stop by his office. He'll get to know all of them when the offseason program gets under way on April 8, a date he's looking forward to.

Some, he's already getting to know well.

"I joke with Ryan Stonehouse all the time," Callahan said of the team's punter. "I think he's been in the building every single day I've been there — every Saturday, every Sunday. If I am in the building, I am going to see Stoney at some point. So, I've seen the most of him. Obviously, Will (Levis) has been around a little bit. He always stops by when he is in the building."

As Callahan headed toward his meeting with the prospects this morning, he gave a quick detail on what he's looking for in players.

High character, being coachable, consistent, and a passion for football are traits he's looking for. Callahan also wants speed and explosiveness on both sides of the football.

The past month has given Callahan a taste of what's on the horizon.

It's also made him hungry for more.

"As a head coach, there's a lot to do for sure," Callahan said. "But I have not felt overwhelmed by any of it. A lot of it, I felt like I knew was coming. And I feel really prepared for it. I haven't had any moment

where it's like 'Oh man, this is a much bigger deal than I thought it would be. I feel really good about it. I'm really, really excited.'"

#

**TITANS HC BRIAN
CALLAHAN'S OPENING
MESSAGE TO TEAM
CENTERS ON
RESILIENCY,
RELENTLESSNESS**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
APRIL 10, 2024**

NASHVILLE – New Titans head coach Brian Callahan held his first team meeting this week, and his message was clear – he wants his team to be relentless, and resilient.

Also, he wants guys to feel comfortable, and to be themselves.

The Titans began their offseason program on Monday, which Callahan referred to as "an orientation."

"We're trying to lay out expectations, guidelines, what we want our team to look like," Callahan said. "(The opening message) was two things: Two critical factors that we want our team to be when you turn our tape on is relentless and resilient, and they got that message the first day. It's a huge part of what I believe in. And, then the other part of it is, just some very simple things that we have expectation-wise. I don't do rules, I don't have a lot of things they need to abide by, but I want guys to be themselves. I want guys to be on time, and I want to protect our team. That is what I live by. So that's sort of the first opening message that they got. The opening message was certainly we want to be a relentless and resilient football team."

Callahan, formerly offensive coordinator with the Bengals, was named head coach back in January.

In the first few weeks on the job, Callahan hired his first coaching staff. Callahan has been busy in all facets since, making trips to the NFL Combine, the NFL owners meetings, and pro days, in addition to working with his new staff, gearing up for the start of the offseason program.

For the Titans, that started on Monday with Phase One.

Callahan said he's been pleased with the attendance right out of the gate.

"There's been great energy with all the players in the building," Callahan said. "I just felt the excitement. Any time there is change, you can handle it one of two ways: You can be disappointed by it, or you can be excited and ready to embrace whatever comes your way. I think these guys have done a great job embracing the newness of it all, and the excitement of what's to come, and I've appreciated that from them. I've felt really good about the start we've had this week."

The Titans are scheduled to hold a veteran minicamp from April 22-24.

The team's rookie minicamp, which will follow the NFL Draft, is scheduled for May 10-13.

The Titans will hold voluntary OTAs in May and June, along with a mandatory minicamp from June 4-6.

The offseason program will end in mid-June, and training camp will begin in late July.

"We are going to coach as hard as we can, as much as we can, for the time we are allotted," Callahan said. "And whoever is here is going to be here. But I have been very pleased with our attendance so far this week."

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WHAT MAKES BENGALS OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR BRIAN CALLAHAN A RISING NFL COACH

**BY DAN POMPEI
THE ATHLETIC
AUGUST 30, 2022**

CINCINNATI — One minute left, and the Bengals and Jaguars are tied at 21.

On second-and-13, Jaguars defensive coordinator Joe Cullen calls for a zero blitz. Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow checks to a screen pass to tight end C.J. Uzomah — the perfect counter move — and Uzomah goes 25 yards to set up the winning field goal.

Of course, credit for the long gain on the play went to Burrow.

But it also should have gone to Peyton Manning.

From 2012 through 2015, Bengals offensive coordinator Brian Callahan worked with Manning in Denver as an assistant in various capacities. It was Manning who influenced Callahan to prepare for every possible pressure and make him understand that the protection plan is the most essential part of any game plan.

“It’s one of the things most deeply ingrained in me from my time with Peyton,” Callahan says, “I spent hours combing through tape for Peyton, finding all the blitzes, drawing them up, presenting them to him. He always wanted answers — what calls to make to get the blitz blocked, what plays to check to, how to make a team pay for blitzing him. (Now) I always want to give Joe as many answers as he needs for what he might encounter.”

Before the game against the Jaguars, Callahan studied Cullen back to his days as a defensive line coach with the Ravens. He suspected a zero blitz might be coming with the game on the line and advised Burrow accordingly,

Callahan’s understanding of exceptional quarterbacks has elevated him and his teams.

“He’s seen a lot of successful quarterbacks and how they worked, and that experience has helped us,” Bengals coach Zac Taylor says.

“The more exposure you can get in this league to players and systems that are successful, the better you are if you are willing to learn,” says Matthew Stafford, another quarterback Callahan has coached. “He’s always finding ways to be a better coach by learning from players as well as coaches.”

The quarterbacks in Callahan’s past tell the story of where he’s been. And they also reveal where he’s going.

Randall Cunningham

In a closet of a home not far from Paul Brown Stadium, there is a porcelain figurine of Cunningham, depicted as the quarterback of the Eagles. During a move long ago, one of the figurine’s legs was broken. It was glued back together and remains in the box it came in, protected by the original Styrofoam.

Callahan’s father, Bill, who later became head coach of the Raiders and now is the offensive line coach of the Browns, was the Eagles’ offensive line coach in the mid-1990s. As a seventh grader, Brian served as a ball boy for the team during camp. Cunningham asked him to play catch once, and they struck up a relationship.

And then one day Cunningham gave Callahan that figurine, a treasure still.

“What an awesome moment it was to receive that,” Brian says. “I was in awe when I saw him. He was so big. He was a superstar at the time, but he was so nice to me, so gracious.”

Previously, Brian had spent many days around the Wisconsin football team with his brother Danny when

Bill was the offensive coordinator. To hear Bill tell it, they were “gym rats.”

But playing catch with Cunningham at Eagles camp and watching how a star quarterback carried himself was something special, and the first of many significant quarterback intersections in his life.

Rich Gannon

The Raiders were preparing for a training camp practice in 1998 when Gannon called over Callahan, then a high school freshman who also played quarterback. They chatted as Gannon warmed up. From then on, Gannon talked to him a little every day.

Callahan always had questions.

“Why did the coach call that play against that defense?”

“Why did you throw to this receiver instead of that one?”

“Against this look, should you expect blitz or coverage?”

Gannon was known for being all business, but he admired young Callahan’s curiosity and respectful approach. He gave him pointers about throwing mechanics and footwork, and he especially tried to teach Callahan about the mental part of quarterbacking — the attributes that too often are minimized but were Gannon’s NFL lifeblood. He told him about the importance of toughness, work ethic and preparedness, and explained why amazing throws have less to do with winning games than amazing decisions.

Callahan learned the most by watching Gannon interact with others.

“He was very demanding,” Callahan says of the quarterback who was voted NFL MVP while playing for Callahan’s father in 2002. “He didn’t care. He wanted to win. It was my first time seeing somebody like that where it was, either you do it right, at the level I expect, or I’m

kind of done with you. I was in awe of that kind of command. He wasn't always nice. He was prickly. But he was brilliant."

This, Callahan thought, is what a quarterback should be like.

In the evenings, Callahan followed his father to the offensive installation meetings. There, he watched head coach Jon Gruden, offensive coordinator Marc Trestman and other coaches install plays for Gannon and the other players. Then, it was Gannon asking questions.

Says Gannon, now an analyst with CBS Sports and NFL Radio, "He soaked it all up."

Tim Tebow

The 2007 Heisman Trophy winner was one of the most beloved athletes in the country when he became the starting quarterback of the Broncos in 2011. His biceps were prettier than his passes, but Tebow's performances were enchanting in a way most football coaches could not understand.

Head coach John Fox and offensive coordinator Mike McCoy knew they could not win with Tebow in a conventional system, so they decided to incorporate option plays into the offense. This was before the pistol offense became the flavor of the day and zone reads became standard in every playbook. Callahan, the team's offensive quality control coach at the time, had played in the option at De La Salle High School and coached it at Serra High School, so the other coaches asked for his help designing a run game that fit with Tebow's skill set.

"We watched all his tape at Florida and tried to figure out how to bring college concepts to the pros," Callahan says. "We did a bunch of stuff nobody was doing at the time."

Tebow was unlike any other quarterback, but he helped Callahan learn to work with other quarterbacks.

"The big takeaway was find things players do well and do it," Callahan says. "We all want to throw it 30 times for 300 yards, but that wasn't what we had. You have to work around whatever it is they can do. It has nothing to do with the kind of system you want to run. It has everything to do with putting your guys in the best position to be successful."

Peyton Manning

The Broncos replaced Tebow with Manning, and Callahan was given a critical responsibility as an offensive assistant: informing Manning of opponents' tendencies. In the later stages of the season, Manning also assigned Callahan and the backup quarterbacks to research each opponent and make a presentation the day before the game.

"Cally — everybody called him Cally — was there all night, early in the morning, breaking film down nonstop," Manning says. "It's a grind. I like coaches that are willing to do that. Some coaches just want to skip right to being a full-time position coach, coordinator, head coach, but Cally going through the grind made him learn a lot as a coach."

Working with Manning, Callahan learned the meaning of accountability.

"You had to go through everything because he did, and then he tried to find holes in whatever you told him," Callahan says. "We were playing Cincinnati. I tell him they never bring this safety blitz when the corner is in this position. OK. He writes everything in his notebook, this horrible chicken scratch. So the next morning, he opens his notebook and tells us to call up a specific play. He said, 'You said they don't bring this blitz when they have this look, but they did it here.' He had gone like two years back. It was his way of showing me that what I did wasn't good enough. At that moment, I said I would never be wrong again."

Eventually, Callahan earned Manning's trust. Manning says Callahan played a significant role in his late-career success.

"It was a whirlwind ordeal coming to Denver, trying to get established and coming off an injury," Manning says. "Cally helped a lot with my transition. He was a big part of my journey."

Watching Manning's wheels turn made Callahan understand how a coach's wheels need to turn. Manning did everything at the highest level, from watching tape to giving interviews to broadcasters in production meetings. He was so intense in walkthroughs that he often came off the field drenched with sweat. Manning's routines, focus and structure were blueprints for Callahan to share with every quarterback to come.

"It was," Callahan says, "like getting a Ph.D. in quarterback play."

Matthew Stafford

When Callahan became the Lions' quarterbacks coach, he was working in the same offense he did with Manning. So naturally, Callahan tried to handle Stafford how he and the other Broncos coaches dealt with Manning.

But Stafford was different from Manning in the way he perceived, related and played, so Callahan had to adjust. Whereas Manning left no doubt what he wanted and how he wanted it, Callahan sometimes had to coax things from the laid-back Stafford.

"I realized not everyone is Peyton, and they don't have to be," Callahan says. "I figured out there are a lot of different ways to be good. I absolutely loved coaching him, but I had to coach Matthew differently than Peyton."

It helped that Dan Orlovsky, then a veteran of 11 NFL seasons, was Stafford's backup. Orlovsky counseled Callahan on how to connect with Stafford.

“What I did with Peyton, that’s not for everybody,” Callahan says. “Dan helped me mold what I taught to the personalities I was teaching.”

Stafford appreciated Callahan’s experience with Manning, but he didn’t necessarily want the same play calls.

“Some of the things Peyton really liked, maybe I didn’t, and vice versa,” he says. “Brian had an ability to navigate that, communicate that and explain why Peyton liked something. I would say why I didn’t, and he found ways to make those dynamics work. He was always great at it.”

Callahan found Stafford to be intelligent, instinctive, tough and committed. He was relatable in all corners of the locker room. So he focused on building around those attributes.

In addition, Stafford had arm talents that were fantasy for Manning.

“The offense we were running was probably called a little different than when Peyton was running in Denver,” Stafford says. “We probably took a couple more shots down the field here and there. That’s what makes a coach a good coach, being able to get the most out of his players and understand strengths and weaknesses.”

Without flexibility, Callahan learned, he wouldn’t have a chance.

Derek Carr

Seventeen years after Callahan was a high school kid sitting in on Gruden’s install meetings with the Raiders, he joined Gruden’s staff in Oakland as quarterbacks coach. In Gruden’s second stint as head coach of the Raiders, his quarterback was Carr, who was very different from Gannon and every other quarterback Callahan had been around.

Callahan found Carr intelligent, resilient and adaptable, and also sensitive.

“Being religious is very much a part of who he is, and he would preach,” Callahan says. “He didn’t like people cussing and he didn’t like negative talk. You have to learn to work with that. I’d try not to cuss.”

Gruden, subsequently, tried to reach Carr in his colorful way by instructing, correcting and sometimes berating his backups. The head coach demonstrated how he could get his points across without ruffling Carr.

For every situation, Callahan learned, there is a workaround.

Joe Burrow

In 2021 when Burrow was rehabbing from knee surgery, Callahan told him how Manning returned from neck surgery nine years earlier. Even though their injuries differed, Callahan knew Burrow could benefit if he could think like Manning did during his comeback.

Callahan preached patience, as he had seen it benefit Manning. He told Burrow to be open with his feelings and encouraged him to ask the Bengals staff for what he needed. He told him recovery isn’t linear, that there would be tough days for him as there had been for Manning.

Burrow won the 2021 comeback player of the year award, and part of the reason, he will tell you, was the Manning mindset.

Callahan talks with Burrow about all the quarterbacks in his past. Sometimes it’s just telling an amusing story, but often it’s passing down a lesson, or as Burrow puts it, giving him a “nugget.”

“I’ve got a lot of experience with these quarterbacks and Joe’s the perfect person to impart all the things I’ve learned because he’s able to handle all of it,” says Callahan, now a veteran coach at 38 years old. “He’s in the early stages of his career, and hopefully it can help him develop at a rapid rate. You get veteran players, and their minds are made up about a lot of things. But

Joe is always open to hearing new ideas. There are things he’s still impressionable about.”

Callahan meets with Burrow and the other Bengals quarterbacks during morning installation sessions and for post-practice film review. He is responsible for base down game planning and oversees red zone plays and the protection plan, so they frequently interact in the lead-up to games. Play calling is Taylor’s responsibility, but Taylor says he and Callahan have a constant discussion between plays and series.

Burrow led the Bengals to the Super Bowl earlier this year in his first full season as a starter, but Callahan believes he has a lot of room for growth. Callahan thinks his quarterback has Hall of Fame potential and has even thought about what Burrow’s induction speech might sound like.

He sees Burrow as a blend of Manning, a Hall of Famer, and Stafford, a potential Hall of Famer. Like Stafford, Burrow can toggle between easygoing and fierce. Manning thrived with control; Burrow is the same way.

Callahan subsequently has given Burrow “the keys to the offense.” That means Burrow has autonomy at the line of scrimmage as well as input and veto power on concepts in game plans.

“If I don’t feel great about a certain route on a concept, I bring it up and there is no hesitation about changing it,” Burrow says. “That’s not always the case with all the coaches you play for. Some are very adamant it’s their way; run it how the play is supposed to be run. That’s not how Brian does it. That’s empowered me to go out and play free and fast and physical and really understand what I’m doing.”

As the Bengals prepared to play the Chiefs in the AFC Championship Game last season, Burrow told Callahan he preferred to have wide receiver Ja’Marr Chase run a fade on the backside of a red zone concept instead of the route

Callahan initially intended Chase to run. Callahan listened to his quarterback and changed the route. Late in the third quarter of the 27-24 Bengals' victory, Chase scored on a 2-yard reception from Burrow on the fade Burrow had suggested.

With Burrow, Callahan has used what he calls "my Tebow lesson" — finding the things the player does well and asking the player to do them repeatedly. For Burrow, that means a healthy dose of mid-range routes — Callahan says "his intermediate accuracy is the best in the NFL" — and consistent downfield shots to Chase.

Burrow appreciates Callahan as a coach and more. Burrow is not a small-talk guy. But Callahan asks about his family. He tries to make him laugh.

"I consider us friends, which is rare to consider yourself as a player to be friends with a coach," Burrow says.

Burrow is glad to have found himself in Callahan's path. And if the chain is unbroken, another transcendent quarterback will find himself there.

Burrow: "I thought he was going to get a head coaching job last year (he interviewed with the Broncos). I was anticipating having a new offensive coordinator. When his opportunity comes, I know he'll make the most of it and be a great head coach for a long time."

Stafford: "He is comfortable with himself and he knows the game. I think the sky's the limit for him."

Manning: "I've been really proud of him. He's got fire in him, and at the same time, Cally is in control. It's the perfect mix. He's got a great demeanor for a quarterbacks coach, offensive coordinator or head coach in my opinion."

Gannon: "I don't think there's any question he'll be a head coach. Brian's going to get that opportunity and he's going to be really good at it."

From playing catch with Cunningham, to peppering Gannon with questions, to finding plays for Tebow, to poring through tape for Manning, to adjusting his message for Stafford, to finding workarounds with Carr, to empowering Burrow, Callahan has developed a deep understanding of how to help a quarterback maximize his gifts.

And that deep understanding is a commodity that can take coaches places.

###

HOW A COACHING LINK TO PEYTON MANNING HAS HELPED BENGALS QB JOE BURROW

**BY BEN BABY
ESPN.COM
DECEMBER 17, 2021**

CINCINNATI -- When quarterback Joe Burrow was looking for things to do last year during the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cincinnati Bengals offensive coordinator Brian Callahan had the perfect suggestion.

Watch tape of Peyton Manning.

Manning joined the Denver Broncos during Callahan's six seasons as an assistant with the franchise. While Burrow prepped for his rookie year from the basement of his childhood home, the 2020 top overall draft pick watched and studied Manning.

Callahan's time with Manning and Denver didn't just have a big impact on Cincinnati's 37-year-old offensive coordinator. That time has also indirectly played a key role in Burrow's development as he looks to turn the Bengals into a playoff contender.

"The biggest thing that makes it applicable is Joe is very much wired the same way," Callahan said of Sunday's trip to Denver to face the Broncos (4:05 p.m. ET, CBS). "And he can handle those things, and he wants to handle those things. It's not for every quarterback."

Callahan landed with the Broncos in 2010 as a quality control assistant. Manning, a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame and five-time NFL MVP, arrived in Denver for the 2012 season.

As Manning led the Broncos led to two Super Bowl appearances, including a victory over the Carolina Panthers in 2015, Callahan worked his way up the ranks, eventually becoming the team's quarterbacks coach. And for the young assistant, it was an education in what it took to play the position at the highest level.

"The 'no stone unturned' type of mentality that Peyton had that was required of all of us that were around him," Callahan said. "I thought that's been probably the biggest foundation of how to prepare a quarterback how to play in the NFL and what's required of the staff, what's required of the quarterback."

When Callahan had the opportunity to work with Burrow, those experiences proved beneficial. Of course, there was already a strong link between Burrow and Manning.

The Burrows and Mannings got to know each other well as Burrow participated in the Manning Passing Academy before his transcendent 2019 season at LSU. Before the draft, Manning and Burrow shared a conversation that lasted roughly 45 minutes. Burrow took copious notes that he referenced during his rookie season.

And when it came time to watch tape on how to operate as an NFL quarterback, Callahan pulled up Manning's highlights, helping Burrow work on things such as his vocal command at the line of scrimmage and his pre-snap mechanics. While he didn't copy and paste anything into his own game, Burrow certainly took notes.

"Every quarterback works on their own game in the offseason and likes to improve what they can do," Burrow said Wednesday. "But at the end of the day, they're going to play the way that they play and can take concepts and eyes and stuff like that and footwork."

Burrow is coming off one of his strongest periods of football ahead of the showdown against the Broncos (7-6). In the fourth quarter and overtime of the Bengals' 26-23 loss to the San Francisco 49ers, Burrow was a combined 11-of-15 passing for 210 yards and two touchdowns.

Bengals OC Brian Callahan says Peyton Manning's constant search for how to exploit a defense is a trait

the hall of famer shares with Joe Burrow. Andrew Hancock for ESPN

Bengals coach Zac Taylor, in explaining his regret of not leaning on Burrow more in the loss, gave Burrow some very heady praise.

"You can also put the ball in your quarterback's hands, because in 15 years we're going to look back and he's going to be a Hall of Fame-type of quarterback, and give him a chance to win us the game," Taylor said Monday.

Burrow is trying to match Manning and lead the Bengals (7-6) into the playoffs in his second NFL season. While Burrow doesn't check the notes from their 2020 conversation, the two have remained in touch.

"He texted me on Thanksgiving and all that good stuff," Burrow said Wednesday. "He has been good to me."

Even though it's early in Burrow's career, Callahan can see a lot of similarities between him and Manning. Both are always looking to find the answers to questions presented by defenses and exploit them. Each have raised the level of expectations for everyone around them and set a standard to be met by players and coaches, Callahan said.

And in a decade or so, maybe current Cincinnati coaches are pulling up Burrow film to show their young, aspiring quarterbacks, much like Callahan has done for Burrow with Manning.

"They are very much built the same," Callahan said. "And hopefully when we look up in 15 years, he's had the same type of career and the same accolades are dumped all over him."

###

BENGALS HEAD COACH ZAC TAYLOR HANDS OFF PLAY-CALLING DUTIES TO BRIAN CALLAHAN ... FOR A DAY

BY JAY MORRISON
THE ATHLETIC
JANUARY 25, 2020

MOBILE, Ala. — Bengals head coach Zac Taylor and offensive coordinator Brian Callahan have a unique Saturday routine that helps them prepare for the game the following day.

They play fantasy football but with a twist.

Rather than drafting players, they're crafting ideas. Taylor will pick a recent NFL game and grab the game book, which includes all of the play-by-play data, and right before they have their final team meetings of the week Saturday night in the hotel, he and Callahan will role-play their way through the chosen game using down and distance and other situations to see what they would call if presented with the same variables.

"It's just a chance for us to work through the game plan we have for that week," Callahan said of their Saturday night in-season ritual. "We'll try to look at a game that might be the style of game and similar to how we're going to have to play that next day. If you're playing a really good defense, well let's pick a game with a really good defense because you tend to get into more third downs and see more third-and-longs. You're punting the ball more and it's a field possession game, and all these things start to marinate throughout the week and when it comes to Sunday, you've talked about a lot of those things before they happen, and it's easy when they come up. You're ready for it."

Saturday afternoon in Mobile, Ala., they added another element to their brand of fantasy football, skipping the role-playing and instead employing role reversal as Taylor handed Callahan the play-calling

duties for the Senior Bowl at Ladd-Peebles Stadium.

Taylor explained the thought process behind the decision Thursday afternoon during a break between meetings and practice.

"I thought it would be good for Brian," he said. "And at the same, I've been interviewing (assistant coaches) a lot, so Brian really formulated the game plan with the rest of the offensive staff. He's got total ownership. I decided to just let him take it and run with it."

The other part of the equation is that allowing Callahan to create the game plan and call plays freed Taylor to be more involved in the process of evaluating players, which was the No. 1 priority for the coaching staff this week.

"I've got to really pay attention to these defensive prospects as well as the offensive guys," Taylor said. "So for me to have all my time and attention over there on the offense, calling plays and deciding what schemes we're going to run isn't the best way to spend my time. I need to be more involved with these defensive guys because there's a good chance there's going to be a heavy emphasis on them for us in the draft."

Callahan's play calling got off to a great start as the South offense won the coin toss, elected to receive and went 65 yards in seven plays to take a 7-0 lead after a 16-yard touchdown pass from Oregon quarterback Justin Herbert to Florida running back Lamical Perine.

But the South wouldn't reach the end zone again until there was 6:08 remaining as the North, coached by the Lions, cruised to a 34-17 victory.

"Procedurally, it was good," Callahan said. "It was fun to call plays. The pass protection was a little shaky from time to time, so we had to make some adjustments and make sure we helped the edges, but it was a lot of fun."

Saturday was just the second time Callahan has called plays since he became an NFL coach in 2010. The other was in the fourth preseason game in 2018, when Raiders coach Jon Gruden gave Callahan the opportunity for many of the reasons Taylor did in the Senior Bowl.

The outcome of the game had little meaning and Gruden had other, more pressing things to do.

"It's kind of a common practice in that fourth preseason game because the play caller is usually the coordinator and in most cases, the coordinator is getting ready for the opening-day opponent," Callahan said. "In Oakland, we kind of split the team. The starting guys that weren't going to play in the fourth preseason game were getting a couple extra days to work on Week 1, so me and three other guys coached the rest of the team through that game, put the game plan in, installed it, taught it."

"For Jon to allow me as a younger staff member and the quarterback coach to call a game meant a lot. Those guys are competing for jobs and they're trying to make teams. That wasn't lost on me. It was important. It's not important in the grand scheme of it's not going to go on my record and it's not going to be anything that anybody looks at or even remembers that I called that game. But it was important for me to do a good job for those guys and put them in position to have success. I didn't take it lightly. And I don't think you get better at calling plays unless you call plays."

In that first experience, Callahan called a win as the Raiders beat the Seahawks 30-19. But that wasn't the only difference between that experience and the Senior Bowl.

Taylor informed Callahan he would call the plays even before the staff left for Mobile. Because of the nature of the event, an exhibition all-star game, Callahan didn't have to go heavy into the scheme. But the dynamics of the Senior Bowl also created some extra work as Callahan

had to change all of the terminologies.

“He had to do that because these guys are going to scatter and go play for a lot of different teams,” Taylor said. “So there were a lot of things that we tweaked so that players didn’t have our information and walk away from the game with if they took good notes. As we were getting on the plane to come down here, I’m looking at the call sheet and some of the words I didn’t even know because he had changed everything.”

The biggest hurdle Callahan faced in the Senior Bowl was a trainwreck of an offensive line. The North registered eight sacks against the trio of South quarterbacks — Herbert, Oklahoma’s Jalen Hurts and Colorado’s Steven Montez — and added several more pressures, two of which led to interceptions.

The South lost two offensive linemen to injuries during the game and four others never suited up. Oregon’s Calvin Throckmorton was a late addition, arriving in Mobile late Tuesday night after the first practice.

Throckmorton also was a late addition during a humorous scenario late in Saturday’s game. The South had recovered a North fumble two plays after a missed field goal, and when the South’s offense took the field, it had only four offensive linemen.

That’s because Throckmorton was doing an interview on the sideline with former Bengals offensive lineman Dave Lapham for bengals.com, and neither realized there had been a turnover and Throckmorton needed to be on the field.

“I thought I heard someone yelling, but we had our backs to the field and had no idea,” Lapham said. “Brian came over to me after that and said, ‘We’re down to five linemen. Do you think you can play?’”

“We were a snap away from a tight end having to play tackle,” Taylor said.

While talking Friday night about his opportunity to call plays, Callahan mentioned how it would be a watered-down version of the offense because he wouldn’t need to make any scheme adjustments. But he found himself doing exactly that because of all the injuries and the linemen’s inability to block the North’s edge rushers.

“We ran it a lot more than we’d like to in an all-star game, but we’re trying to help those guys so we could at least have a chance to get something,” he said. “We couldn’t push the ball down the field much. We had a hard time holding on to it and we had to help the edges some, too, so we had to adjust in that manner.”

Another unusual element to Callahan’s day as a play caller was just a few snaps after the Throckmorton situation.

With the South trailing 31-10 and only a few minutes remaining, Tennessee wide receiver Jauan Jennings made a request for a specific route. Callahan told him he would call it, but then he had to pull Jennings out of the huddle to get different personnel in.

Callahan sent Jennings — and his requested call — back in one play later, and the wide receiver caught an 18-yard touchdown pass from Hurts.

“We had some challenges today, but I enjoyed the process,” Callahan said. “It was good experience.”

###

**TITANS CENTER LLOYD
CUSHENBERRY FEELING
GOOD, HOPEFUL FOR
WEEK ONE RETURN**

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JUNE 11, 2025

NASHVILLE – It's been a grind, Titans center Lloyd Cushenberry won't deny that.

But Cushenberry can see the light at the end of the tunnel following a long rehab and recovery process from an Achilles injury, and he has his sights set on being back for the season opener.

"I feel good, man," Cushenberry said. "I am close to being back, cleared and healthy and ready to go. The offseason has been good, I am locking in on my diet, getting in the best shape as I can. I am doing well."

Cushenberry suffered the season-ending Achilles injury in the team's November 3 game against the Patriots, nine games into his first year with the Titans.

He went on Injured Reserve and then began a long and grueling rehabilitation process.

"It's been long, and it's been tough," he said. "It's been a lot of long and lonely days in the training room with all the staff, but they've been great. It's been slow, trying to build my calf strength back up, and everything around it. It's a tough process, but I think it is going well."

While he's been recovering, Cushenberry said he's focused even more on his diet, and game preparation. He admitted the long absence has been a challenge mentally, but the time away allowed him to spend more time watching tape, and bettering his body, and his game. Cushenberry said his body percent percentage has gone down seven percent recently, when he's also lost five pounds.

Cushenberry has been taking part in the stretch periods during this week's minicamp, but he's still not practicing. He missed all of the team's OTAs.

"It's been a test," Cushenberry. "But I feel like it's just a test from God, and I am going through it right now."

After playing his first four NFL seasons with the Denver Broncos, the highly regarded center was voted a team captain by his new teammates in Tennessee at the start of the 2024 season.

He feels like the offseason additions on the offensive line will make a difference on the field this fall, and he's looking forward to being a part of it.

Cushenberry couldn't help but smile when he saw the Broncos are the Week 1 opponent for the Titans. In some ways, he thinks it's appropriate, since he began his NFL career in a game against Tennessee in 2020.

The 6-foot-4-inch, 315-pounder was selected by Broncos in the third round of the 2020 NFL Draft, and he started 57 games at center for the club during his first four NFL campaigns.

Cushenberry said he's as optimistic about being back for the opener, but he has to continue putting in the work.

It remains to be seen whether he'll begin training camp next month on the team's Physically Unable to Perform list.

The Titans don't open the season until September 7.

"I don't want to put a timetable on it yet, but I am on track," Cushenberry said. "Things are looking up, and I just have to take it one day at a time. This summer is going to be huge for me, getting back into football shape, and ready to go. But I'll be back. I'll be back soon."

"I am very optimistic about Week One, and being out there, starting, and ready to go. My body will tell me if I'm ready, but I feel pretty good."

###

TITANS TRUSTING IN CUSHENBERRY'S BRAINS, BRAWN AT CENTER

BY JOHN GLENNON
NASHVILLE POST
JUNE 11, 2024

Titans coach Brian Callahan spends the majority of his time bettering the team's offense.

Defensive coordinator Dennard Wilson focuses his attention on the other side of the ball.

But both men share the belief that when it comes to pressuring a quarterback, the middle of the pocket is the most critical of all battlegrounds.

"You can manage edge rushers," Callahan said. "You can help on edge rushers. But if the middle of your pocket gets pushed, there's not a lot of places for the quarterback to go."

Added Wilson: "When you dominate the offensive line through the [interior], there's no step-up lanes for the quarterback. And if there's no step-up lanes, if we go back to the corners being connected at the top of the route with no step-up lane, where is there for the quarterback to throw?"

Those comments are a clear reflection of the philosophy behind the Titans' offseason signing of center Lloyd Cushenberry, who will be asked to fortify a trench position that was all too often overrun in 2023.

Titans quarterback Will Levis was pressured on 45 percent of his throws last season, per Pro Football Focus, the second-highest rate among quarterbacks who played at least nine games.

Most of the problems stemmed from Tennessee's turnstile situation at left tackle. But the center of the line failed to hold all too often as well.

Former Titans starter Aaron Brewer, who stood 6-1 and weighed 295

pounds, was mobile but not particularly meaty — and as a result was on many occasions overwhelmed in pass protection. He surrendered the second-most sacks among league centers (six), allowed the second-most quarterback hits (seven) and the third-most pressures (34), per PFF.

Enter the 6-4, 315-pound Cushenberry, who allowed just one sack, four hits and 14 pressures in about the same amount of snaps while in Denver last season. His pass-blocking grade of 76.4 ranked third among centers who played at least 10 games, well above Brewer at 52.5.

"I've always believed in the firmness of the interior of the pocket," Callahan said. "Strong players tend to keep it that way, so there's a place for the quarterback to move and to run and to step up, when needed. That's a huge benefit. These guys inside on the other side of defense keep getting bigger and better and stronger and faster every year. You want people that can match that, and Lloyd can do all those things."

What the Titans have found so far in the offseason is that they admire Cushenberry's brains as well as his brawn.

Titans offensive line coach Bill Callahan began to understand that almost as soon as Cushenberry signed his four-year, \$50 million deal with Tennessee, ending a multi-team pursuit of the four-year veteran.

"The thing that strikes me about Lloyd is he's a guy who could have gone anywhere," Bill Callahan said. "But he wanted to be with a team that could improve his game, and he wants to be great. It really struck me that the game goes deeper than the wallet for him. He has a tremendous passion, curiosity and intellect that goes beyond anything. So he's great for our room, super for the team in terms of running the show up front."

Likewise, Cushenberry said the presence of Bill Callahan, who's

coached NFL offensive lines for 22 years, was a big plus for the Titans.

"That was a big reason [I signed]," Cushenberry said. "He's very detailed ... He has a whole encyclopedia of terms and things he teaches. So, it's a lot to have learned."

"I love going back and watching old film and just picking his brain sometimes. He does a great job because he remembers things as well. I remember in meetings, he pretty much told us a whole series of what happened in a game in 2009 with the Jets. It was amazing to hear."

The Titans have wasted no time in challenging Cushenberry this offseason.

That's because one area the team wants improvement, in addition to pass protection, is efficiency on the offensive line. Tennessee was flagged for 30 false starts last season, the second-highest figure in the league behind the New York Jets (31). In comparison, Brian Callahan's Cincinnati offense last year was whistled 13 times for false starts.

Part of the problem in Tennessee was that there were cadence and communication issues between Levis and Brewer — and between Brewer and his fellow linemen.

What better time to work on that than the offseason?

"We've been hammering [Cushenberry] every single day, and the whole offensive line, about how we're not going to hold back when it comes to cadences, and we're going to empty the bag and start using them all right now," Levis said. "We can't be the team we were last year with all the shooting-ourselves-in-the-foot penalties."

"So they've been doing a really good job with that, and obviously [Cushenberry] is leading that group. He has a lot of great experience and has a really good hold on our protection system. He's been great for me, and he's been great for

everyone else in the offense. I feel really comfortable with him when I get under center or when I'm in the gun with him."

It's possible, of course, that the bond between the two was strengthened in late April before a Predators playoff game, when Cushenberry assumed the center position on a Bridgestone Arena stage and snapped a sizable catfish — Nashville's unofficial good-luck charm — to Levis, sending the crowd into a frenzy.

"I didn't know we were going to do it until about 10 minutes before that," Cushenberry said. "So leading up to it, my heart was racing. In my head, I was just like, 'Get the snap to him.' I didn't want to mess that up in front of thousands of people."

Cushenberry executed the shotgun snap smoothly, the same way he's handled his first offseason.

###

**LLOYD CUSHENBERRY
EAGER TO LEARN FROM
BILL CALLAHAN TO
REBUILD TITANS
OFFENSIVE LINE**

**BY TERRY MCCORMICK
TITANINSIDER.COM
MARCH 14, 2024**

As the Tennessee Titans begin the process of rebuilding their offensive line, they know the culture, as well as the personnel, has to change on a unit that gave up 64 sacks in 2023.

The first move along that road to a rebuild was signing center Lloyd Cushenberry to a four-year deal on the first day of free agency.

Cushenberry, 26, comes over from the Denver Broncos to put a big body in the middle of the Titans offensive line. At 6-4, 315, Cushenberry replaces the undersized Aaron Brewer and gives the Titans three more inches of height, and more importantly, 40 pounds of man to play the center position.

Cushenberry was matter of fact when asked what attracted him to the Titans in his foray into free agency, and he replied, "Bill Callahan."

"His resume speaks for itself. He's coached a lot of great guys and I've heard a lot of great things about him. I think it's a good opportunity for me to continue to grow my game and take the next step as a player," Cushenberry said.

Cushenberry said it is his understanding that Callahan bring a high level of detail and expectation and he is eager to be his pupil.

"It's a different level of offensive line play that he kind of unlocks. It's a lot that goes in to his game planning," Cushenberry said.

As for rebuilding the culture as part of revamping the offensive line, Cushenberry said it is of the utmost importance.

"It's a big part of offensive line play, just having a good culture and having a good room, a good group of guys that's willing to play for each other. That's what I look forward to trying to build," he said.

Cushenberry's NFL foundation was laid by a familiar name to Titans fans, as he was coached by Mike Munchak in Denver.

"Coach Munch was amazing and I see a lot of similarities to what Callahan is teaching. Coming in, he helped me lay a great foundation and since that point, every year I've gotten better and that's what I want to continue to do," Cushenberry said.

###

**EYE ON THE TITLE
LLOYD CUSHENBERRY III
KNOWN BY HIS PARENTS
AS A GENTLE GIANT
WHOSE DREAM IS
COMING TRUE**

WAFB.COM
JANUARY 12, 2020

CARVILLE, La. (WAFB) - One of the "big" reasons LSU has had such a prolific season offensively is the man in the middle of the line.

Center Lloyd Cushenberry III, a 6-foot-4, 315-pound junior from Carville, La. quarterbacks the unit that was named the best in college football this season.

So, your son's in the national championship game.

"It's a dream come true; it's just something we always imagined going through and it's coming true," said Lloyd Cushenberry II.

"He told me one day, 'Mom, that's going to be me one day,' and I said, 'Yeah and I'm going to be a proud mama,' and it's a dream that's came true. And I said, 'When you hit the field, remember, someone is looking at you, so do your best,'" added Debbie Cushenberry.

So, what kind of kid was he?

"Humble, quiet, very intelligent, didn't have to do no homework with him. He had his homework done," Debbie Cushenberry answered.

"One of the best, man. You couldn't ask for a better kid, man," Lloyd Cushenberry II noted.

Is he kind of a gentle giant?

"Yeah, yeah. That sums it up right there. He's a great kid, man. Staying humble all the way through and just, enjoying the ride, and having nothing but fun," Lloyd Cushenberry II pointed out.

"He loves the game and he takes it seriously. So, if he sees something not going right, he's going to correct

it. They all connect together. They're all humble guys, willing to work with each other, listen to each other. That's what makes a team," Debbie Cushenberry explained.

"Brotherhood thing - on and off the field," added Lloyd Cushenberry II.

"I see that he's a good coach with them. He has a lot of respect for them and they have a lot of respect for him. That's what makes a team - when your coaches are right connected with you," Debbie Cushenberry described.

The fact he snaps to a Heisman Trophy winner. He'll have that for the rest of his life.

"That was a blessing, man. For Joe [Burrow] to come ... that was just God-sent, man," said Lloyd Cushenberry II.

So, what did it mean to beat Alabama this year?

"Oh, it meant so good. I told my boy ... that's what, this summer I told him, 'I want you to win them all but go beat Alabama,'" Debbie Cushenberry replied.

How does it feel, Lloyd?

"Feel great," said Lloyd Cushenberry III. "On to the next one. On to the next one."

Kelly Orgeron joined by LSU, Clemson fans volunteering at food bank ahead of game

LSU players look relaxed, exude confidence during media day; practice in Saints indoor facility

"The day of the game, I had some co-workers who were Alabama fans and they come back saying, 'Alabama,' and I'd say, 'You've got to let me come back and say LSU,'" Debbie Cushenberry stated.

Those people you work with, you really think they're Alabama fans?

"No. I think they just do it to me," she answered.

"Yeah, it was our turn," Lloyd Cushenberry II added.

Lloyd Cushenberry III has started at center for LSU in 27 straight games.

###

**TITANS LONG SNAPPER
MORGAN COX IMPACTED
ONCE AGAIN BY "SOUL-
SCARRING" MISSION
TRIP TO UGANDA**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JULY 2, 2025**

NASHVILLE – Morgan Cox traveled to Uganda this offseason to make an impact.

Cox, long snapper for the Tennessee Titans, had also previously traveled to the country in East Africa as part of a mission trip.

It turns out the trip made an even bigger impact on Cox, and his perspective.

Nothing validated that feeling more than the lasting memory of a man living in a mud hut handing Cox a rooster as a show of appreciation for his work, and good deeds, for the people in Uganda. The man had recognized Cox from his first mission trip there in 2019.

"We always describe going to Africa and spending time there as a soul-scarring trip," Cox said. "It's not an easy trip, but it's a very impactful trip to see what goes on in the world and to see how people live.

"The nature of the Christian faith is going out and making disciples of all nations, so being able to share our faith but also taking care of basic needs is the premise, being able to help the people there take care of their children."

Cox, a Collierville, Tennessee, native who played at the University of Tennessee, is heading into his 16th NFL season, and his fifth with the Titans. He's been named to five Pro Bowls, and he was recently selected as the long snapper for ESPN's All-Quarter-Century NFL team.

Cox has made it part of his life's mission to give back to others, and his mindset was put on display once again when he traveled to Uganda as

part of a mission initiative team from Grace Evangelical Church in Memphis.

Cox joined 12 others on a trip to Uganda, where the group spent a week assisting those at a village and school that houses 750 kids, ranging from ages from 3 to 22. The school first started years ago under a jackfruit tree, where the school administrator taught kids in the dirt.

Now the kids have a building and desks, and a secondary school, or high school, has been an added to the elementary school.

Cox and another member of the church started a team to travel and help those in a community in Uganda. During his trip in 2019, Cox was part of a group that started the boarding school, and a medical clinic.

During the two trips, including the most recent one, the group has built desks and tables for the school, provided a water well, provided a generator for lighting while also spending time with the kids, playing sports, hosting a field day, and a craft station. The group bought a cow for them to have protein.

Many people in the area live in mud huts, with little resources.

Cox and the others went there once again to help, and for ministry work, to talk about the gospel, telling them about Jesus and faith in Christ.

"God has blessed me with the occupation that I have, and I've always felt a calling for helping others through it," Cox said. "So going to Uganda and being able to help a community there that is clearly in need ... You know anything that you give them is going to be received well and impactful."

Cox said the mission initiative team at the church plans to continue returning to Uganda to help those in need.

From his first trip in 2019 to his trip this offseason, Cox said he's been humbled to see the difference that

has been made by those who've traveled from Memphis.

He's also aware of the appreciation from those in Uganda. He can see it on the faces of the kids, and from the gesture of the man with the rooster.

"From the kindness of his heart, he wanted to feed me, and feed our group," Cox said.

Cox said he will never forget the man's message – and the fact the rooster ended up defecating on him as he held it.

"Through a translator, the man said: Morgan, thanks for coming back to see us. We are so thankful. May the Lord bless you and your family. I would like for you to have this rooster," Cox said.

"I would never be able to repay him for the message he gave me."

###

**LIFE LESSONS HELPED
TITANS LONG SNAPPER
MORGAN COX BECOME
ONE OF THE FINALISTS
FOR THE BART STARR
AWARD**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
DECEMBER 12, 2024**

NASHVILLE – When Morgan Cox was just a youngster, his father gave him a gift he'll always remember: an autographed poster from Hall of Famer Bart Starr.

Starr was at an autograph signing in Memphis, and Cox's father was a fan of the Packers quarterback.

"(My dad) had a poster signed: To Morgan. Best wishes, Bart Starr," Cox said on Wednesday. "I had it hanging in my room for years."

It makes this moment even more special:

Cox, in his fourth season as long snapper for the Tennessee Titans, is one of 10 finalists for the 2025 Bart Starr Award, honoring those who exhibit outstanding character, integrity and leadership on and off the football field.

Starr was a two-time Super Bowl champion during his playing days with the Packers, and an NFL MVP, while playing from 1956-1971. He later served as head coach of the Packers. Starr passed away in 2019.

"Just knowing the type of person that Bart was, as a family man and in the community, it's an honor to be even in the same breath as him," Cox said on Wednesday. "I've looked up to him. My dad told me about him when I was really young. I'm just truly honored to be selected.

"Bart Starr was a phenomenal man, and I know this award is given out to someone who is intentional, and values family life, and community. So, it truly is an honor."

Cox, who played at the University of Tennessee, joined the Titans in

2021 after playing 11 seasons with the Baltimore Ravens. The Collierville, Tenn. native, who attended Evangelical Christian High School, has been named to five Pro Bowls, and he's one of the team's captains once again this season.

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After every game, Cox identifies a player or two from the opposing team's special teams unit, and he offers words of encouragement and support, while praising them for their work and commitment.

Cox also regularly brings together the two teams in postgame for an on-field prayer.

A year ago, Cox was one of the finalists for the Art Rooney Sportsmanship Award.

At some point later this month, an overall winner for the Bart Starr award will be named. The group was recently trimmed from 32 to 10. Voting will take place in conjunction with the Pro Bowl voting in the coming weeks.

Cox, a father of four, credits his entire family for making him the man he is today, from the example they've set, to their service in the community. Both of his grandfathers served in the military, and his father currently serves on the school board in his hometown. His parents rarely miss home games.

"As a strong, Christian believer, it's something that I have been raised on, in a Christian household," Cox said. "My mom and dad used to tell me, when I was really young: 'Be a leader, not a follower.' I remember that from grade school, and what that meant to me was not to just follow the crowd, but to make your own decisions and treat people with respect.

"Being that Athletes in Action is the one that does the (Bart Starr) award, being a part of that organization and having gone through Fellowship of Christian Athletes in school. ... Service in the community is such an important part of our family backbone. It's always been important to my family, and to me."

**TITANS LONG SNAPPER
MORGAN COX
NOMINATED FOR ART
ROONEY
SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
NOVEMBER 22, 2023**

NASHVILLE – Titans long snapper Morgan Cox has been nominated for the Art Rooney Sportsmanship Award.

The award is presented each year to an NFL player who best demonstrates the qualities of on-field sportsmanship, including fair play, respect for the game and opponents, and integrity in competition.

On Wednesday, the NFL announced the 32 player nominees for the ninth annual award. Each NFL team nominated one of its players for the award, which recognizes players around the league who exemplify outstanding sportsmanship on the field.

Created in 2014, the award honors the late founding owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers and Pro Football Hall of Famer Art Rooney Sr.

Cox, who played at the University of Tennessee, joined the Titans in 2021 after playing 11 seasons with the Baltimore Ravens. The Collierville, Tenn., native has been named to five Pro Bowls, and he's one of the team's captains this season.

After every game, Cox identifies a player or two from the opposing team's special teams unit, and he offers words of encouragement and support, while praising them for their work and commitment.

Cox also regularly brings together the two teams in postgame for an on-field prayer.

"I could not be more excited and prouder to hear that Morgan has been nominated for the Art Rooney award," Titans special teams

coordinator Craig Aukerman said. "Morgan has demonstrated excellence in competition and sportsmanship both on and off the field. His respect of the game and to his opponents is second to none. As a team captain, Morgan's leadership qualities and willingness to mentor younger players have helped them achieve a high level of integrity to succeed in the National Football League."

A panel of former players from the NFL Legends Community — Warrick Dunn, 2014 Art Rooney Sportsmanship Award recipient Larry Fitzgerald, Pro Football Hall of Famer Curtis Martin and Leonard Wheeler — will select eight finalists (four in the AFC and four in the NFC) from the 32 nominees.

The eight finalists will be listed on the Pro Bowl ballot under the NFL Sportsmanship Award category when players vote in December.

"Sportsmanship is the core of the game, the vanguard of public confidence, the keeper of game integrity," said Troy Vincent, NFL executive vice president of football operations. "These Rooney Sportsmanship Award nominees exemplify the spirit of fair play and the values of respect, integrity, commitment to team and resiliency at the highest level of competition."

The winner of the Art Rooney Sportsmanship Award is determined by a vote of current NFL players. From the eight finalists, each team's players will submit a consensus vote of their choice for the winner. As in Pro Bowl voting, a team cannot vote for its own player.

The winner will be announced as part of NFL Honors. He will receive a \$25,000 donation from the NFL Foundation to a charity of his choice.

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FROM THE PRO BOWL: LONG SNAPPER MORGAN COX REFLECTS ON LIFE'S BLESSINGS, AND HIS JOURNEY TO THE TITANS

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
FEBRUARY 2, 2023

LAS VEGAS – Morgan Cox has experienced a lot during his 13-year playing career.

The Titans long snapper has played in a Super Bowl and been named to five Pro Bowls. He's played in over 200 career games, in stadiums all over the country. He's made lifelong friends, and countless memories.

As Cox took a helicopter ride on Thursday morning into the Grand Canyon, over Lake Mead and the Hoover Dam, and then over the Las Vegas strip, Cox reflected on his journey, and the blessings that have come with it.

"I've seen God's hands on a lot of things as I kind of reflect on my career," Cox said. "I am grateful for the opportunities I have been given, and the unique experiences I have gotten to have because of this game."

Cox is in Las Vegas for the 2023 Pro Bowl Games. It's his first trip as a Titan after being named a Pro Bowler on four earlier occasions during his playing days with the Ravens, where he won a Super Bowl ring during the 2012 season.

Cox, who just finished his second season in Tennessee, admits this one is special. A Collierville native who played at the University of Tennessee, Cox is representing his home state – and the team he grew up cheering for as a youngster.

While overlooking the Las Vegas Strip on Thursday, Cox told a story about the time he traveled to a Titans game his senior year in high school with his buddies.

They took his mom's Suburban, and they painted "Titans" on it. They

also painted letters on their chests, spelling out T-I-T-A-N-S.

"It was a memorable trip," Cox said with a smile.

Long before that, Cox remembers watching the Titans play in Super Bowl XXXIV, at his aunt and uncle's house in Memphis. The Titans-Rams game was projected on a bed sheet.

"I remember (Kevin) Dyson stretching out the ball," Cox said, "and being heartbroken."

Cox never dreamed he'd end up playing in the NFL himself.

It started with a childhood competition, and it's continued because of a lot of hard work.

As an 11-year-old, Cox went out for a football team called the 'Buccaneers' in the Collierville Youth Athletic Association. The coach was his dentist, Bill Burriss.

On the first day of practice, Burriss brought all the players up and said they needed to fill the position of 'long snapper'. Everyone got in line, and they all got a chance to snap.

"My first shot at it was really pretty bad," Cox recalled. "So, they moved onto the next person."

But Cox said his father, who happened to be at practice that day, encouraged him to try it again, so he went to the side and practiced. He started to get the hang of it, and he got back in line.

The following year he was back in the mix, as a seventh grader, for the long snapping position at Evangelical Christian School.

"Over time," Cox said, "I got better and better."

Cox played in high school at ECS, got recruited by the University of Tennessee, and after paying his dues for a few years at the school – and learning from FG snapper Adam Miles and punt snapper Ryan West – he got his chance.

Cox ended up playing in 38 games in three seasons at Tennessee, and was then signed by the Ravens as an undrafted free agent in 2010.

As they say, the rest is history.

Cox is humbled to be at the Pro Bowl again.

"It's an honor for me to be here, being a part of the Titans now," Cox said. "To be in my 13th year and to be able to experience the Pro Bowl again, it is truly an amazing honor and tough to put into words what it means to me."

Along the way, Cox said the backing from family and friends has made it even more special.

"The support from my home state has been amazing," he said. "No shortage of ticket requests, but that's been great as well. It's awesome to be able to play in front of people I've been around my whole life. I grew up in Memphis, went to school in Knoxville and everybody converging in Nashville is pretty cool."

Cox plans to enjoy the events surrounding the Pro Bowl Games this week.

He's scheduled to take part in a "Kick-Tac-Toe" event, and has other things planned as well.

"This isn't my kind of town to be honest," he said. "I'm a big saver, not much of a spender."

As he looks ahead, Cox plans to keep working to sharpen his craft.

Even after 13 years, he believes there's always room for improvement.

"I've put in a lot of time and work in kind of honing the craft," he said. "I can never say I have perfected it. I don't think there is such a thing. You're constantly want to chase perfection and find ways to improve your game, whether it be snapping, blocking, covering. I can always improve."

Cox is already looking forward to Year 14.

He's hoping it will be with the Titans.

"God has a plan, and I certainly hope to be back with the Titans next year," he said. "I am going to play as long as I possibly can. I love what I get to do, and I am grateful. I feel like I am still playing at a high level, and I am going to keep playing as long as I can."

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GATORS RECEIVER DIKE HAS MADE IMPACT WHEREVER HE'S BEEN

**BY SCOTT CARTER
FLORIDAGATORS.COM
SEPTEMBER 29, 2024**

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — They have all moved on since that late 2022 lunch at Café Hollander, a favorite spot near the University of Wisconsin campus where Badgers gather for Belgian beers and European-style comfort food.

Tight end Clay Cundiff, whose career was wrecked by injuries, retired from the game prior to the 2023 season. Center Joe Tippmann heard his name called a few months later in the second round of the NFL Draft, and Tippmann is now the starter for the New York Jets, snapping the ball to quarterback Aaron Rodgers. Meanwhile, receiver Chimere Dike sensed what the lunch meeting might be about and wanted to offer his full support to quarterback Graham Mertz.

After four seasons at Wisconsin, Mertz informed a small group of close teammates that he was leaving to continue his career at Florida. Dike was the only player who would play for the Badgers last season, but he never took his eyes off Mertz.

"We stayed in touch," Dike said. "Every single game that we didn't play, we'd be in my living room with my roommates, and we were watching it. I remember watching the Tennessee game and being like, 'Let's go. That's my guy.' I've supported him all the way."

Unbeknownst to Dike on that Madison winter afternoon, his days catching passes from Mertz were not over. He rejoined Mertz when he transferred to Florida in January, eager to see if they could reconnect the way they did at Wisconsin during the 2022 season when Dike led the Badgers with 47 receptions, 689 yards and six touchdowns. Dike's numbers dipped to 19-238-1 last season.

"We kind of grew up together in college football," Dike said.

Following Florida's victory at Mississippi State last week, Dike smiled whenever Mertz's name popped up after Mertz completed 21 of 23 passes and three touchdowns. Dike finished with three catches for 43 yards in the 45-28 win.

Starting in front of true freshman DJ Lagway in the two-quarterback system utilized by head coach Billy Napier, Mertz was sharp from the beginning.

"He's competitive, resilient, and he doesn't give in to adversity," Dike said. "He's one of my best friends off the field, just being able to spend so much time with him, but that's a guy that has been through some adversity the past couple weeks, and I think when you turn on the film, you can see the character that he has. I'm thankful I get to play with him for one more year."

Mertz, Graham and Dike, Chimere (2024)

Gators quarterback Graham Mertz, left, and receiver Chimere Dike have reunited at UF after three seasons together at Wisconsin. (Photo: Courtesy of JLab)

While Dike's previous relationship with Mertz has highlighted most stories about the UF newcomer, his departure from Wisconsin was a giant leap. A native of Waukesha, Wis., Dike left home when he opted to transfer for his final season of eligibility. Dike was a team captain for the Badgers last season and grew up in the Milwaukee suburbs, his hometown a 70-mile drive to Camp Randall Stadium.

Mertz, who grew up in Kansas City, said it was difficult for him to leave because of the team's culture. Still, when former coach Paul Chryst was fired and replaced by Luke Fickell, Mertz decided he needed a fresh opportunity and chose Florida.

First, he had to tell Dike.

"I mean, Chim's my brother," Mertz said. "I've known that guy. We've been through some great times and some hard times. I don't think anybody knows me as good as he knows me. I don't think anybody knows him as good as I know him. So that was not easy. I never thought I would be on a team with him again."

Their fates aligned when the Gators, seeking to replenish a position group that lost Ricky Pearsall to the NFL and Caleb Douglas and Thai Chiao Khiao-Bowman to the transfer portal, offered Dike via the transfer portal.

Soon after Dike enrolled, he and Mertz hit the golf course on a sunny winter day, a rarity from their days together in Wisconsin.

"We just looked at each other, and I'm like, 'What are we doing? Like, how do we end up here?' We're on a golf course in January in Florida," Mertz said. "We normally had like a month and a half to play golf in Wisconsin."

Dike's quick ascension on the Florida roster was evident following the season-opening loss to Miami. Following head coach Billy Napier's press conference, veteran defensive lineman Justus Boone and Dike were the only players to address the media from the podium in the team's meeting room at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium. Mertz was knocked out of the game with a concussion.

It was Dike's first game as a Gator, but he did not avoid discussing a defeat that sent ripples across Gator Nation.

"The thing is, I had the experience of having big losses before, and there's kind of two choices you can make," Dike said. "You can either concede and go into the loss, or you can respond from that. But I know the guys in our room, and I know the guys on our team are willing to grow from this, and that's the only choice we have."

The 22-year-old Dike has suffered much more significant losses than in

football. One of his best friends growing up, Kai Lerner, died in 2019 from a rare undetected heart condition. The two spent countless hours together at Dike's home and went to high school together.

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In the summer of 2022, Dike held a youth football camp to benefit a memorial fund in Lerner's honor shortly after the Kai 11 Bill, intended to help prevent sudden cardiac arrest deaths in young adults, was signed into law in Wisconsin. Mertz was one of more than a dozen Badgers who participated in the event at Waukesha North High, where Dike played football, baseball and basketball. Dike held the camp once again in the summer of 2023.

Kai Lerner is never far from Dike's mind. He keeps his keys on a Chicago Bulls keychain that belonged to Lerner, who was 16 when he died. The keychain was a gift from Lerner's father after Kai's death.

Mike Lerner told the Waukesha County Freeman he is grateful that Dike is "still passionate about keeping his [son's] memory alive."

As the Gators move deeper into the season, Dike figures to continue to be a key contributor and a player fans will learn more about. The Gators won two of three entering their bye week and return to action on Saturday when UCF visits The Swamp.

Dike is off to a good start, hauling in 11 passes for 189 yards and a touchdown. He has excelled on special teams, averaging 16.7 yards on six punt returns and downing two punts inside opponents' 5-yard line.

He impacts in ways that surprise no one who knows him in Wisconsin. It's the way Dike has always approached the game – and life.

"I think if I can help any aspect of the team, I want to," Dike said. "I'm a student of the game, and I like taking things and learning from different people. There's so many different things that you can take."

'I THINK ABOUT HIM EVERY DAY': UW'S CHIMERE DIKE USES HIS PLATFORM TO HONOR A FALLEN FRIEND, RAISE AWARENESS OF THE VALUE OF EKGS

**BY JEFF POTRYKUS
MILWAUKEE JOURNAL
SENTINEL
JUNE 21, 2022**

MADISON – Chimere Dike hasn't forgotten the friend he lost a little more than three years ago.

"His memory and his impact still is with me and he pushes me every day," Dike said. "I think about him every day."

The friend to whom Dike referred was Kai Lermer, a classmate and teammate at Waukesha North High School who went into cardiac arrest while playing basketball on March 25, 2019. Lermer, a 16-year-old junior at the time, survived after being rushed to a hospital but was taken off life support several days later. The lack of oxygen had left him with little brain activity.

"I was with him that day," Dike recalled. "We went to Q'Doba to get lunch."

Lermer had an undiagnosed heart condition called Wolff-Parkinson-White Syndrome. Individuals who have WPW have an extra electrical pathway between the upper and lower chambers of the heart. The result is a rapid heartbeat.

The condition can be diagnosed with an EKG but such tests typically are not included in physical examinations for Wisconsin high school athletes.



Dike, hoping to raise awareness about EKGs and support the Kai Lermer Memorial Fund, is set to host a youth football camp June 25 at Waukesha North High School.

Lermer would have turned 20 on June 16.

"I grew up playing with him in all sports," said Dike, who was a junior at North in 2019. "It was tough, but our community really came together and we got through it."

"And when his family started the foundation, I knew it was such a good cause that I knew it was something I wanted to be able to give back to. Obviously, I have aspirations of playing pro ball. And I knew if I was fortunate enough to be able to reach that level, I would do something with my platform."

"But with NIL (Name, Image and Likeness) I realized that maybe my platform could be used now, even if it is on a smaller scale. I said: 'Why wait to do something? Why wait to get it started?'"

"So, I thought about doing the camp, not only to give back to the foundation but also to my community. We've got a lot of really good players coming so I'm excited."

The camp is open to students entering third through 10th grade. Camp packages are either \$50 or \$85 and Dike plans to contribute some of the proceeds to the memorial fund.

Several UW players are set to work the camp with Dike. They include safety Hunter Wohler, quarterback Graham Mertz, tailback Braelon Allen, linebackers Nick Herbig and C.J. Goetz and wide receiver Dean Engram.

"It has been great that the guys have been volunteering to come," Dike said. "That means a lot to me because they are supporting something that is important to me. It speaks to the kind of guys they are."

Related: Wisconsin football gets commitment for the 2023 class from an Ohio wide receiver, one day after landing an edge rusher

Related: Badgers men's basketball assistant Joe Krabbenhoft promoted to associate head coach

In the wake of their son's death, Lermer's parents worked to introduce a bill to raise awareness about sudden cardiac arrest in young athletes.

Gov. Tony Evers signed a bill — Kai-11 — into law March 29.

Gov. Tony Evers signed the Kai-11 bill into law March 29 at Waukesha North High School, a measure aimed at educating parents and coaches on the dangers of sudden cardiac arrest in youth by using EKG testing. Waukesha North student athlete Kai Lermer died three years earlier of an undiagnosed heart condition.

The bill requires the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association and the Wisconsin Department of Instruction, along with a minimum of two pediatric cardiologists, to work to educate coaches, athletes and their parents about the risk of sudden cardiac arrest.

It also requires that parents and athletes are given information about EKGs, including the benefits and any potential risks, as well as how to request such testing from a health care provider.

The information is to be given to athletes 12 years and older at the beginning of each youth sports season.

“An EKG could have detected his heart condition and that could have saved his life,” Dike said. “That is why the foundation is so impactful because it could save lives. That is why I am so passionate about it.

“It is something that is so simple. When I came here to UW, we do EKG testing. And that was an eye-opener. It almost made me angry because I saw how quick it was and how seamless it is. That fact that it’s not required in (high school) health checks is kind of ridiculous to me.

“It is a five-minute process that can help save lives. The more we can raise awareness ... it is really important.”

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‘THERE’S NOTHING HE CAN’T DO’: WHY DYNAMIC IN-STATE WR CHIMERE DIKE IS READY TO MAKE AN IMPACT AT WISCONSIN

BY JESSE TEMPLE
THE ATHLETIC
JANUARY 15, 2020

Waukesha (Wis.) North football coach Matt Harris knew his star player was exhausted, running on fumes in an effort to keep his team in a September game against defending Division 1 state champion Muskego. Chimere Dike had barely come off the field, used at wide receiver and running back on offense, as a safety on defense, as a punt returner and kick returner and as a gunner on the punt and kickoff teams. He needed a water break, and he needed it now.

The problem, Harris realized, was that this was a really bad time. Dike was about to field a third-quarter kickoff with Waukesha North trailing by two touchdowns, and the team required a big play. Harris informed Dike, half-jokingly, that if he simply scored a touchdown he could rest. After all, Dike was not on the field goal or extra-point units — the only phases of the game where he didn’t contribute.

Dike caught the kick and ran straight ahead behind his blockers. He bounced off a would-be tackler at the 27-yard line and slipped through a small crease. Then came magic. He eluded two separate shoe-string tackle attempts from behind at the 33 and the 38 and outran three more defenders down the left sideline, pulling away as he hit full speed. His 92-yard kick return for a touchdown trimmed the deficit to 28-20. Dike earned his water break.

“It’s ridiculous the amount of output he had in games considering he really never came off the field except for on field goals and extra points, and that’s it,” Harris said. “But he didn’t ever want to come off. He always wanted to make plays. You don’t do it with

everyone, especially in our conference. There’s not many players who can pull that off, and he did. And he did it for one reason, and that was to help his team win. That’s all he cared about.”

Chimere Dike (pronounced Chim-Ray Dee-Kay) possesses a skill set that makes him one of the best wide receivers to come out of the Wisconsin prep ranks in the past decade. That’s why the Badgers extended a rare in-state scholarship offer to someone at that position. Dike, who grew up dreaming of playing for Wisconsin, took less than a week to commit.

He signed as a member of Wisconsin’s 2020 recruiting class in December and arrived this week as an early enrollee ready to begin classes, winter workouts and prepare for spring practice to give himself the best chance to contribute right away. Dike became the first in-state scholarship wide receiver to sign with Wisconsin in seven years, since Jazz Peavy in 2013.

Dike, listed at 6-foot and 175 pounds on Wisconsin’s signing day roster, consistently showed he was a versatile threat. He caught 59 passes for 962 yards and six touchdowns as a senior. He also carried the ball 43 times for 318 yards with six more scores. Dike recorded 93 total tackles, two forced fumbles and two interceptions and added two kick returns for touchdowns.

He was a two-time all-state selection at wide receiver and earned first-team all-state as a senior on offense, with honorable mention all-state honors on defense from the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association. Dike also collected the Al Toon Award as the state’s top senior wide receiver.

Harris can supply a steady stream of Dike’s most impressive highlight-reel plays. One of Harris’ first encounters seeing Dike’s competitiveness and talent shine through came in his second varsity game as a freshman against Whitnall. Waukesha North had dialed up a pass designed to beat one

safety over the top on a play that nearly always went for a touchdown in practice. Harris wanted to pull Dike from the game and have a more experienced receiver run the play.

“Chimere looked me in the eyes and said, ‘Do not do this. I will score,’” Harris recalled. “And I just laughed. I couldn’t believe he thought to tell me that in the game. So I just looked at him and I was like, ‘Man, I actually believe him.’ So I put him in and I let him run it. We threw the seam to him and he caught it and he ran so fast, even though those kids were probably faster than him at that age. But he knew he was not going to come back to the sideline without scoring. Sure enough, he scored and came up to me after and said, ‘I told you.’”

During Dike’s all-state junior season, he caught 79 passes for 1,091 yards and 12 touchdowns, none more jaw-dropping than in a Week 5 game against Oconomowoc. Dike hauled in a screen on the right side of the field at the 20-yard line with a defender directly next to him. He shook the defender while trying to cut across the field, only to meet two more defenders. Dike cut upfield and dropped both players. Another defender reached him at the 15 but missed the wraparound tackle at his waist. Dike ran up the right sideline and beat the rest of the defense to the end zone. Waukesha North escaped with a 35-34 victory.

Harris singled out one more play from Dike’s senior season against Waukesha West in which he was used at running back near the goal line. Dike fielded a handoff and was met by a defender, who bent low to tackle Dike at the 3-yard line. Dike used his left arm to push himself upright, spun off four more potential tacklers and crossed the goal line for a touchdown run. The sequence highlighted his intelligence, athleticism, balance and strength. That play, as well as Dike’s kickoff return for a touchdown against Muskego and a long touchdown catch, were featured on his video highlight package that Wisconsin compiled on signing day.

“For us on our level, especially in high school, there’s nothing he can’t do,” Harris said. “He had incredible hands. His route running abilities were as good as anyone I’ve ever seen, and I’ve had a couple other D-I wide receivers. He just was the whole package.”

Dike was a four-sport athlete for the first two years of his high school career. He played football in the fall, basketball in the winter, track in the spring and baseball in the summer. When the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association moved baseball to the spring, he dropped the sport in order to focus on track, where he starred. Dike said his personal best in the 100-meter dash is 10.85 seconds.

His dedication to multiple sports and ability to excel in all of them caught the eye of Wisconsin special teams coach Chris Haering, the football program’s in-state recruiter, as well as offensive coordinator Joe Rudolph.

“I’ll be honest, everything stood out about Chim,” Rudolph said. “I went there with Coach Haering. He loved him. He said, ‘I want you to come see this guy. I’m pumped about him.’ Man, by the time I walked out of the school hearing everyone talk about him, watching film, going through things, I’m like, ‘Shit, I love him too, man.’”

“Here’s a kid with all-conference (honors) in four different sports. I’m like, ‘I don’t know if there’s anything he can’t do.’ So I’m excited. He’ll be in at the mid-year. I think that’ll give him a great opportunity to impact this place. But whenever he does make the impact, he surely will. I’m really excited about him and his future here.”

Dike was the only signee in the 2020 class listed by Wisconsin as an athlete rather than having a defined position, although Rudolph said he anticipated Dike beginning his career at wide receiver. Harris said Dike’s skills translated all over the field, including at safety, cornerback

and running back but that he would do whatever the team asked of him.

Dike finally beginning his Wisconsin career is the culmination of a childhood dream. Dike’s mom, Mary, said she and her husband, Uche, both attended Wisconsin, as did Mary’s father. Uche recalled that the family visited campus when Chimere was 12 because his older sister was touring colleges. They attended a track meet at the Shell, a recreational sports complex located next to Camp Randall Stadium. As they walked in the shadows of the football stadium, Chimere turned to Uche and said: “I’m going to play football here someday, dad.”

“Wisconsin is basically in our blood,” Mary said.

Dike said he and his friends used to play backyard football and fight over which person could pretend to be tight end Lance Kendricks and wide receiver Nick Toon, both of whom played for Wisconsin. Dike insisted on being Toon.

“I always had aspirations of being a Badger,” Dike said. “When I started going through the recruiting process, I really wanted to pick the school that was best for my future. But as I got around the program and was around the coaches and players, I could really see that Wisconsin was a fit. And every time I would go back, I would feel most at home there. I wanted to take a little bit of time to think about it. But every single time I thought about it, I would just come back to the same decision.”

Dike’s first scholarship offer came from Iowa State in January 2019. Wisconsin followed with an offer the next week while Dike visited campus for junior day and took in a Badgers basketball game against Michigan. He committed five days later on Jan. 24 and then immediately shut down his recruitment, even as other Big Ten programs inquired about his availability.

“There were all these recruiters that were still coming to the high

school,” Uche said. “He pretty much came home after two or three days after the offer from Wisconsin and said, ‘Dad, I am not going to play for other schools over Wisconsin. So what’s the point of waiting?’ He didn’t see any value in waiting to get offers. He was not really interested.”

Added Mary: “When they offered, it was a no-brainer. He felt like he had to hold out and wait. But the more the days went by, it was actually more stressful for him to not tell them. It was an easy decision for him.”

Uche had spoken with Wisconsin head coach Paul Chryst during the recruiting process and came away impressed with his straightforward approach. Chryst didn’t make any promises about playing time and said Dike was free to visit other schools if he wanted. But Chryst made it clear that coaches thought Dike would be an excellent fit for the program and that they could help him develop on and off the field.

Wisconsin’s wide receiver pecking order is in flux a bit this offseason with the departure of No. 1 receiver Quintez Cephus, who declared for the NFL draft, as well as A.J. Taylor using up his eligibility and Aron Cruickshank entering the transfer portal. Danny Davis and Kendrick Pryor figure to step into more prominent roles within the offense. But if a playmaker emerges elsewhere, even as a true freshman, he could potentially work his way into the rotation. Harris said Dike’s skillset reminds him of what Cephus provided for Wisconsin’s offense.

Wisconsin returns seniors Jack Dunn and Adam Krumholz, who combined for seven catches for 61 yards with one touchdown. None of the other receivers on the roster have been regular contributors, and only Taj Mustapha has a catch from that group. Dike enrolling early could give him the head start he needs to make inroads toward playing time. His ability as a returner is intriguing as well, particularly considering Cruickshank, the Badgers’ No. 1 kick returner last season, is gone.

“I think my goal is to impact the team in any way I can,” Dike said. “Whether that’s starting or being a practice player, whatever I’m going to be, I’m just going to try to get better every single day and hopefully impact the team in a positive way.”

Dike said his two biggest strengths entering college were his ability to run clean, crisp routes, as well as to make plays once he had the ball in his hands. He praised Badgers wide receivers coach Ted Gilmore for his ability to develop players mentally and physically. Harris said Dike mapped out his high school curriculum so he could graduate early and enroll in college. He told Harris he had nothing more to prove in high school and couldn’t wait to get a head start at the next level.

Dike isn’t the only one excited about what he can offer Wisconsin.

“He’s been getting double- or triple-teamed on every single play the past two years,” Harris said. “We’re a smaller school in our conference, and teams can afford to put two or three guys on him because they can make up for it in other spots against us. For him to do the things that he did and basically change every team’s defense when we played them to focus entirely around one player, a wide receiver, nonetheless, I can’t wait to watch somebody try to cover him 1-on-1.”

###

**UNPACKING THE 'UPSIDE'
TENNESSEE TITANS HOPE
TO FIND IN DRAFT PICK
JAELYN DUNCAN**

**BY PAUL SKRBINA
THE TENNESSEAN
APRIL 30, 2023**

The weight of the wait didn't weigh Jaelyn Duncan down.

Duncan, the Tennessee Titans' sixth-round pick in the 2023 NFL Draft, has a history of waiting.

Duncan didn't start playing football until he was 14 years old.

For the next four of five years, the 6-foot-6, 306-pound tackle who played at the University of Maryland, had little idea about what he was doing.

"It probably took me until my redshirt freshman year, maybe even a year after that," Duncan said. "Throughout high school I was just out there moving people and just being a bigger body, not really using a lot of techniques. So when I got to college, that was one of the main focuses.

"It probably took me until my redshirt freshman year, maybe even a year after that."

Duncan was a three-time All-Big Ten honorable mention selection in five seasons with Maryland, where he allowed 58 quarterback hurries, 15 quarterback hits and 19 sacks in 2,551 snaps spanning 43 games, including 39 starts. He also was selected to play in the East-West Shrine Bowl.

He knows the learning will be accelerated come training camp.

"Just technique things, hand timing, punch timing, hand placement, just keeping great balance, stuff like that," Duncan said of areas where he needs to improve. "You don't want to lean and stuff. Just being more consistent and finishing, just continuing to drive and get it done every play."

Duncan's relationship with football began late, he said, because "some life stuff was going on. It wasn't the right circumstances at a young age."

Duncan won't be walking into completely unfamiliar company when he joins the Titans. He and Titans first-round pick Peter Skoronski, who faced off in the Big Ten, worked out together and shared the same trainer. He also will reconnect with Titans tight end Chigoziem Okonkwo and defensive tackle Sam Okuayinonu, with whom he played at Maryland.

"He's a guy we envision having a ton of upside," Titans general manager Ran Carthon said. "He's really, really athletic. He has some high-end traits we'd love to work with and develop. We look forward to working with him."

The weight of the wait of being picked didn't discourage Duncan, even though he said he thought he would have been picked Friday during the second or third round.

"You just sit around the house, wait for your phone to ring," he said. "I've been a little bit anxious and a little bit nervous, but God has a plan, so I've just been waiting."

He had three meetings with the Titans before the draft, including one at the combine and one at the Senior Bowl.

His next stop will be rookie minicamp, which for Duncan, can't come soon enough.

###

‘YOU CAN’T TEACH THAT SIZE’: ALI GAYE’S JOURNEY FROM THE GAMBIA TO LSU STARTER

BY BRODY MILLER
THE ATHLETIC
SEPTEMBER 22, 2020

BATON ROUGE, La. — When Ali Gaye came to visit Baton Rouge, Bill Busch ensured it was different from most college visits. Because Gaye is a little different than most players he recruits.

Gaye is a Muslim. A devout one. He’s a 6-foot-6 defensive lineman born in The Gambia in West Africa who moved to the Seattle area when he was 12. He was a soccer player. His first language is Wolof. His parents’ first languages are two different dialects. Gaye himself speaks three fluently and knows a good amount of five or six.

Busch did his research. The LSU safeties coach is known for recruiting the details. He often starts his texting campaign to recruits at 5:30 a.m. And with this visit, he was going to make Gaye and his parents, Omar Gaye and Afsatou Jallow, feel comfortable.

“We did a lot of things with how his Muslim religion fit in here in Louisiana,” Busch told *The Athletic* in December.

Busch planned what meals they’d eat. They introduced the family to former Gambian LSU athletes to explain their experiences. One they discovered was from Afsatou’s neighboring town. He had LSU Muslim outreach groups meet with them. He even made sure Gaye’s high school coach — John Gradwohl, who Gaye at one point lived with — got a waiver to come on the visit.

So by the final day of the trip, after LSU made Gaye and his parents feel comfortable he could continue following his faith, Gradwohl asked Gaye what he thought. It was the first of five scheduled college visits.

“This is where I want to be,” Gaye decided. He committed to LSU by the end of the weekend.

Fourteen months later, less than a week before LSU’s season opener against Mississippi State, Gaye called Gradwohl with some surprising news. Ed Orgeron named him LSU’s starting left defensive end.

“I was just so happy because I knew the winding road he took to get there,” Gradwohl said. “And if anybody appreciates it, I tell you, he sure does.”

Let’s go back, though. Back to the eighth-grader moving to Washington from The Gambia. There were problems there, and Omar and Afsatou wanted their children growing up in a better education system (All three of their children are now either in college or have earned their degree).

Gaye was sharp, but he had understandable issues that went with jumping into a school where they speak a language that isn’t your natural one. Plus, the education system in The Gambia left him behind. And it was somewhere around this time a junior high football coach spotted Gaye walking around — you couldn’t miss him — and told him he ought to go out for the football team. With Gaye’s affable personality, he just said, “Sounds like fun. I’ll try it.”

Soon he joined Gradwohl at Edmonds-Woodway High. He was raw, but he was also huge and athletic and became a three-time all-conference standout with an offer from the University of Washington.

But during his high school career, his parents’ home was severely damaged. There was a fire, a small one, but the water from the sprinklers caused a great deal of harm. Gaye, his cousin and his sister, Ida, moved in with the Gradwohls. There, the Gradwohls were able to help him a great deal academically. Ida and their cousin eventually moved out, but Gaye

stayed. He was developing so much there.

The initial adjustment for the Gradwohls was the increase in Costco runs to feed the large child, but they also became invested in his life. Gradwohl’s wife, Margie, always reminded him when it was time to pray. She helped him with school. They call him their nephew, making sure never to say son because Gaye has two great parents.

Fasting was another adjustment. During Ramadan, Muslims must abstain from food or drink from dawn to sunset for the entire month. One of his junior college assistant coaches, Tom Orthmann, would look at his cafeteria plate when he could eat during Ramadan and joke, “Whatever you can eat, eat more of it.”

“I think one of the biggest problems was a lot of these kids wanted to do all these activities, and we had to restrict them,” Gradwohl said. “Because if it’s hot out and they’re trying to do all these exercises, it wasn’t healthy for them.”

Gaye signed to play football for Chris Petersen and Washington in 2017, a dream come true for a local prospect. But his SAT scores weren’t high enough, and he had to take summer classes. Even after that, he wasn’t eligible to play for the Huskies. He was informed of that on a Monday. By Wednesday, Gradwohl took him on a visit to check out Arizona Western Community College, a junior college that’s developed many professional athletes.

He enrolled by the spring semester and got right to work under coach Tom Minnick. That fall, he showed his potential despite not showing much on the stat sheet.

“He was a little bit raw on film,” Minnick said. “He was raw as a freshman, and he got better and better and better. You knew he was going to get better ... You can’t teach that size.”

Then, the Arizona Western football program was shut down in December 2018. So Gaye followed Minnick and his staff to Garden City Community College in Kansas. Once again, he developed a close relationship with a coach's wife, this time Minnick's — who ran study halls — helping Gaye with his academics.

Busch made a trip out to Kansas that spring, and he was all in on Gaye right away. He only had eight career tackles, but Busch could see the talent. Mix that with his character, and LSU offered him a scholarship soon thereafter.

Gaye began to put it all together in 2019 at Garden City. He compiled 44 tackles, one sack and 7.5 tackles for loss. Even if the stats weren't impressive, the growth was evident.

"He was dedicated," Minnick said. "He's such a great kid. He does everything right. He works his butt off. That's what you get from a lot of international kids. Those kids work their butts off. We always used to tease him that he hasn't been Americanized yet."

Gaye eventually came to LSU as an afterthought in a loaded 2020 class. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say he was the least-discussed player coming in. But he enrolled early in January. He got to work. He developed his body. He began earning the trust of the coaching staff.

Still, Gaye was by no means a projected starter this summer. He was often the sixth or seventh name Orgeron mentioned at defensive end. Even just two weeks ago Orgeron implied Gaye was just a rotation guy. Few expected the news that came Monday.

The hardly discussed new guy who didn't even focus on football until midway through high school is now LSU's starting left end. He'll split reps with Travez Moore, but Gaye is the one who knows his assignments and who the staff can trust.

"I like his range," Orgeron said Monday. "He's 6-foot-6. He's smart. Works hard every day. Very humble young man, wants to learn, physical at the point of attack. A very good pass rusher. He's tall; he's got a lot of batted balls. He had a batted ball for an interception I think the third play of the scrimmage last Friday. Great young man."

We have no clue how ready Gaye is to be an SEC starter. We don't know how polished he is or if his 262-pound frame is strong enough. He got the job at the last second, and he still has plenty to prove.

But he's here. He came over from The Gambia. He caught up in school despite obvious limitations. He adapted to a football world that rarely sees Muslim players. He went from an afterthought to a starter for the defending national champions. It's a journey to stop and appreciate.

"A kid like that," Orthmann said, "that is that good a kid, that always tries to do his best, that always tries to do the right thing, is an easy kid to encourage. He never got down. He felt like if he continued to work hard the opportunities would come.

"That proved to be the case."

###

ROAD LESS TRAVELED LEADS FORMER E W FOOTBALL STAR TO LSU

**BY ZAC HERETH
HEARALDNET.COM
JUNE 18, 2019**

The road less traveled is a familiar path for former Edmonds-Woodway High School football standout Ali Gaye.

The 6-foot-6, 270-pound defensive end came to the United States from Gambia as a 12-year-old and although he didn't start playing football until the eighth grade, he developed into a major-college prospect.

By his senior year, he was a three-star recruit with scholarship offers from several Pac-12 schools. Gaye signed a national letter of intent with the University of Washington after his senior season and planned to grayshirt — which allows a signee to enroll during the second term of the following school year.

Gaye never ended up being a Husky. He said his SAT scores weren't high enough to enroll at UW. The three-time All-Wesco 3A/2A South selection was tasked with finding a different avenue for his college football career. He ended up going the junior-college route, enrolling at Arizona Western College in 2018.

A year later — and now at Garden City Community College in Kansas after Arizona Western dropped its football program — Gaye has earned himself another chance at his dream, this time with perennial Southeastern Conference power LSU.

Gaye made a verbal commitment to the school last week via Twitter, and hopes to suit up for the Tigers beginning with the 2020 season.

"I've always been interested in playing in the SEC, especially at a school like LSU," Gaye said in a phone interview. "It's a place I can see myself being successful on the

field, (in) the classroom and just as a person."

Gaye was a soccer player when he moved to the United States from Gambia. He said he stood just 5-foot-5 when he was 12 and had more of a soccer player's body. Turning out for the football team in eighth grade was an "experiment" with the sport.

The following year is when Gaye started to grow. He said he shot up about 5 inches and put on around 50 pounds his freshman year, eventually measuring in at 6-3, 225 pounds.

"I didn't really get into (football) until freshman year going into sophomore year," Gaye said. "That's when I really got serious with it, and that's when I really got bigger and started to look more like a football (player)."

He also played basketball and wrestled in middle school, which he credited along with soccer for helping develop his footwork and agility.

"You got a kid that's 6-6 while weighing 265, 270 who moves like a basketball player," said John Gradwohl, Gaye's football coach at Edmonds-Woodway. "Not a lot of those guys move that well. He's competitive, he loves to learn, he's coachable, he's got all those qualities."

While Gaye was on the football team, he developed a close relationship with the longtime Warriors coach.

"He's been able to walk through (the recruiting process) with me, just give me advice and just mentoring me through my journey," Gaye said. "I'd say he's been kind of like a second father figure who really just cares for me — him and his family."

Said Gradwohl of Gaye: "He's just a warm-hearted, nice young man."

As Gaye developed into a major-college football recruit, he still was

adjusting to school in the United States.

"In high school, my grades weren't all that well because the learning here is really different than the learning back home," he said. "Everything here is a whole other level."

Gaye said he's doing better than ever academically since entering junior college, and he's "keeping his head down" while working toward his goals.

"I feel like my parents really set me up in the right direction bringing me here to this country and there's a lot of opportunities for me," he said. "I just gotta go get it, so that's what I'm trying to do right now."

But junior-college football presents its own challenges.

"Juco is not for everybody. A lot of guys quit it. Sometimes people go through it and be successful," Gaye said. "I'm blessed enough to be able to have the opportunities that I have and have the people that have supported me through it, especially my coaches and my mentors, my parents and friends. Without them, there's no way I could've gone through it."

After Gaye's freshman year at Arizona Western, it was announced the program would come to an end. Luckily for Gaye, his head coach at Arizona Western, Tom Minnick, took over at Garden City and asked him to come along.

"He knows the type of dude I am and the type of player I could turn into. So he asked me to go with him and I did," Gaye said. "I believe in him and I believe in what he's doing. He's had a lot of success in bringing players to the next level. I'm really thankful to have him."

Gaye has one season of junior-college football remaining and won't be able to make his commitment official until the early signing period for junior-college transfers opens Dec. 18. He also has offers from Iowa State, Kansas

State, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Mississippi State, according to recruiting website 247sports.com.

And while the path for the Gambia native has been the one far less traveled when compared to the routes taken by his future teammates, it ultimately led to the same destination.

“With the opportunities I’ve been given, I never thought I’d be in the position I’m in — coming from a third-world country and being a stranger in this country and just now adjusting,” Gaye said. “I’m just a person trying to make it out and be somebody the kids — anybody like me — can just look at me and just know that there’s always a way. No matter how little you are or how big you are, there’s always an opportunity out there for anybody that wants to accomplish something.”

###

**TITANS LB CEDRIC GRAY
MOTIVATED, AND READY
TO COMPETE FOR
STARTING JOB IN YEAR 2**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JUNE 5, 2025**

NASHVILLE – Patience.

When Titans linebacker Cedric Gray reflected on his rookie season, it didn't take him long to come up with an answer for what he learned most.

"The biggest thing that I learned, honestly, has nothing to do with football," Gray said. "I think the biggest thing I learned last year was patience. For me, personally, coming in I had these high expectations, and this, that and a third. And really, I think calming down and learning how to be patient and learning the game more, growing, it is something I learned last year."

A fourth-round pick of the Titans in the 2024 NFL Draft, Gray was sidelined during the first half of the season with a shoulder injury that resulted in him being placed on Injured Reserve.

Gray eventually got healthy, but he still had to wait to get playing time, and snaps.

Gray admitted the waiting wasn't easy.

"It was definitely hard on me," he said. "I've never really had a serious injury before in my life, so that was kind of hard for me miss 10 games. That was definitely a challenge for me. But I think I tried to manage it, and got through it pretty well. I tried to keep high spirits during that time, and keep learning and growing, so when I got back I could take advantage."

Gray ended up playing in seven games in 2024, and he finished the year with 14 tackles on defense, and eight more on special teams. He had an especially productive game at

Indianapolis on December 22, when he tallied 11 tackles, and four more on special teams.

###

Heading into the 2025 season, Gray has his sights set on a starting inside linebacker spot alongside newcomer Cody Barton, who has made a nice early impact on a group that also includes James Williams, Otis Reese, and others.

"Cody has really stepped up as a leader," Gray said. "He is a very smart player. He helps me out a lot, helps James out, helps all of us. And I think we are all continuing to grow, myself, James, Otis and others. Just stepping into more of a leadership role as well."

The 6-foot-2, 234-pound Gray is ready to make a difference himself.

He feels like he's improved in the classroom, and with his speed and strength. He focused on being more flexible this offseason, working on his hips and bending, so he can stay low at all times on the field.

He's motivated, and ready to compete.

"I am definitely highly motivated this year," said Gray, a two-time All-ACC performer at North Carolina who racked up 369 tackles, 30 stops for a loss, 8.5 sacks and five interceptions during a very productive college career. "I feel like I missed out on the opportunity of preseason and training camp (last year) because I got hurt early on in camp, so I am looking forward to that part, because that's where I think I can really grow my game in that area of time."

"I just think I have to keep doing what I am doing, being a smart football player, showing the coaches that I understand what is going on out there, that I can make the adjustments and can make the reads and continue to hone in on my technique, and just be myself."

"I feel like I have the ability and all that stuff, I just have to keep growing, just keep trending upward and I think I'll be fine."

HOW TENNESSEE TITANS PICK CEDRIC GRAY SAW HIS MOM'S ADVICE PAY OFF IN 2024 NFL DRAFT

BY NICK SUSS
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
APRIL 27, 2024

Cedric Gray's mother Esther has officially been proven right.

The Tennessee Titans drafted Gray, a linebacker out of North Carolina, early in the fourth round of the 2024 NFL Draft. A two-time All-ACC player who ended his college career with three-straight 100-plus tackle seasons, Gray said he turned down opportunities to transfer in high school and college to stay where he felt most comfortable, bearing in mind what his mother likes to tell him.

"Something my mom always told me was 'Don't rush your blessing,'" Gray said. "This blessing, it came today."

Gray prides himself on being a "sideline-to-sideline" linebacker, someone who plays a complete game with an emphasis on athleticism who's just as comfortable filling in against the run as he is rushing the passer or dropping in coverage. He looks up to star NFL inside linebackers like Zaire Franklin and Fred Warner. He was North Carolina's defensive play caller for two seasons in college and thinks he'll be able to take over that skill with the Titans as well.

He admits his knowledge for the game developed later in his career. When he was in high school, he was a "see ball, hit ball" player. It wasn't until the summer before his sophomore year of college when his understanding broadened. And from there, he quickly emerged as one of the best linebackers in the ACC.

Despite this success, and the Titans' need for an inside linebacker, Gray says the Titans never met with him in the pre-draft process and he didn't have that big of a sense that the

Titans would be picking him Saturday.

The Titans had the confidence to pick him anyway, slotting him into a linebacker room that also includes Kenneth Murray II, Otis Reese and Jack Gibbens.

This is the type of player Gray says Titans fans should expect in him.

"A guy who gets to the ball a lot. A guy who can cover a lot," Gray says. "Linebackers today in the NFL need to have the athletic ability, the athleticism to be able to match up with running backs, tight ends and receivers and be able to make plays."

###

**CHARLOTTE'S CEDRIC
GRAY GAVE UP
CATCHING TDS AT UNC.
IN EXCHANGE, HE GOT A
CHANCE AT THE NFL**

**BY ALEX ZIETLOW
CHARLOTTE OBSERVER
APRIL 16, 2024**

Ask Cedric Gray about his football-playing life before he arrived at UNC, where he eventually became a standout four-year linebacker as the Tar Heels surged into a new era of success, and you learn something pretty quick: All along, he thought he'd be a receiver. He made that known to everyone. "Oh yes!" said Cedric's mother, Esther, when asked about her son's wide receiver dreams. She laughed. "I mean, a receiver is all the pride and joy. You get to have all the fun and score touchdowns."

Four years ago, Cedric Gray exchanged touchdown catches for interceptions. Yards for tackles. Playing with Drake Maye in youth 7-on-7 camps to practicing against him in college. When he arrived on the Chapel Hill campus from Ardrey Kell High School in Charlotte, he even exchanged his No. 11 jersey number he wore throughout his life — his favorite player was the remarkable Julio Jones — for No. 33. As a result, he's now a few days away from the NFL.

Gray, the 6-foot-2, 234-pound linebacker, will be one of the handful of prospects from the Carolinas to hear his name called at some point during the 2024 NFL Draft, which will be hosted in Detroit from April 25-27. Gray's draft profile states that he'll contribute most as a weak-side linebacker at the next level, that he has the athleticism and traits to handle man coverage and that he can be a disruptive defender when "playing proactively and taking aggressive, downhill shots" through gaps. He's projected to be a third-round pick — a result of his prolific career at UNC and the agility and speed (4.64 40-yard dash) he

showcased at the NFL Scouting Combine in February. And when he does hear his name called, he'll be proud to call Charlotte home, he said.

"I'm very proud to come out of Charlotte," Gray said at his Pro Day in March. "We have a lot of talented guys to come out of Charlotte. Definitely the best football that's being played in North Carolina at the high school level. So just glad to be a part of that group, glad to represent my city well, and to be the next Charlotte guy to come out and put on."

Gray, 21, was born in Fort Washington, Maryland, about 20 miles south of Washington, D.C. He's the youngest of three brothers, Devon (nine years older) and Michael (six years older), and has played football and basketball all his life. He's remained competitive and singularly focused throughout. A few flashpoints that give you a picture of who Cedric Gray is: There was the time when he was 8 years old, when he scored the game-winning touchdown in a youth championship game on a fourth-and-goal from the 1-yard line, a result of a play that his coaches spelled out simply for their team: Get Cedric the ball. (Cedric's mother still has a photo of that day, with Cedric holding up a trophy larger than him and smiling ear to ear.)

At 11, Gray moved from Fort Washington to Charlotte and used football to find his friends, find his community. Throughout high school, with all the pressures to transfer to another football program, he stayed at Ardrey Kell.

At 19, in the third game of his sophomore season, he started his first game at linebacker for the Tar Heels and "it was on" from there, posting 99 tackles and 2.5 sacks and two interceptions that sophomore year — one INT was the game-sealer against Miami in a 45-42 shootout that marked Gray's arrival. And simply throughout college, he was consistent — as a player on the field, yes, but also as a presence; not

resentful because he only played special teams as a freshman; not tempted to leave by any other opportunities out there; not motivated to do anything but lead the team he's on.

Gray finished his senior season with 121 tackles, five sacks, two forced fumbles and a fumble recovery en route to a First-Team All-ACC nod, a Butkus Award Semifinalist nomination and a second-team All-American accolade. He hopes to showcase all this at the next level. "This is something I've dreamed of since I was a child," Gray said, reflecting on his move from Maryland to Charlotte, his transition from wide receiver to linebacker, his switch from college standout to an NFL prospect with everything to prove. "So if this is what it takes, this is what it takes."

###

**MARCUS HARRIS NFL
DRAFT INTERVIEW:
COMPETITIVE PLAYER**

**BY JUSTIN MELO
THE DRAFT NETWORK
APRIL 20, 2025**

Cal cornerback Marcus Harris played his best football in 2024 after transferring to the program from Idaho. The Golden Bears standout showcased an improved ability to disrupt the catch point by recording seven pass breakups and two interceptions. Harris also recorded 46 tackles, making plays around the line of scrimmage.

Harris recently spoke exclusively with The Draft Network. Harris discussed entering the portal and going from Idaho to Cal, playing man and zone coverage, making plays around the football, and more.

JM: I thought you played your best football at Cal this past season after transferring to the program from Idaho. You had seven pass breakups and two interceptions. What changed for you in 2024?

Marcus Harris: I was able to step up and showcase more confidence in my game. I had a nice career at Idaho, spending three-and-a-half years there. I came to Cal and improved even more in 2024.

JM: You made plays at the catch point. What do you think led to that increased production?

Marcus Harris: My philosophy as a defensive back is to make plays on the ball. There's usually five secondary defenders on the field on any given play. Going out there and disrupting the catch point is our job. We have to be around the football to make the plays that come to us.

JM: Talk to me about your ability to play man and zone coverage. You showed that ability at Cal.

Marcus Harris: I feel like I'm a pretty versatile cornerback. I've played in like three different schemes. Applying those tools and

the knowledge I learned in different systems, I can play man and zone coverage as necessary.

I applied those tips to the scheme at Cal and it made me more versatile. It allowed me to utilize my entire skill set in the secondary.

JM: Do you have a preference between man and zone?

Marcus Harris: I don't have a preference. Like I said, I've played in systems that were both man and zone heavy. I'm very comfortable with both schemes.

JM: I'll put you in a scenario then. Say it's 3rd-and-long with the game on the line. It's an obvious passing down. Would you rather be manned up or playing zone with a chance to make a play on the ball near the sticks?

Marcus Harris: That's a tough question. I'm a big game plan guy. I guess it depends on what our game plan was leading up to the game. If we're sending pressure, we can definitely play man coverage. If we know the quarterback likes certain things, we can go zone coverage and take it away and see how he reacts, making him panic.

Either way, we're getting a stop.

JM: I love the commitment to the game plan. You also had 46 tackles this past season. You made plays behind the line of scrimmage in the run game.

Marcus Harris: I'd credit my willingness to be aggressive and make plays behind the line of scrimmage in the run game. I didn't second-guess those plays. Instead of making a tackle after a one-yard gain, I tried to kill those plays at the line of scrimmage. I wanted to help my defense out.

JM: You recently put forth an outstanding performance at Pro Day. I believe you ran a 4.38. Wow, what a huge showcase that was for you.

Marcus Harris: I was pleased with the performance, but I do think I could have possibly ran even faster. I was pleased with that time. It was 4.38.

JM: Have you met with many NFL teams throughout this process?

Marcus Harris: I've met with a bunch of teams on Zoom. I've had great meetings with a number of organizations. I've been blessed with those opportunities. I'm going to keep the team list private at this time. I met with teams locally to Cal, from East to West, North to South.

JM: We've appreciated your time today. What kind of impact is Marcus Harris going to make at the next level?

Marcus Harris: You're going to get a competitive player. I'm going to showcase my skill set every chance I get. I'm a dog who is ready to compete.

###

**HEADING INTO YEAR 14,
VETERAN PUNTER
JOHNNY HEKKER STILL
HAVING FUN, AND READY
FOR MORE**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
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NASHVILLE – Johnny Hekker signed with the St. Louis Rams as a rookie free agent way back on May 8, 2012.

Over 13 years later, the veteran punter is headed into his 14th NFL season, now with the Titans.

In his career, Hekker has punted the ball for 45,052 yards – or 25.6 miles – in 212 games.

And, he's still going strong.

How has he done it?

"I'd say every day is a gift from the Lord," Hekker said with a smile. "I'm not going to shy away from the fact that I wouldn't be here if it weren't for my loving wife, and God directing people into my life to be a positive influence on me and showing me the way to be a pro, to take care of my body, be humble and serve every opportunity that you get.

"So, how you have a long career is taking every day like you don't get another one. So, I'm just having fun, and trying to make an impact however I can. And, trying to be a use to this organization in every imaginable way."

The Titans signed the 6-foot-5, 225-pound Hekker earlier this offseason.

The Oregon State product spent 10 seasons with the Rams, in St. Louis and Los Angeles, before spending three years with the Carolina Panthers from 2022-24.

He's known for his net punt skills, and his ability to pin opponents deep in their own territory. And, for his engaging personality.

Hekker has punted the ball 963 times in his career for a 46.8 gross average, with 378 punts placed inside the 20-yard line, and a 42.9 career net punting average.

Hekker was named to the NFL's 2010's All-Decade Team and he's been an All-Pro first teamer on four occasions (2013, 2015, 2016, 2017), and a second-team All-Pro on two occasions (2018, 2014), in addition to being named a four-time Pro Bowler (2017, 2016, 2015, 2013).

Hekker said he was excited about the chance to join the Titans, in part because the team's new special teams coordinator, John Fassel, is one of the guys that God put in his life to help him. The two are now reunited, after spending time together with the Rams.

"It was an opportunity to come and be somewhere where my contributions will hopefully help a team turn the page into a bright future," Hekker said. "And being reunited with Bones (Fassel) had a huge part to do with it, too, the impact he's had on my career, from my time with him, and him coaching against me. Even then I could still pick his brain and still be a friend. We've always had a great relationship.

"So, the door being open to join him again was a dream come true. I'm just thankful to be on a team that's hungry to improve and turn the tides here. Excited about the future of the program. I'm excited to be a Titan."

Hekker first started punting at Bothell High School in Washington, and he was the starting quarterback of a team that advanced to the state championship during his senior year.

Looking back, Hekker said the reason he began punting was as simple as this: "My coach trusted me back there to catch the snap and get (the ball) off."

Hekker began training more seriously headed into his freshman year of college at Oregon State.

"And I never looked back," he said. "I realized it was a great gig."

Hekker has made the most of it, ranking among the league's best in net yards over his career.

Hekker played in every game for Los Angeles (161) from 2012-21, making 727 punts for a net average of 42.87 with a long of 78 yards and 300 punts inside the 20. In 2016, he set NFL record with 53 punts inside the 20 with just one touchback and had a league-best 4,508 net yards for 46.0 net average, breaking the NFL single-season record for net punt yards. In 2021, Hekker helped the Rams win Super Bowl LVI as he punted six times for 261 yards in the title game.

In the last three seasons with the Panthers, he averaged 45.7 yards on 73 punts in 2024, with a 41.5-yard net.

Hekker has also been used for some special teams trickery during his career, as he's completed 15-of-26 passes for 193 yards with a touchdown and interception in his career, with 12 of the completions going for first downs. His career passer rating is 77.9.

"It's a ton of fun," Hekker said of being used on trick plays. "I wish I could have completed every one of them, but it's a ton of fun to go out there and be a part of the game plan, and knowing, aside from just punting, you could have an opportunity to extend offensive drives and get the juice going for the guys."

Hekker aims to keep doing his thing in Tennessee, where he'll show off his all-around skills.

Mostly by punting.

"To punt in today's NFL, you have to be well-rounded in a lot of different areas," Hekker said. "I pride myself in being great directionally, I really try to hang my hat on that, where we tell our guys where I'm going to punt the ball, and put it over there. Also, having some

kind of misdirection stuff, too, to keep punt returners guessing.

"I've tried to develop those things over the course of my career, and I still try to add things to the bag. And, I'm still having fun doing it."

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JOHNNY HEKKER IS THE MOST INTERESTING PUNTER IN THE WORLD

BY WILLIAM POWELL
STLMAG.COM
NOVEMBER 14, 2014

While I explain the ground rules, Johnny Hekker talks smack. We've lured the St. Louis Rams punter to the city's Tilles Park early on a fall afternoon. The sun hangs high, threatening our freckled skin, but the grass is sleeping in, snuggled beneath a blanket of auburn and scarlet leaves. We're not here to gaze at the foliage, though. We've come to answer one of life's most pressing questions:

Who is more athletic, an NFL punter or a magazine editor?

To settle this score scientifically, we devised a series of competitions, arranged in a best-of-five format. I mention to Hekker that if he wins the first three, the final two won't be necessary. "That's what I'm aiming to do," he says, "wipe the floor with you."

He's come dressed for battle, in a pair of Kevin Durant basketball shoes (a gift from Sam Bradford), Jordan shorts, and a Mob Squad T-shirt. "A group of rams is called a mob," he says. "Most people don't know that."

Not to be outdone, I'm sporting a pair of Mizuno sneakers I've had since high school, LeBron James shorts, and a bright pink T-shirt I got for winning a rec volleyball league.

We begin on the basketball court. I try to strike fear in my opponent's heart by mentioning I played in high school. Because the punter has 6 inches and 80 pounds on me—and because I don't want an angry Rams mob after me, should he roll an ankle—we decide to play Horse, a noncontact shooting contest, instead of one-on-one.

Hekker begins the game with "one of my famous starting shots." He calls for a bank-shot free throw and

bounces it in. Going glass from the foul line is universally loathed by basketball purists—so of course a punter would do it. I attempt to match his shot and miss. I've got an H.

"A waterfall begins with one drop," Hekker taunts. He nails a three from the right wing. I fire a brick. H-O. "You're a ho, Bill."

Hekker finally misses, and it's my turn. I go for an eyes-closed free throw, a classic Michael Jordan maneuver. Swish.

"I wasn't even looking to make sure the eyes were closed," Hekker protests.

"I saw it," confirms the photographer who's here to capture the spectacle.

Hekker misses, giving him his first letter. He curses under his breath. For a professional football player, he seems to be taking this seriously, pleading with the ball, cheering his makes, coaching himself in third person.

He misses from half court. ("Dang it!" he yells. "I thought that was going to be a net-ripper right there!") I miss from behind the hoop. ("Yes! Yes! Yes!" he exclaims.) A shot from the baseline sends me to H-O-R, though Hekker misses the opportunity to call me a whore.

I get him to H-O on a shot from the left wing, but he sends me to H-O-R-S on a pull-up three. "I got to put the nail in the coffin," he declares. "This is my signature shot: jump from the free-throw line, between the legs, lay it up."

He uses his long arms to pull off the complicated motion, rolling the ball into the hoop. I surprise both him and myself by getting the ball through my legs and to the rim, but it bounces away.

"I'm not trying to say I stereotyped you," he says, "but when I first met you, I didn't anticipate that being as close of a game as it was."

Hekker leads 1–0.

Many professional athletes understandably loathe media. How would you like 100,000 screaming people watching as you work, booing every time you mess up, then a bunch of reporters crowding around to ask why you choked? You'd probably be terse, too. Players at the other end of the spectrum use media as a bullhorn, bursting into self-aggrandizing rants, promoting their "personal brand."

Hekker's found a sweet spot between extremes. Either in social or traditional media, he's always up to something, but it seems to come from a place of joy, not ego. "I've always considered myself something of a yes man," Hekker says when asked how he ends up on TV so often.

In September, Hekker and linebacker Jo-Lonn Dunbar hosted Ram-Oke, a charity karaoke party to benefit SSM Health Care's Kick Cancer initiative. Hekker's dancing to "Thriller" was so bad, the video made TMZ.com under the headline "St. Louis Rams Punter: The White(er) Michael Jackson."

He has a weekly radio show on 101 ESPN, and last year, he did a regular spot on FOX 2 KTVI-TV called Hang Time with Hekker. In one episode, he attempted to anchor a newscast. In another, what was billed as a gift-wrapping contest turned into a slideshow of embarrassing childhood photos. Here he is in SpongeBob SquarePants boxers; there he is playing with dinosaur toys. In a third segment, he and a reporter raced go-karts. Afterward, a coach mentioned he might not want to do that again.

"I'm not the best guy on TV," he says. "I hocked a loogie during one of the segments. I had a cold. I didn't know we were live yet. It was bad."

He has a longstanding Twitter stunt called #JohnnyHekkerSketchTime.

Followers make suggestions, then Hekker draws them, signs them, and tweets pictures back to the fans. He's also a gamer. Look him up on Xbox One; his tag is WhatTheHekk. He even took a flight with the Blue Angels, after a coach dared him on Twitter. The pilot flipped and rolled. They broke the speed of sound.

"I'm like pasted to my seat," Hekker says. "I almost lost my lunch. It was so much fun."

His most famous off-field stunt, though, was his collaboration with Dude Perfect, a group of friends who turned their trick-shot basketball videos into an online sensation. Appearing in a "Punters are people too" shirt, Hekker kicks a football into a basketball hoop from 40 yards away, then joins the Dude Perfect dudes in going bananas. The YouTube video, titled "NFL Kicking Edition," has more than 10 million views.

In the interview portion of the film, Hekker is asked which three Pokémon characters he'd take into battle. Without hesitating, he responds, "Charizard, Blastoise, and Venusaur—the three main Pokémon styles: grass, fire, and water. I don't think you could be beat with those three." Then he punts a stuffed Pikachu.

Yeah, he's not a typical professional athlete.

I pull out a pair of tennis rackets and a can of balls. Since I lost at basketball, I decide to give myself the upper hand this time, taking the serve, the better racket, and the better side, forcing Hekker to look into the sun.

We decide to play best-of-three games. We both confess to being terrible, which I hope will work to my advantage. "I feel like you're just sandbagging here," Hekker says, "and you're really good at tennis."

It doesn't take long to prove him wrong: I smack two wild serves for a double fault. Hekker dances back and forth while waiting to return,

mimicking the motions of a professional. I win three straight points on his errors. "Get it together, John," he chastises himself. He climbs back to deuce, but I win when he hits a shot in the net and shanks another off the fence.

"Idiot!" he yells at himself.

Hekker has the serve for the second game. "1–0. Back's against the wall," he says, focusing. Taking advantage of his superior height and strength, Hekker rips his first serves. When they're in, I have no chance at a return, but he usually misses. His second serves are lolli-pops. "Weakest serve in America coming at you," he says.

We trade points and exultations. "Come on!" he cries.

"Vámonos!" I scream back.

Between points, I accidentally hit a ball back to him when he's not looking.

"Dude, are you trying to kill me?" he exclaims.

"Take that," I shoot back. Sportsmanship is for sissies.

We end up at deuce again. "John, you need to win this," Hekker says. "Eye of the tiger."

He wins the next two points to take the game. Before game three, we play rock-paper-scissors at the net. I pick paper; he goes rock. I take the serve for the decisive final bout. He chooses to switch sides, so I'll have to fight the sun.

Again, I begin with a double fault. The next point, he hits a ball that sticks in a crack on my side of the court. "I'm definitely complaining about that when I write about this," I promise.

Then I battle back to tie the game, 30–30. "I have some graffiti over here that's messing with my concentration," Hekker complains.

On the next point, after exchanging a few shots, I hit a ball into the

middle of the court, right at Hekker's feet. He pulls his elbow in next to his body and tries to flick at the ball, with disastrous results.

"Did you get a photo of that?" I ask the photographer.

"The disgrace?" he responds. "Yes."

"It was a terrible, terrible choice of shot," Hekker laments. "I didn't go with normal tennis. I went with spatula."

I win the next point to seal the match.

"You were who I thought you were, and I let you off the hook!" he gripes.

We're tied, 1–1.

Hekker grew up in Bothell, Washington, a Seattle suburb that Hekker describes as "awesome" and that, if a cursory glance at Wikipedia is any indication, is known for a large chicken statue. So it's no surprise that he says life there revolves around high-school sports. Johnny is the youngest of five boys, and as a child he wanted nothing more than to follow in his brothers' footsteps by playing football and basketball for the Bothell High School Cougars.

The family's lives revolved around sports and their church, where Joy Hekker worked and Johnny went to day care. "I was able to build my faith and spend a lot of quality time around quality people and be brought up the right way," Johnny says.

One of his first sports experiences came in a noncompetitive Christian soccer league. They didn't keep score, "but me and my brothers, we couldn't be stopped," he says. One time, when his brothers' team had a few players out sick, Johnny got to play with them. At one point, little Johnny and the biggest kid on the other team went running after a loose ball. "I knocked him over, and I remember I felt so cool after that," he says.

With four older brothers, he was usually the one who ended up on the ground. “I got my lumps and bruises,” he says. “It was mostly necessary tough love.” The boys played football and basketball in the street. He’d rebound for his older brothers. Then, when it was his turn to shoot, they’d leave him to chase his own ball. They taught him respect. He gives them credit for where he’s ended up.

Johnny’s father, Bob, worked at Fircrest School, a residential facility for adults with severe disabilities. (He and Johnny have matching WWJD tattoos.) “It kind of just instilled a bit of gratitude in your heart for how blessed you are,” Johnny says.

In high school, he was the quarterback and punter, but because the team was good, they rarely needed to punt. He led the Cougars to the state final twice. Western Washington University recruited him as a quarterback, and going there would have meant playing with his brother. But whenever Johnny and his father would drive past the University of Washington’s Husky Stadium, Johnny would say, “Dad, I’m going to play there one day.”

“You can do that,” his father would answer. “Let’s make that happen.”

He sent a highlight video to Oregon State University, where the coach had shown some interest. Johnny tacked a couple of punts on the end. The Beavers already had six quarterbacks, but they did need a punter. Their special-teams coach called. Johnny could come as a preferred walk-on. There would be an open competition for the punting job. Whoever won would get a scholarship.

To prepare, he went to Alabama to work with Mike McCabe of One on One Kicking. “He had a lot of work to do,” McCabe says. “He had potential, but he had such great work ethic.”

Because he’s so big, Hekker’s leg was slow. They worked all summer

on speed, trying to get more pop into his kicks, having him drive his leg through the ball.

Back at school, Hekker competed with Ryan Allen for the starting job and scholarship. Allen kicked the ball farther, but Hekker earned the job by a hair—maybe because of consistency, maybe because his background as a quarterback would help with fake punts. He’s not sure how he won, but he did.

Allen transferred to Louisiana Tech University and became the best punter in the country. Now, he’s the punter for the New England Patriots. Imagine that: two walk-ons from Oregon State, both in the NFL. “Isn’t that wild?” says McCabe, who trains both of them.

Little coincidences in life make all the difference. If Hekker had lost the starting job to Allen, who knows where he might be now?

“I’m just really happy to see that it worked out well for both of us,” he says.

In planning the competition, I’d considered a Pokémon game, but I wanted to at least have a chance. I settled on Pass the Pigs instead.

As we sit down to play, I tell Hekker, who’s never heard of the game, that the wind might affect the action.

“Really?” he asks.

“No.”

He surveys the rules. “I want to get so many snouters,” he says.

Pass the Pigs is a dice game, but instead of numbered cubes, players roll two rubber pigs. Points are earned on the basis of how the pigs land. A pig on its back, called a razorback, is worth five, as is one that lands on its feet, called a trotter. The rarest of rolls, a leaning jowler, where the pig is balancing on its nose, one foot, and an ear, is worth 15. A double leaning jowler, the holy grail of Pass the Pigs, is worth 60. “That’s pretty special,” Hekker says.

The trick is knowing when to pass the pigs. Each turn, a player can keep rolling as long as he wants. But a pig out, where the pigs land lying on opposite sides, costs a player all of the points he’s accumulated during that turn.

The game is usually played to 100 points, but we decide to do an even 10 rounds. We both pig out on our first rolls. On Hekker’s second turn, he has 15 points, but decides to keep rolling.

“You better not pig out,” I tell him.

He pigs out.

“No! You stupid pigs!” he shouts. “Lesson learned.” In fact, Hekker does not learn. He continues to press his luck—and for the most part, it works. He rolls a double razorback, worth 20. “Fortune favors the bold!” he proclaims.

He builds a small lead, but I keep pace, playing a conservative style, usually stopping with 10 or 15 points. “You coward,” Hekker jokes.

In the ninth round, Hekker rolls another double razorback, giving him an 89–59 lead. “Gosh, I love you guys,” he tells the pigs. I answer with a sider, a snouter, and a double razorback, worth 31, to take a 90–89 advantage. “Damn, that’s big,” he observes.

In the 10th and final round, Hekker scores 10 points, then stops. I need nine to tie, 10 to win. I roll a double razorback.

“I never thought seeing two little pigs on their back would bring me so much sorrow,” Hekker says. “I’m just disgusted.”

Powell leads, 2–1.

For our fourth contest, I suggest playing Pictionary, though we would need to borrow a couple of kids from the playground. Hekker points out how creepy it would be for two adult men to ask children to play Pictionary. We settle on a

drawing contest, with the photographer acting as judge.

Given his Twitter art, Hekker seems to have the upper hand. We decide to do three rounds. The first will be five minutes. He goes to a different table, to prevent me from copying his work. The judge gives us a prompt: “Let’s draw Mike Matheny enjoying his favorite Ted Drewes dessert.”

I start by drawing the manager in his uniform, then outline the custard stand. I put one concrete in Matheny’s hand and have the clerk handing another out the window. Five minutes is a lot of time, so I start adding details: clouds, the sun, a flock of seagulls. I give Matheny a long, low dog that looks more like a Komodo dragon.

Hekker draws Matheny smiling, saying, “Yumm.” The sun wears shades, while a plane overhead pulls a Go Cards banner.

The judge deliberates. He incorrectly picks Hekker. “I’m not feeling this long dog,” he says.

For the second round, we drop the time limit to three minutes and draw a Blues player holding the Stanley Cup. This time, we create similar scenes: a character with skates wearing a blue-note sweater and hoisting the trophy. I add some fruit and a child in the Cup, with the player crying.

“It’s highly unrealistic that a child could fit in there,” Hekker argues.

Again, the judge gives the victory to the punter. Hekker gives himself a standing ovation.

We’re tied, 2–2.

Kickers and punters, you might say, are the ugly ducklings of football. Compared to their mammoth, muscle-bound teammates, they tend to stick out like a gaunt thumb on the sideline. And that’s usually where you find the punter, since of the 140 or so plays in every NFL game, a team’s punter will be on the field for maybe five of them. Unlike a wide

receiver, who runs routes, catches balls, and blocks, a punter has one job: punt—and occasionally tackle (but hopefully not).

And punter is the only position where the better the team plays, the less you participate. “I love getting a chance to get out there,” Hekker says, “but I also want to sit on the sideline and have our offense score touchdown after touchdown.”

McCabe says punters’ contributions are underrated. If a team has a good punter and a good kicker, like Hekker and the Rams’ Greg Zuerlein, that’s a third of the game, he says: “If you’ve got 16 games, they’re probably winning you three to four ballgames right there with points and field position.”

About the only time a punter makes Sports-Center, though, is when he shanks a kick or makes an embarrassingly poor attempt at a tackle.

Hekker knows. During a game against Wisconsin in college, he hit the ball off the side of his foot and shot it straight out of bounds for –4 yards. “I’ve never seen the ball punted backward,” the announcer said.

Another time, against Arizona State, Hekker tried to make a diving tackle. When he landed, the guy’s towel was in his hand, and the runner was celebrat-ing in the end zone.

“That’s the kind of stuff you can’t make up,” Hekker says.

But even in this thankless role, he has found ways to shine. During his freshman year, Oregon State traveled to El Paso, Texas, for the Sun Bowl. In the lowest-scoring bowl game in half a century, Oregon State beat Pittsburgh 3–0. Hekker punted 10 times for an average of 45 yards and went home with a trophy as the Special Teams MVP. “That was a great springboard for my career,” he says. Hekker also kicked the school’s all-time second-longest punt, a 74-yarder.

With the Rams, he’s distinguished himself as an excellent punter, but also a dangerous trick-play passer. Twice, he’s used his arm to defeat his hometown Seahawks. During Hekker’s rookie year, in 2012, St. Louis beat Seattle 19–13, after the Rams’ only touchdown came on a fake field goal. Hekker, who was acting as the holder, threw to receiver Danny Amendola in the end zone. “All my friends back home were like, ‘Oh yeah! Oh no!’” he says, laughing.

Two days before we met in the park, he did it again. In the fourth quarter, with the Rams leading the defending Super Bowl champs 28–26, St. Louis faced fourth down from its own 18-yard line, with just under 3 minutes left in the fourth quarter. Giving the ball back to Seattle might have spelled doom. So the Rams faked the punt, with Hekker throwing an 18-yard pass to Benny Cunningham. The game was theirs. Once again, his friends texted him their conflicted feelings.

At press time, Hekker was 4-for-5 for 60 yards and a touchdown in his career. His passer rating of 156.3 is more than 50 points higher than that of Peyton Manning or Tom Brady. (Obviously, the comparison is absurd.)

Hekker’s greatest career achievement came last season, when he set the NFL record for net punting average, with 44.2 yards per kick. Unlike total punt yardage, the net statistic is a team effort, because it takes into account the return. McCabe says the record shows Hekker’s outstanding directional punting and hang time, lofting the ball for 5 seconds and giving his teammates time to sprint down the field.

“The number is really indicative of my teammates more so than myself,” Hekker says. “Leading the best punt team ever to play the game is pretty awesome.”

For the decisive fifth competition, I challenge Hekker to a footrace. He refuses. Instead, he proposes an obstacle course, involving various

playground equipment. A red-bearded writer and a redheaded kicker climbing over walls and swinging across monkey bars? We dub it American Ginger Warrior.

We agree to a time trial, rather than a race, so we won't be stepping on each other. We start at a set of benches, run up a slide, and climb back down a zigzag ladder. Then it's up a rock-climbing wall and across a set of monkey bars. From there, we go up some steps, down a slide, and across the park to another slide. We finish by leaping over two rocking horses and returning to the bench.

We go over the course verbally twice and walk it once. The photographer asks whether we should get one or two runs.

"One—winner take all," we respond in unison.

I go first. Hekker keeps time. I dash up the first slide...then freeze. My mind blanks. I don't know where to go next. I spin around in a circle, confused. "The clock is ticking!" Hekker calls out. "Go!"

Mercifully, he stops the clock for a second and yells "zigzag." I go down the ladder, then trip a bit while climbing the wall. I swing across the monkey bars, and now I'm back on track, picking up speed. I show off my vertical while hopping the horses, then turn on the jets. I finish in 1 minute, 8 seconds.

"Man, I choked," I say.

It's his turn. With his long limbs, he can cover each stage of the course in a couple of strides, practically stepping over the rock wall and taking the monkey bars in one big swing. He shows impressive speed between the slides and launches himself over the horses with ease. He finishes in a cool 56 seconds.

In the eternal battle between punters and journalists, Hekker reigns supreme.

"That was much more tiring than you would think," he says, panting. "How do kids do this all day?"

What means more to him, beating the Seahawks or beating me?

Hekker smiles. "I think beating the Seahawks means more to St. Louis—that game takes the cake.

"But on a personal competitive level?" he adds. "This means quite a bit."

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**TITANS ROOKIE TE
GUNNAR HELM ASKING
QUESTIONS, LEARNING
FROM VETERANS, AT
START OF HIS NFL
CAREER**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
MAY 19, 2025**

NASHVILLE – Gunnar Helm is familiar with Nashville.

Leading up to the NFL Combine, the former University of Texas tight end trained in Nashville at David Lipscomb to get ready for the next level.

Something else he did to prepare himself for the NFL: Pick the brain of veterans.

Now with the Titans, he's still doing it.

"I talked to a lot of NFL vets throughout this process, throughout the combine, post-combine, post-Pro Day about just what to expect," said Helm, who was selected in the fourth round of the NFL Draft by the Titans. "All of them kind of said the same thing: The biggest difference from college to the National Football League is not only the speed, but it's really attention to detail. It's all mental at this level, so just grasping the new playbook and figuring out the concepts. ... The chemistry, the timing all of it, just kind of falls back on that mental piece."

During his first few weeks in the NFL, starting with the rookie camp earlier this month, Helm has been spending time early in the day watching film with rookie quarterback Cam Ward and some of the team's other receivers.

He's also been working on the field alongside veteran tight ends Chig Okonkwo and Josh Whyle, along with returning tight ends David Martin-Robinson and Thomas Odukoya. Undrafted free agent Drake Dabney, who played at TCU, is also in the mix.

The Titans are hoping Helm can get up to speed as quickly as possible after finishing his college career on a high note.

At the University of Texas, Helm appeared in 54 games, with 25 starts and he totaled 79 catches for 1,022 yards and nine touchdowns.

After three years of playing behind upperclassmen, Helm (6-5, 241) was a second team All-SEC and a John Mackey Award semifinalist as a senior behind a career-high 60 catches with 786 yards and seven touchdowns.

Helm acknowledged he had to pay his dues in college at Texas, and he's willing to do the same in Tennessee.

"I kind of worked myself into a locker room guy, a culture guy," Helm said. "I like to pride myself in doing things the right way around the facility and off the field. ... (Texas assistant) Mike Bimonte used to tell me every day to trust the process, and while it got hard at some points, some guys don't develop overnight and that always kind of lingered in the back of my mind – I had developed through high school, too. I didn't even touch the varsity field until I was a junior, and that's when I made the switch to tight end. So, it is not going to happen right away for everybody, it could be middle school, high school, college or the National Football League."

Helm said he plans to watch the veterans during his early days with the team, taking notes on their study habits, how they treat their bodies, and how they carry themselves on and off the field.

"And, asking a bunch of them for help," Helm said. "Seeing how they did it, asking how they learned it. And obviously, just doing the exact same thing."

Helm said he's ready to play wherever the team needs him, whether it's as a blocker, or as a pass catcher.

He takes pride in both.

"It's however Coach (Brian) Callahan wants to use me," he said. "I've always been super blessed to have great hands. It was like that in high school, and obviously when I got to college. I always had that trust in myself – I've been on the JUGS (machine) quite a bit, been on the JUGS since I've been here."

###

**TEXAS TIGHT END
GUNNAR HELM A
STANDOUT WHO STAYED
PATIENT AND STAYED
PUT IN TRANSFER ERA**

**BY JIM VERTUNO
ASSOCIATED PRESS
DECEMBER 28, 2024**

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Scan the rosters of Texas and Arizona State ahead of the Peach Bowl and the usual names pop out.

Texas quarterback Quinn Ewers and Thorpe Award winner Jahdae Barron. Arizona State All-American running back Cam Skattebo.

Another Longhorn who draws a lot of attention from Sun Devils coach Kenny Dillingham is Texas senior tight end Gunnar Helm, who has been catching everything thrown his way and even hurdling over defenders in a breakout season.

Helm's 55 catches for 688 yards are both Texas tight end records as the No. 5-seeded Longhorns head into a New Years Day Peach Bowl matchup against No. 4-seed Arizona State in the College Football Playoff quarterfinals. He also has six touchdowns.

"He's dynamic," Dillingham said. "He's not a tight end that clumsy and catches it and falls. He catches it and extends completions, which is something you never like to see when you're going (against) a tight end ... You don't want them to catch it and run."

Staying patient

In the transfer portal era of college football, Helm is a rare case of relatively unheralded recruit who stayed patient, stayed put and developed in to a first-team all-Southeastern Conference player this season.

"I think somebody this predicted me to have nine receptions this year," Helm after he caught six passes for 77 yards and a touchdown in a 38-24 first-round win over Clemson.

"We've just got a great connection, and (he) just always is open it seems like," Ewers said.

Rated a 3-star recruit out of Edgewood, Colorado, some recruiting analysts had him as the lowest-ranked player in the Texas class that came to campus in coach Steve Sarkisian's first year in 2021. Helm had initially committed to former coach Tom Herman but stuck with Texas through the coaching change and a 5-7 season.

"I didn't really have a choice," Helm said earlier this season.

Also signed in that class was high school All-American Ja'Tavion Sanders, who over the 2022 and 2023 seasons would catch 99 passes and set the school's single season and career pass catching records for tight ends. Helm caught 19 passes those two seasons.

Breaking records

The field finally opened up for Helm when Sanders turned pro after Texas made the playoff last season and was drafted by the Carolina Panthers.

Helm's breakout game came in a 31-12 win at Michigan when he had seven catches for 98 yards and a touchdown. Against Clemson, Helm caught a touchdown pass in the second quarter. He was wide open in the end zone but had to leap high to cradle the ball and still toe-tap his feet in the end zone to stay inbounds.

His size (6-foot-5, 250 pounds), athleticism and versatility as a blocker have Helm projected as an early round draft pick in the NFL.

"We all know the path, his journey, the development that he's had in our program. I'm super proud of him," Texas coach Steve Sarkisian said. "(Ewers) can place balls in certain spots where he knows maybe if Gunnar doesn't catch it, it's probably incomplete ... They've been together for three years now,

and I think there's a lot of trust there."

—

###

**GUNNAR HELM'S
BREAKOUT SENIOR
SEASON: THE EVOLUTION
OF TEXAS' TRUSTED
TIGHT END**

**BY KATIE BORCHETTA
THE DAILY TEXAN
NOVEMBER 15, 2024**

This season, Texas football's roster is loaded with highly skilled newcomers and transfers, resulting in a recruiting class ranking sixth and fifth-ranked transfer portal recruiting, according to 247Sports. These new Longhorns have not disappointed, with players such as junior wide receiver Isaiah Bond, senior defensive back Andrew Mukuba and five-star freshman wide receiver Ryan Wingo who helped lead the Longhorns to an 8-1 record and now a No. 3 Associated Press Poll ranking.

However, a familiar face on the field stands out this season.

Senior tight end Gunnar Helm has had a breakout role this season despite being at Texas since his freshman year in 2021. This season alone, Helm has held 461 receiving yards and three touchdowns in nine games, surpassing his cumulative stats for his first three years on the team.

One skill from Helm exclusively seen this season is an explosive hurdle over the defense during the run after catch. These runs have not only gained a lot of attention but have helped the Longhorns accumulate yards after the catch. Helm also had an impressive 62 yards on six receptions against Georgia last month, in a matchup where the offense didn't have much success.

However, Helm's progression might be overlooked because he has played almost every game on the Longhorn schedule dating back to his first year. Looking back at his first season, Helm said that he was just thrown into his role and had to learn by doing.

"I think I've made leaps and bounds since my freshman year," Helm said. "I was behind Jared Wiley my freshman year. He's on the Chiefs now and doing a great job but a week before our first game, he gets hurt. So, you know, I'm on the road in Arkansas, and then home against Louisiana Lafayette. It was definitely very eye-opening. I was thrown kind of right into the fire."

Since his freshman year, Helm has prided himself on working hard to get where he is this season. In his time at Texas, he has improved his passing-catching game, yards after the catch, stretching the defense and perfecting his routes. Yet, he doesn't just credit himself.

"I've had the pleasure of playing with a lot of really good tight ends, a lot of NFL tight ends," Helm said. "So taking things from Ja'Tavion (Sanders') game, taking things from Jared Wiley's game, taking things from Cade Brewer's game, I think it's made me the player I am today. And obviously trusting Coach Sark (Sarkisian) and Coach Banks and Coach Flood, and when you know that; when they were telling me; when it was tough to believe, 'Just trust the process.'"

With his transformative success, Helm has turned into a potential NFL tight end, and, being from head coach Steve Sarkisian's "inaugural recruiting class," he could not be more excited for Helm.

"I've been really proud of Gunnar," Sarkisian said. "Gunnar continued to work at it, and I think the dedication that he made to developing himself in the passing game, we saw glimpses of it last year, but what he's been able to do this year has become a real weapon ... a guy that can not only catch the ball but can create explosive plays and can make people miss in the open field."

###

**NEW TITANS OC NICK
HOLZ READY TO WORK
ALONGSIDE HC BRIAN
CALLAHAN**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
FEBRUARY 14, 2024**

NASHVILLE – On the same day he was hired as head coach of the Tennessee Titans, Brian Callahan last month made his plans of calling the team's offensive plays known.

On Wednesday, Callahan introduced Nick Holz, the man he hired as his offensive coordinator.

So, what will the dynamics between the two look like?

Callahan said the working relationship will develop further in time, but he knows it can work since he operated in a similar structure at his previous job, as offensive coordinator with the Bengals.

"It's a little different than maybe you're used to around here," Callahan said, "having an offensive head coach that's calling the plays with an offensive coordinator by title, that doesn't call the plays. But it's a set-up I'm trying to emulate from how we were set up in Cincinnati with myself and (head coach) Zac Taylor. And it's a system that I know is important, and I know that it works.

"(Most) of Nick's job is to make sure the offensive staff and the offensive players and the offensive scheme keeps running all the moments I am not available to be there, particularly during the course of the week. There's a preparation part of it that is critically important to me."

Holz brings 11 years of NFL coaching experience to the Titans, and a total of 16 years coaching.

He joins the Titans after one season with Jacksonville as their Passing Game Coordinator.

"You need to be yourself first," Holz said of how he'll handle the set-up,

and approach his job. "I am not going to try and be Brian. We are different people in that regard. ... As each day goes, just seeing a few more things I can take off his plate It is really kind of an open dialogue the whole time in how we're trying to figure stuff out, and structure it this way."

Holz has deep ties with the Callahan, and his family. Holz and Brian Callahan were teammates at De La Salle High School (Calif.), and Holz got his start in coaching on Bill Callahan's staff at the University of Nebraska in 2007. Bill Callahan was officially named offensive line coach with the Titans.

Prior to joining the Jaguars, Holz spent 10 years (2012-21) with the Oakland/Las Vegas Raiders and served in a variety of roles on offense, mostly focused on wide receivers.

As an offensive unit, Holz said he wants to see players playing with effort and toughness, and "we really want to see guys playing with great speed, detail and execution."

Callahan and Holz believe they're like-minded in their offensive philosophy, and approach.

He plans to do his part to help the Titans be successful as a unit.

"Everybody has their own management style," Holz said. "I don't think you'll see me as a yeller and a screamer or anything like that. But I think if you build relationships with people, you kind of empower them to do their jobs.

"I feel like the people I have worked for, they empowered me ... As a leadership style, the same thing with the players, 'We're going to give you this, and you keep going and we'll build the connection in that regard.'"

###

**WITH NEW FACES
AROUND HIM, TITANS
VETERAN SAFETY AMANI
HOOKER READY TO LEAD
THE WAY**

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JULY 5, 2024

NASHVILLE — When veteran safety Amani Hooker looks around, he sees a lot of newness.

New head coach, new defensive coordinator, new position coach, and plenty of new faces around him on the defense.

Hooker, heading into his sixth season with the Titans, wants to do his part to help lead the way.

"It's all about accountability, with me as well," Hooker said. "This is all new for me — it's a new style, a new defense, new scheme, so just like everyone else is learning, I am doing the same thing.

"But my job is to make sure everyone learns at a progressive level and we're doing it together as a unit."

Hooker is the second-longest tenured Titan alongside defensive lineman Jeffery Simmons, behind only outside linebacker Harold Landry. Hooker and Simmons were part of the 2019 draft class, and they've been mainstays ever since.

Before looking ahead, Hooker looked back at last season, and it reminded him of things he can do better moving forward.

"(Things I can) improve on is having ball disruption, getting my hands on the ball, whether that is interceptions, pass break-ups, forced fumbles," Hooker said. "Overall, just being the best overall safety I can be. I know I have a long road to get there, but I know my capabilities are there and I just have to improve this offseason and help my guys around me."

In five NFL seasons, Hooker has played in 66 games, with 37 starts. He's tallied 245 tackles, seven interceptions, and 22 passes defenses, along with two quarterback pressures and two forced fumbles.

In 2023, while playing in 13 games, Hooker totaled 80 tackles and an interception, along with three tackles for a loss.

Hooker said he's excited about the additions the team has made around him, including the addition of veteran cornerbacks L'Jarius Sneed and Chidobe Awuzie.

"We have two dogs — we have Chido and Sneed out there," Hooker said. "I can't wait to go full speed with them, with the pads on. I have been watching them make plays for the other team against us, so I am excited that they're on our team now and it's going to be a lot of fun.

"These guys have proven they can be in the right position to make the plays, and when I'm out there I am able to do my job now, and start searching for plays as they come to me. Knowing you have guys that are aggressive out there, it makes me as a safety have that same mentality that they have and bring it to our defense."

Hooker said he's also fired up about new defensive coordinator Dennard Wilson, and the mindset he's preaching.

Across the board, Hooker said guys are excited, and they see opportunities, whether they're new to the team, or been around several years like himself.

"I'll just say it's a lot more aggressive," Hooker said of the defense. "It has been aggressive there's times when it can be aggressive and there's times when not to, so our coaches are doing a good job teaching that."

TITANS SAFETY AMANI HOOKER THANKFUL FOR CONTRACT EXTENSION WITH THE TEAM

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
SEPTEMBER 9, 2022**

NASHVILLE – The Titans on Friday agreed to terms on a multi-year contract extension with safety Amani Hooker.

After practice on Friday, Hooker said he's thankful for several reasons.

"It means a lot," Hooker said. "It shows how much the Titans believe in me and trust me, and I have that same trust and confidence in them. I am just going to do my job to make sure I can help this team win and help them win a Super Bowl."

Hooker said he called his parents when the deal became official.

Growing up, Hooker recalled cutting grass, walking dogs, and working a construction job to make money. Hooker said he knew after two days the construction job wasn't for him.

The NFL has worked out well for Hooker and his family.

"My parents, they were with me when I was in little league and they knew my dream when I was in kindergarten," Hooker said. "For them to see where I am at today, I know they are very proud of me, and I wouldn't be here without them."

"Growing up, the dream was for me to get to the NFL, and it was also my dream to stay in the NFL and be able to provide for my family. Being able to do that is a blessing from God."

Hooker, heading into his fourth season, has played in 44 games, with 15 starts, for the Titans since being picked in the fourth round of the 2019 NFL Draft.

Over the years, Hooker has developed into a key player on the team's defense.

In 2021, Hooker started 12 games and finished the year with 62 tackles, and an interception. Hooker also added an interception on the team's playoff contest against the Bengals.

Hooker had a team-high four interceptions in 2020.

In three seasons, Hooker has recorded 119 tackles, five interceptions, 12 passes defended and a forced fumble.

With five career interceptions, Hooker is tied with Juan Thornhill for the third-most among safeties from the 2019 draft class, behind only Darnell Savage Jr. (eight) and Taylor Rapp (seven). From 2020 to 2021, only 11 NFL safeties had more interceptions than Hooker.

Hooker, whose contract was set to expire after the 2022 season before the extension, said the thought of playing alongside veteran safety Kevin Byard long-term is key.

"It is definitely a blessing," Hooker said of Byard. "Watching KB and how he is around the building, I wanted to mimic that because I've seen the success that he had off the field, and on the field as well."

"We have been together for four years, and we're about to be together for another four right now. So we're going to be able to be on the same page and be able to make plays and we'll be the best we can be."

The Titans kick off the 2022 season against the New York Giants on Sunday at Nissan Stadium.

###

BYARD SAYS HOOKER HAS FOLLOWED PROPER PATH TO LEADERSHIP

BY MICHAEL HOGAN
SI.COM
JUNE 3, 2021

Amani Hooker figures to make a bigger impact in more than one way this season.

First, the Tennessee Titans safety figures to be a full-time starter for the first time in his career after the team released veteran Kenny Vaccaro as part of a secondary overhaul in March.

He also hopes to be more of a leader for the defensive unit.

And nobody knows how to properly establish leadership than the man he will be playing beside in the defensive backfield this season, Kevin Byard, who has been a team captain in each of the past two seasons.

In order to become a good leader, Byard said, one must first be a good follower. And Hooker has done that well over his first two NFL seasons.

"I think Amani has been a great follower since he's been here," Byard said. "Watching me and (Vaccaro), or just watching any of the veteran guys and learning from them, learning how to be a pro."

A third-round pick out of Middle Tennessee State in 2016, that's exactly how Byard became one of the Titans' most prominent voices in the locker room, for both on and off-field matters.

The Pro Bowler and All-Pro observed and learned from the likes of defensive back Jason McCourty and linebacker Brian Orapko.

Not only would Byard listen to what veterans had to say on a daily basis, but he paid close attention to the smallest of details. In the NFL, of course, doing the "little things" matters most.

"One thing that I did when I first got into the league was I looked at the parking lot," Byard said. "When I got there in the morning, I was looking at cars ... what car is here early in the morning? Okay, this guy here. I was asking Jason, 'Hey, what time are you getting here in the morning? Why are you coming here so early?' They were getting rehab or doing the little things."

A fourth-round pick out of Iowa in 2019, Hooker's ascension to a more significant role on the defense started last season. His snaps with the defense increased, and when Vaccaro missed three games due to a lingering concussion, Hooker was called upon to start.

He finished tied for the team lead in interceptions with four and second in passes defended eight while also making 51 total tackles. All of those marks are career-highs.

Entering the 2021 season, Hooker is in a position to evolve as a leader for many reasons. Many younger players will fill the secondary after numerous moves in free agency and the NFL Draft.

But most importantly, he's taken after many veterans over his first two seasons, including Byard.

"He's into that role where he's out there playing, he's out there being more vocal, making calls and checks. That's the start of it," Byard said. "Going out there being sure of yourself, knowing what you need to do. When you assure yourself and know what you need to do, you can coach another guy up. I think he's been doing pretty great at that."

"I think we're going to be pretty good running mates this year."

###

**TITANS ROOKIE WR
JHA'QUAN JACKSON
DRAWS INSPIRATION
FROM HIS 104-YEAR-OLD
GREAT-GRANDMOTHER**

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
AUGUST 21, 2024

NASHVILLE – Jha'Quan Jackson is headed back home this weekend.

That storyline is special enough for the Titans rookie receiver, who grew up in New Orleans and played in college at Tulane University.

Making it even better: Jackson will get a chance to see his 104-year-old great-grandmother, who has been an inspiration to him since he was a little boy.

"She's a great, young-looking lady," Jackson said with a smile. "She is all about putting God first, and I love her to death. I talk to her each and every day, and I love her for everything she's done for me.

"She taught me a lot when I was a kid, and let me do a lot of things to learn to be the man that I am. If you get a chance to go talk to her, it's a blessing."

Elizabeth Ann Thomas was born on January 25, 1920, when Woodrow Wilson was president.

Jackson, a sixth-round draft pick on the 2024 who has been a preseason standout, said his great-grandmother still gets around well while continuing to inspire him, and everyone in the family. Thomas lives in Metairie, La., about five minutes from the Saints practice facility.

Jackson, who has eight siblings (five sisters and three brothers), said there was a time when he lived with his great-grandmother, up until the third grade.

"She's a lady who had 12 kids," Jackson said. "My great-grandfather lost his life early, before I was born. She raised all her kids, even

working for other people, cleaning up houses. Battling all that, going to work and then coming home and cooking for the kids. She's always been an amazing woman."

Jackson has tried talking his great-grandmother into going to Sunday's Titans-Saints preseason game, even offering to put her in a suite at the Caesars Superdome.

And while it sounds like that won't happen, Jackson said he'll be happy to see her while in town.

Jackson keeps a photo of his great-grandmother and other family members in his locker at Ascension Saint Thomas Sports Park.

"I always want to give her her flowers," Jackson said, "because I love her so much.

"My family, the ones I love, I think of them each and every day. I am doing this for them."

###

COMFORTABLE SURROUNDINGS LEADING TO OFFSEASON GROWTH FOR TITANS' JHA'QUAN JACKSON

BY JUSTIN MELO
BROADWAY SPORTS
MEDIA
JUNE 17, 2024

Tennessee Titans rookie wide receiver Jha'Quan Jackson has been acclimating to professional football. From getting into a huddle to defeating press-man coverage, Jackson has showcased consistent improvement. One thing that's helped him is his relationship with running back Tyjae Spears.

Jackson and Spears have leaned on each other beyond football. Whether it was navigating Nashville following the NFL draft, or playing top golf and laser tag to ensure an escape from football was present when appropriate, Jackson has counted on his best friend. It led to desirable on-field results throughout OTAs and mandatory minicamp.

Jackson recently spoke exclusively with Broadway Sports. Jackson discussed his acclimation growth throughout minicamp and OTAs, route running in a new offense, his bond with Spears, and more. We also discussed his relationship with wide receivers coach Tyke Tolbert and veteran players like Jeffery Simmons and DeAndre Hopkins.

JM: You've now completed three offseason workout phases as a Tennessee Titans rookie receiver. You participated in rookie minicamp, mandatory minicamp, and OTAs. How do you feel you're acclimating to professional football? What was the overall experience like?

Jha'Quan Jackson: It's been a great experience so far. It's an honor to be here. It's the blessing of a lifetime. I've dreamed about playing in the NFL ever since I was a young boy. I've always wanted to be the best player I can be.

Going into that first week of minicamp, I was learning the playbook and getting to know the coaching staff. I was learning about the organization and how the culture wants to function. We had OTAs the following week and that's when they started ramping up my reps.

The reps ramped up once again when I got to mandatory minicamp. By the time minicamp came around, I felt like I knew the playbook inside-out. I was getting my splits right and being a great communicator.

I was seeing coverages faster as well. That first week, you're just trying to get your feet underneath you. It's a new offense so you're trying to do the right things, trying to be in the right spot at the right time.

It goes back to what coach Brian Callahan did with the Cincinnati Bengals. There's a lot of different ways you can scheme things up to get your guy open.

JM: Expanding on that, did you have a "Welcome to the NFL" moment during that first week of practice? Something that made you say wow, this is definitely different?

Jha'Quan Jackson: I mean, that was probably the first time I really got into a huddle (laughs). We didn't huddle in college. We used to get the call from the sidelines. That's where we got our signals from. I could probably mention a few things, but really being in the huddle for the first time was the biggest difference.

JM: I love that (laughs). Wide receivers coach Tyke Tolbert attended your pro day at Tulane. Do you remember your interactions with him at pro day?

Jha'Quan Jackson: I definitely do. It was great. I had great interactions with every member of the Titans I met with throughout the pre-draft process. When coach Tolbert came to Tulane, we spoke before the pro day workout even started. We talked about my background and my family. We didn't even really talk

about football until after the workout.

We got on the white board a little bit. He wanted to see how fast I could recall the offense. He was impressed with what I showed him that day. I recalled the offense to him.

Who would've thought I would be with the Titans, man? Remember Justin, the last time you and I spoke, you told me I was going to be a Titan [at the Senior Bowl] (laughs). That's crazy that you called it in January. It's funny. I'm back with my guy [Tyjae Spears] and a lot of other great players.

It's a great organization with an amazing general manager and head coach. I can't forget the owner Mrs. Amy Adams Strunk. She's an amazing person.

JM: She sure is! I appreciate your kind words. What's your relationship like with coach Tolbert today? How is he helping you get better?

Jha'Quan Jackson: It's been great. It goes beyond coach Tolbert. All of the assistant coaches around him have been great as well. They're always ready and willing to help. You might see the defensive backs coach telling the receivers how the DB might play a route. Everybody wants to help everybody.

It's been nothing but love since the moment I got here, not just from the coaches, but from the veteran receivers as well. Guys like Arden Key, Tony Pollard, Tyjae Spears, and Jeffery Simmons have been trying to help out us rookies.

Everybody is pushing us to be great. From the head coach to the defensive coordinator, it's all of their first seasons in charge. It's a new team and a new organization. It's a new offense and a new defense for everybody, not just for the rookies.

Even the veterans feel like it's a brand new team. Everybody is really starting from square one. It's all about how quickly you can learn

and pick up the scheme. Coach Tolbert has been a great asset for us in that regard.

Coach Tolbert wants us to be the best players we can be. We're working on developing the tools we need to be successful. He coached Darnell Mooney in Chicago, Anquan Boldin, Odell Beckham Jr., Peyton Manning, and so on. He's been around a lot of great players.

JM: He has a terrific resume. One of the biggest challenges any rookie receiver faces is getting used to seeing more press coverage. You didn't see a lot of it at Tulane. How are you managing so far? The Titans have an incredible room of cornerbacks that will challenge you at the line of scrimmage.

Jha'Quan Jackson: That's one of the biggest things when going from college to the NFL. You have guys that are just as fast as you. Everybody is good in this league. You have some guys that lean on football I.Q. and technique. Game speed, tendencies, it's all completely different from college.

At the end of the day, constantly working on your craft is what separates you and makes you better. It goes back to what coach Brian Callahan did with the Cincinnati Bengals. There's a lot of different ways you can scheme things up to get your guy open.

Press coverage doesn't necessarily have to be harder. It's all about knowing who you're up against. If you're going up against L'Jarius Sneed or Chauncey Gardner-Johnson, or somebody like Sauce Gardner, there are different types of players and different ways to win in this league.

It's all about how you prepare yourself for that specific opponent.

JM: Your relationship with Tyjae Spears has been well documented. You guys were best friends and roommates at Tulane. What's it been like to reunite with him?

Jha'Quan Jackson: It's been great. Once I got the call, everybody knew he was at my draft party (laughs). He was right there with me. He thought I was going to get drafted by a different team. We were both so excited when the Titans made that call.

I've been here in Nashville ever since I got drafted. It goes beyond being with Tyjae. I'm loving the city of Nashville. It's nice, calm, and quiet. I'm thankful that I get to wake up and spend almost every day with my best friend.

JM: I love the way you guys are leaning on each other. It goes way beyond football.

I told Tyjae Spears just yesterday when we were together, I probably would have been sad if I got drafted somewhere else. I would've been alone in that city. You can try to make it feel like home wherever you end up, but it's hard when you don't have anybody that you really know in that city. Being with him makes it feel like home.

He told me he was sad a lot last year when he first got to Nashville. Don't get me wrong, he was so happy to be a Titan, but he didn't have anybody from back home here. I don't know what that feels like because I've been lucky enough to have him by my side every step of the way. I can't imagine not having him here with me.

I felt way more confident and better about myself when I got here. I'm talking about life away from football. We can go play top golf or laser golf together. Hey man, let's do something to get you out of the house. He didn't really have that person last year.

We both feel so comfortable right now.

JM: We couldn't be happier for you both. As you continue getting familiar with everybody else on the team, what's your first impressions of Will Levis as a quarterback?

Jha'Quan Jackson: All three quarterbacks have been doing a great job. It's a new offense like I said earlier. We're all hammering down and learning the new system. From the first read to the second and third, it's totally different. Those quarterbacks are learning the playbook to make sure they put the ball in the right position.

That's true for Mason Rudolph as well. Malik Willis is doing a great job every single day. All three of those quarterbacks are competing. They're trying to be the best quarterbacks they can be.

JM: You practiced returning kicks and punts at OTAs. That's something you did frequently at Tulane. Are you hoping to be the starting kick and punt returner this season?

Jha'Quan Jackson: My goal is just to come in every day and go to work. Everything else will work itself out. I'm leaving that up to the coaches. They'll be the ones to make those decisions. They want to put the right guys on the field to help us win games. I try to be the best teammate I can be. I'm pushing myself to be better and I'm pushing my teammates to go harder as well.

JM: We've appreciated your time today. This has been outstanding. You're now on a midsummer break before training camp begins in late July. What are your goals heading into camp?

Jha'Quan Jackson: My main goal is to ensure that I'm both physically and mentally ready for camp. I have to make sure I'm prepared and up to par. This is going to be my first training camp at the NFL level. I'm going to keep my eyes and ears open.

I'm going to be a sponge. We have guys like DeAndre Hopkins, Calvin Ridley, and Tyler Boyd in our receiver room. Those guys are going to help make me a better player. I'm going to listen to all of their tips so I can catch on faster.

Say we have a formation out there with a play-call and concept versus a certain coverage. I know those receivers are going to help me understand what and why our approach is. It's all about those quicker tendencies. I'm trying to learn something in five seconds as opposed to 12 seconds (laughs).

I want to be efficient. That's how you line up fast and play fast.

###

**BACK IN TENNESSEE
RECEIVER VAN
JEFFERSON READY TO
MAKE THE MOST OF HIS
OPPORTUNITY WITH
TITANS**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
MAY 21, 2025**

NASHVILLE – Van Jefferson is back in Music City, hoping to flourish in the city he grew up in.

The Titans receiver knows what he needs to do to give himself the best chance.

"Every day, working," Jefferson said. "It's just about staying ready, and staying ready for the opportunity when the opportunity presents itself. I think if I do that, I'll be fine."

Jefferson, who played at Ravenwood High School, signed with the Titans back in March.

Wearing No.11, he's been running routes in offseason workouts on the same practice fields where his father, Shawn, was receivers coach with the Titans. Back then, the young Jefferson was a regular at Ascension Saint Thomas Sports Park, when he'd cross paths with then-Titans receivers Nate Washington, Kendall Wright, Kenny Britt and others in the hallways.

He's thrilled to be back.

"I remember coming here with my dad, walking with him throughout the facility," Jefferson said. "So, just coming back was crazy to see. So, it's great. Obviously, I am just here to compete and win and get to know my teammates. It's a full circle moment."

The 28-year-old Jefferson played last season in Pittsburgh, where he tallied 24 grabs for 276 yards and two touchdowns for the Steelers.

In five NFL seasons, Jefferson has totaled 137 receptions for 1,876

yards and 12 touchdowns in 78 games. His breakout season came in 2021 for the Rams, when he recorded 50 receptions for 802 yards and six touchdowns. His receiving and yardage totals ranked third on the team that would go on to win Super Bowl LVI.

Jefferson is excited about his opportunity in Tennessee.

"It's a great opportunity," he said. "We have a great group of guys in the room, guys I can learn from, guys that are there who are hungry as well. I am just coming in and doing my part and letting the chips fall where they fall. At the end of the day, we are just here working right now, in OTAs, and progressing into training camp."

"(Right now) I am just learning the playbook – that's my main focus. I am just learning plays and learning each position so I can be on the field at any position I need to be."

Jefferson said he likes the group around him in the receiving corps.

"Obviously I've known Calvin (Ridley) from afar, and the things that he's done from college to the league," Jefferson said. "He's just savvy in his routes, and stuff like that. I'm learning from Tyler (Lockett), who is a savvy vet, and all the great things he did in Seattle. And you have some other guys in the league like Bryce (Oliver), who has played some here, learning from him and Mason (Kinsey) and those guys. So I am just soaking it all in – we have some great guys in the room that I can learn from and we're all just going to be competing."

Jefferson said he's also already been impressed by rookie quarterback Cam Ward, who was selected by the Titans with the first pick of the NFL Draft.

"I think Cam's leadership, the way he has come in and put his nose into the playbook and how he has been around the guys, after practice, getting throws in, that is something you like to see," Jefferson said. "He is very adamant about learning the

playbook as fast as he can, so he can play his best when he is on the field.

"As he continues to grow and grow, you are going to see that come out of him. I am excited for his opportunity and what he can do."

###

LOCAL PREP STANDOUT VAN JEFFERSON EXCITED ABOUT HIS "FULL CIRCLE MOMENT" AS HE EMBARKS ON HIS OWN CAREER WITH THE TITANS

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
MARCH 21, 2025**

NASHVILLE — When Van Jefferson walked into the Titans facility to sign his contract with the team last week, he couldn't help but think about how much his life had changed since his last time in the building.

It was back in 2014, when Jefferson was a senior at Ravenwood High School, and his father, Shawn, was receivers coach with the Titans. The young Jefferson was a regular visitor those days, when he'd cross paths with then-Titans receivers Nate Washington, Kendall Wright, Kenny Britt and others in the hallways.

He cheered on the Titans, mainly because he was pulling for his dad.

Fast-forward to last week, when Van Jefferson returned to Ascension Saint Thomas to sign with the team.

Jefferson, already with five NFL seasons under his belt, returned as a father of five, and a husband.

With him on his trip back was his wife, and the five children who range in age from 10 months old to eight years old.

"I have a crew," the 28-year-old Jefferson said with a smile. "I've been blessed."

A prep standout at Ravenwood who garnered Tennessee Sports Writers Association all-state and Tennessean all-Midstate honors before playing in college at Ole Miss and Florida, Jefferson is thrilled about being back with the Titans after playing for the Los Angeles Rams (2020-23), Atlanta

Falcons (2023) and Pittsburgh Steelers (2024).

"Tennessee, it provided a lot of firsts for me," Jefferson said on Thursday from Pittsburgh. "I got my first exposure there, got my first (college) offer. I met some of my best friends to this day there.

"Being back, it's a full circle moment. Just coming to the facility, I remember when I used to drive there with my dad in the morning. To come back, and now be with the Titans myself, it's amazing. It's a blessing to play in the NFL regardless, but it's a little sweeter when you're able to come back and play for the team where you lived for an extended period of time. I'll always be grateful for that, and it adds more sweetness to it, playing for the hometown team."

News of Jefferson's signing also meant hearing from a lot of folks with a 615 area code.

"I got a lot of those texts, a lot of those calls, from my buddies who are excited for me to be back," Jefferson said with a smile. "And my high school coach, Will Hester, we were on the phone for probably an hour, just talking about me coming back and being around now, and how he'll be able to come see me play. It was hard for him to come see me play in L.A., and away from here.

"So, it was a great welcome from all the people I know. I am glad to be back."

In five NFL seasons, Jefferson has totaled 137 receptions for 1,876 yards and 12 touchdowns in 78 games. His breakout season came in 2021 for the Rams, when he recorded 50 receptions for 802 yards and six touchdowns. His receiving and yardage totals ranked third on the team that would go on to win Super Bowl LVI.

Last season in Pittsburgh, Jefferson tallied 24 grabs for 276 yards and two touchdowns for the Steelers.

Jefferson said there were a number of reasons he opted to sign with the Titans, in addition to his Tennessee roots, and it being his dad's former team. Shawn Jefferson, who played 13 NFL seasons himself, coached from 2013-2015 with the Titans. He's now receivers coach with the New York Jets.

"I had coach (Brian) Callahan coach me when I was at the Senior Bowl, coming out of college," Jefferson said of the Titans head coach. "And their offense is very similar to the West Coast style, similar to what I ran with the Rams. And (Titans receivers coach) Tyke Tolbert has a really good reputation around the league. So, that ultimately helped lead me to come to the Titans.

"In my conversations with the staff, it just felt really comfortable. In my heart it felt like Tennessee was the right place."

A 6-foot-1, 200-pounder, Jefferson has played in 78 games in his five-year career, with 47 starts.

After some modest numbers in recent years, he feels like he can surge even higher in Tennessee.

"Just me being consistent," Jefferson said. "Coming into the league, you always feel like you can get better each year and that is kind of where I am at right now. So, I just want to keep proving to myself I can put up the big numbers and can reach things I've always strived to get.

"Now it is about me putting it all together, and what better place to do it than back home and with an organization that wants to win and hopefully I can be a part of that."

Jefferson said he's already looking forward to getting to work this offseason.

He knows there's some uncertainty at the quarterback position in Tennessee, so he'll have to wait to see how things play out.

Jefferson knows one thing he can control is himself, so he plans to be ready to help.

"I think it's a waiting game, and I don't know if they're going to address that in the draft or if they're going to address it with a veteran free agent who is still out there," Jefferson said of the team's quarterback position. "At the end of the day, I know Will (Levis) was there last year and I'll get some work in with Will, and if we roll with Will, we roll with Will. Will is more than capable of coming out there and playing, and getting the job done. But if it's someone else we'll roll with that.

"Right now, it is just a waiting game and whoever steps out there, we'll do our best to win."

###

'A BABY, AND A LOMBARDI': RAMS WR VAN JEFFERSON, GROWING FAMILY PREPARING FOR THEIR BIGGEST WEEK

BY JOURDAN RODRIGUE
THE ATHLETIC
FEB. 12, 2022

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — Van Jefferson will play in the biggest game of his life on Sunday, but Friday night was just as important.

It was Jefferson's first "daddy-daughter" dance with his 5-year-old daughter, Bella, at her school.

Jefferson, a second-year receiver for the Rams who is blossoming into a key player in their offense, has been inundated with media and marketing requests all week as the Rams took a global stage ahead of a Super Bowl appearance against Cincinnati. But this was the event circled on his calendar. And as Jefferson presented Bella with a bouquet of roses to kick off their own big evening, it was the only thing that mattered.

"It's their first one, and he was like, 'I'm not missing it. I don't care that it's two days before the Super Bowl. I'm going to be there, I'm going to be there for her. I have to show up for her,'" said Samaria, Jefferson's wife. She is also expecting their second child, a son, at any moment — the official due date is Feb. 17, but Samaria is preparing for any scenario in a week like this.

"I'm feeling pretty good — I'm definitely feeling 40 weeks (pregnant)," she told The Athletic this week, laughing. "I'm definitely feeling the pressure and the pain. Nerves for Van, nerves for our family — but it's OK."

"I'm excited about it," Jefferson added this week. "Excited to play in the Super Bowl as well. ... Two things going on. I'm happy about both of them. Maybe he can wait just a little bit longer, until after the Super Bowl!"

Samaria and Van are high school sweethearts who began dating while they attended Ravenwood High School near Nashville, Tenn. She fondly remembers cheering him on from the bleachers Friday nights in his No. 2 jersey. The two had Bella as Samaria finished high school, and with Jefferson in college (first to Ole Miss, and then to Florida), but shortly after, they split up. But Samaria still watched every game. About four years later, they found each other again.

"We left it to God. We let him do his thing and we said, 'Hey, if it's meant to be, then we'll come back to each other.' And that's exactly what happened," she said. As Jefferson prepared to enter his second NFL season, the two got married.

"It's been crazy, for sure. Adjusting to (NFL life), marriage, new baby, all of those things. But it's so great to see how well he manages it," Samaria said. "He's a great dad, a great team player, all of the things. I don't know how he does it, but he does it."

Jefferson has worked to make a difference for the Rams despite a talent-loaded receivers room that features Cooper Kupp, a triple crown receiver, and Odell Beckham Jr. It could have been easy to get lost behind the "names" on the Rams' star-studded roster. But Jefferson has put together a solid season.

In 17 regular-season starts, Jefferson caught 50 passes for 802 yards and six touchdowns, averaging 16 yards per catch. The Rams have needed his length and speed to help stretch the field in their evolved, explosive offense. They also needed him to step up after the loss of Robert Woods to an ACL tear in November (right after the team signed Beckham).

"He's a very gifted player," coach Sean McVay said this week. "I think he's only gotten better as he's gotten more confident, more experience. He's made a handful of big plays, a bunch of crunch-time catches for us. I think the future is really bright for

this guy. ... He's only going to get better. I love Van Jefferson."

Jefferson's season of growth has been punctuated by new moments for his family — Samaria's pregnancy, playing in a division against his father, Shawn (who is the receivers coach for the Arizona Cardinals and who played in two Super Bowls himself), and showing Bella that all of her moments are just as important as his own.

One day this season after the team broke down the huddle to signal the end of practice, Jefferson left the field at a full sprint. That was the day of his first parent-teacher conference at Bella's school, he explained breathlessly as he passed a row of media members on the sideline, and he didn't want to be late.

Van, Samaria and Bella after the Rams won the NFC championship. (Courtesy of the Jefferson family)

Samaria marvels at the journey the two have been on since the days of cheering for him from the bleachers at Ravenwood. Sunday, she — yes, at 40 weeks pregnant — will cheer him on from a suite at SoFi Stadium. She hasn't missed a home game this season.

"Just like any other game, I'm going to be there this Sunday and I'm going to stay calm ... and pray to God my water doesn't break," she said. "I am 100 percent going to be there. I would not miss this moment for anything. I will be 40 weeks pregnant at the Super Bowl, supporting my husband 100 percent."

The family, and the Rams' support staff, are under strict instructions from Samaria to not tell Jefferson during the game if she does go into labor — her decision, despite Jefferson's protests.

"He is going to play. He is going to keep playing," she said. "I said, 'You play, I'll see you at the hospital afterwards.' That's what it is. I will never take that moment away from him. I want to see him glorify God

on the field that day. ... Knowing Van and how he is so caring, he just worries so much about me and the kids. ... If I did tell him or someone told him during the game, he would come off that field. We're saying, 'Hey, you go play. We'll see you after.'"

Samaria is hopeful there's not just one but two new additions to their family this week.

"A baby, and a Lombardi!"

#

'HE HAD TO OVERCOME BEING MY SON': HOW VAN JEFFERSON FORGED HIS OWN PATH OUTSIDE THE SHADOW OF HIS NFL FATHER

BY WILL SAMMON
THE ATHLETIC
AUGUST 10, 2018

Shawn Jefferson's full name — Vanchi LaShawn Jefferson — embarrassed him so much while growing up that he made a decision by fifth grade to identify with only part of it.

"I hated that name," Shawn Jefferson told *The Athletic*. "Could you imagine going to the first day of school hearing the teacher say, 'Hey, do we have a 'Vanch-ee' or 'Vancheye' here?' I'd be down in my desk like, 'Yeah, here, I go by Shawn.'"

For the record, Shawn Jefferson's mother told him that his aunt recommended the name "Vanchi." But the name "Shawn" has stuck, through 13 years as a player in the NFL and another 13 years as an assistant coach, including his current job as Miami Dolphins receivers coach.

The legacy of "Vanchi" didn't end there, though, as much as Shawn Jefferson would've originally preferred it to. His father was a strong proponent of a man naming his first son after himself, and Shawn Jefferson always did what his father told him to do. So on July 26, 1996, in Jacksonville, Fla., Vanchi LaShawn Jefferson Jr. was born.

Van Jefferson shortened his first name but didn't abandon it. Like his father, Van Jefferson is a skilled wide receiver. He transferred to Florida after three years at Ole Miss, and he has been ruled eligible to play for the Gators this season by the NCAA and the SEC. He profiles as the Gators' most complete threat on the outside. The way Van Jefferson lines up, waits for the snap

and runs is all very similar to his father.

But Van Jefferson's first name is a reminder — an irresistible metaphor, even, for a relationship that has evolved over the years — that he is not his father. Shawn Jefferson will always be part of his story, but Van Jefferson's decision to transfer from Ole Miss to Florida is the latest example of him becoming his own person.

"A lot of times, he had to overcome being my son," Shawn Jefferson said. "Van is very driven. He's extremely driven. Not that he hates the fact ... I think what kind of fuels him sometimes is that they'll mention him as the son of former NFL player and coach Shawn Jefferson. Van wants to dispel all of that, which I love — I absolutely love it. That's why when I get requests for interviews, I never call back. I want them to focus on Van and not the fact I'm his father and blah, blah, blah ..."

"Van is self-made. Trust me when I tell you that. Van gets out there, works his ass off. I think his goal is, hey, look, when they mention him, don't say the son of former NFL player ... and I love the fact that I think that fuels him. I want him to be his own thing. Like, 'This is the story of Van Jefferson.'"

Tying Van Jefferson's growth to Shawn Jefferson as a receiver may seem like a tired tale. But every time someone close to Van Jefferson is asked a question about the hardest challenge he has faced to this point, they offer a similar answer.

The part of the story that gets twisted is that, though Shawn Jefferson's past helped, Van Jefferson didn't make his name off his father's, even though it's undeniable that he wouldn't be who he is now without his father. And to use a phrase from Shawn Jefferson on the topic: "It wasn't always pretty."

"My dad is more of a stern guy," Van Jefferson said. "He wants everything done the right way. Not

saying I don't want to do things the right way, but I'm saying he's more of a disciplinarian. Our personalities are very different because I like to joke around a lot and he's more work, work, work, work."

Shawn Jefferson like to tell the story about how when Van Jefferson was 10, his mother would say he's going to be a special football player because of coordination, athleticism and the way he ran. Van Jefferson didn't actually play football with pads on until the seventh grade because his father wouldn't allow him to sooner.

From there, the stories those close to Van Jefferson enjoy sharing the most about his pre-college football days all sound similar.

- There was the time Van Jefferson showed up to a Nike Opening event for the first time in Birmingham. His father told him not to worry about the plethora of five- and four-stars, that he would earn each star he received. After a while, no defensive back volunteered to go 1-on-1 with him. He was named MVP.

- Once, Van Jefferson had the flu the day of a game. He spent the early portion of the day with doctors. His mother, Marla Jefferson, remembers seeing him laying on the ground resting on the field prior to kickoff. Still, he played.

- He suffered a nose injury once in a game and was taken out. His father, as he recalled, walked over and only asked if he was going back in. He went back in.

- He broke his fibula early in his freshman high school season. He grew up wanting to attend Ohio State. The Buckeyes hosted a camp a few weeks after he got his cast removed. Not yet 100 percent, he went and competed.

"That was when I was like, 'OK, I got something here,'" Shawn Jefferson said. "Most kids don't want to go. For the mere fact that he did that, as a father, you put that in the back of your mind like, 'OK, he has these traits.' After that, (Ohio

State was) on him. They recruited Van until the last freaking second. They wanted him bad.”

Van Jefferson moved to Tennessee for his sophomore year of his high school after his father left the Detroit Lions to coach receivers for the Titans. He enrolled at Ravenwood High School shortly after the family met football coach Will Hester, then in his first year at the school.

“I just remember the intensity of his father,” Hester said. “He told me his son was pretty good but he didn’t want anything handed to him and just wanted an opportunity where he can come in to compete to play.”

Van Jefferson set himself apart early. His film from those days tells the story of how: Often, he was able to sink his hips, take minimal steps, get out of his breath and separate from a defensive back quickly.

“Van was — and still is in my 21 years of coaching — the most polished receiver I’ve ever been around,” Hester said. “Van was one of those guys who could come to the sideline and say, ‘Coach, listen, the corner is playing me like this, the safety is rolling like this, this is there and that’s there.’ ”

Van Jefferson started collecting major college football offers ahead of his junior year. The boy who grew up watching college football all day on fall Saturdays and getting exposed to greats like Calvin Johnson through his father’s job informed Hester of his pro aspirations, confirming what Shawn Jefferson always thought he knew.

“When he told me that, my blinders went on,” Shawn Jefferson said. “Sometimes I was brutal on him. It would be, OK, this is what you need to do to get there and it’s going to be uncomfortable at times.”

That it was.

“As far as challenges go, the biggest challenge was living with his dad,” Hester said. “His dad is an uber-intense guy. Their workouts would

rival anything you would put an NFL guy through. At times, Van, early on in his life, would resent that a bit just because it was so hard and so intense. Shawn was coaching him like an NFL receiver and Van wanted him to be his dad a little bit more.

“I don’t know if it was ever off. It was always on, and I think that wore on Van.”

Hester played the role of “good cop” for Van Jefferson, often serving as a listener as much as a coach.

“Van is a very, very, very loving kid,” Hester said. “Van craves affirmation from everyone, and the hardest thing was he wasn’t getting a whole lot of that from dad. And not because dad didn’t love him or didn’t want to give it to him, but because dad knew what kind of ability he had and wanted to make sure he reached that potential.”

Shawn Jefferson fathered his son like a coach, one who would harp on a missed block instead of glorifying receptions and yards. He wouldn’t degrade his son, but he would be direct. He didn’t want Van Jefferson to just be the best receiver, he wanted him to be the best blocker, too.

“Sometimes, as a father, there’s no filter time,” Shawn Jefferson said. “I have to make sure he gets what I’m trying to get across to him. I don’t know if I’m Van’s worst critic. But I’m after perfection. I’m always a stickler on just being perfect on everything. And I know there’s no one perfect but the man upstairs. But that’s where I want his mindset to be.

“If you keep that mindset, you’ll always hover around excellent.”

Ask Van Jefferson about the pros and cons of having a father who is a coach, and he doesn’t list any grievances. Instead of talking about how demanding his father was, his brain goes in a different direction: He mentions needing to block out the criticism and speculation that

Shawn Jefferson, like any NFL coach, faces.

“My dad instilled in me everything I know,” Jefferson said. “Getting out of breaks, creating separation, I owe it all to my dad. He’s been a great influence on my life.”

Van Jefferson isn’t “in your face” with teammates and in any setting, really, as Marla Jefferson put it, and he is far more reserved than his father, whom Marla Jefferson describes as a “strong-fisted-type of a guy.” There are reasons for the differences, and they shed light on Shawn Jefferson’s style of parenting. He never wanted Van Jefferson to be the next Shawn Jefferson, but he did want his son to develop the same kind of mindset that he was forced to have growing up, the idea of working for everything.

Shawn Jefferson grew up with six brothers and five sisters in the Jacksonville projects. His father worked a construction job to support his family of 12. His mother ran the household. His father believed in hard, tough, rugged training.

“You see some of your friends getting killed and you realize how grateful you are for a family structure like we had,” Shawn Jefferson said in a 1991 article in the Los Angeles Times. “You have to have a strong mind to resist (drugs and gangs). Your mother and father instill that in you.”

Van Jefferson lived a suburban lifestyle with his two sisters. “Privileged,” was the way Marla Jefferson put it. In a family of faith, Shawn and Marla Jefferson took their children to soup kitchens, homeless shelters and poor neighborhoods to “bless homes.” One such trip happened in a poverty-stricken area of Detroit when Van Jefferson was in eighth grade. The family visited a woman and her two sons in a tiny two-bedroom apartment. This was the only time the Jeffersons were invited inside someone’s home on such a visit. The woman fried fish

for everyone, creating a thick smoke throughout the small house.

The car ride back home that day featured questions from Van Jefferson about why his family lived the way it did and why the woman couldn't live elsewhere.

"We did not want him to grow up looking at life through one type of lens," Marla Jefferson said.

Compassion and introspection have long been parts of who Van Jefferson is. The recruiting process, when every writer covering every new school that offered him a scholarship wrote the same biographical information, compelled Jefferson to reflect more. Marla Jefferson often heard her son say, 'Why do they always say 'the son of Shawn Jefferson' all the time?'

"So much of who Van is, what he does and the accomplishments that he acquires have always been associated with his father," Marla Jefferson said. "When he was being recruited, that's when the battle actually started really. There were peaks and valleys before. But that's when it really came head to head."

Van Jefferson grew up wanting to play for Ohio State, but his father didn't think it was the right program after weighing several factors such as fit in the offense and the depth chart. "He kind of forbid him not to go there," Marla Jefferson said. Oklahoma was also in the mix, but Shawn Jefferson didn't want his son to go there, either. Shawn Jefferson was particularly fond of Georgia, but Van Jefferson decommitted from the Bulldogs after a visit.

"I don't know if Van couldn't really receive Georgia well because his dad pushed it so much or if he just really didn't feel at home," Marla Jefferson said. "And I kind of believe that. When he went to the campus he liked everybody, but there wasn't a connect."

After redshirting his first year, Van Jefferson caught 91 passes in two

seasons for Ole Miss. (Stan Szeto / USA TODAY Sports)

The draw for Ole Miss when the Rebels entered the recruiting picture was Hugh Freeze, Marla Jefferson said. Van Jefferson and the family liked Freeze. But his mother, with a laugh, also said choosing Ole Miss may have been the act of a rebellious 18-year-old.

"He was sick of the back and forth, the roundabout, the 'I can't go here, I can't go there,' " Marla Jefferson said. "He was torn. At that point, he was depleted. It was kind of like, 'Whatever I have to deal with with dad, I'll just deal with, this is what I'm doing.' "

When Van Jefferson signed with Ole Miss, his father made the following clear: Whatever school you choose to go to, you're making a commitment to that school ... So that means you're stuck there ... There's no going back and forth ... There's no transferring.

Three years later, Van Jefferson wanted to do just that. As a redshirt freshman in 2016, he finished second on the Rebels with 49 catches and third with 543 receiving yards. Things all changed in 2017. Phil Longo became the offensive coordinator. Freeze resigned a few weeks before camp opened. After Van Jefferson missed time in the summer following knee surgery, A.J. Brown moved to the slot. He didn't receive as many targets. The Rebels were hit with another bowl ban after an NCAA investigation.

"I remember very distinctly when he said, 'Things are changing around here and I just don't think that this is a good fit. I don't want to be here. And I'm not going to be here,' " Marla Jefferson said. "It was definitely that sort of thing."

Unlike the recruiting period, those close to him said, Van Jefferson based his decision to leave Ole Miss and transfer to Florida on what he wanted to do first without worrying about his father's approval.

"For Van, someone who is very obedient to his dad, that would be like the worst thing, to do something dad told me not to do," Marla Jefferson said. "For him to do that, I knew then that he was coming into his own."

"Van really came into his own during that time. I would love to say that he found himself a little bit before that, but no. And I still think he is just working some stuff out to figure out who is this guy and what is it that God has for Van to do that sets him apart from everyone else?"

That question is easier to answer in regards to how Jefferson stands out on the field for Florida, the school he said he chose for a few reasons: It's in his birth state, he has family there, there was room atop the depth chart and he has knowledge of Dan Mullen's offense.

"He understands the little intricacies and he's an attention-to-detail guy," Florida receivers coach Billy Gonzales said. "That's probably one of the things that kinda separates him is he understands, he's got the playing experience, but understands that the little things — and if you talk to him he takes it really, really personal as far as being able to, 'Hey listen, he told me to do this. I've got to try to work.' "

As usual, Gonzales mentioned Shawn Jefferson when discussing Van Jefferson. But Shawn Jefferson doesn't want that public credit. Instead, in an hour-long conversation with The Athletic, he stressed that Van Jefferson seeks knowledge about the game through other avenues and he recently caught him studying clips of Antonio Brown in their basement. Shawn Jefferson mentioned that anecdote because the part of his son's story that he is most fond of nowadays is how Van Jefferson isn't a carbon copy of his father.

And that speaks to the growth of both father and son.

"My dad deserves a lot of credit," Van Jefferson said. "We talk every day. He asked me how the first day

of camp went, what we are doing, what can I do to get better. We talk very often.”

“My son is his own person,” Shawn Jefferson said. “Van wants to know the ‘why’ in everything. He makes his own decisions and I love that. I absolutely love that. He is building his own name.”

Part of that is on the field, where Shawn Jefferson often says his son is far more advanced at this point than he was in college at UCF. The other way is through fatherhood. Van Jefferson has a 2-year-old daughter of his own who lives in Tennessee with her mother. Jefferson often posts photos of her on Twitter. The tweet pinned to his profile is a video of her running with the caption that reads, “Superstar in the making!”

“I think Van will make a very good father because of being raised by a coach and dad really not being around a whole lot because of coaching,” Marla Jefferson said. “It is a lifestyle, and it wasn’t like they were whining and crying like, ‘Oh, my gosh, where’s dad?’ I mean, they knew the gig and grew up in it. I don’t think that the fist would be as hard — not fist by hitting, of course — about things.

“Shawn was raised by a very proud, strong man, and work was a big part of being a man who takes care of his family. He walked in that vein, whereas Van, being raised the way he was by Shawn, and kind of lacking some of the things that some kids of coaches go through, I think he will have a greater respect of the time and the quality time he will spend with his children. He’ll be a great dad.”

###

**KINDERGARTEN
TEACHER FONDLY
REMEMBERS OHIO
STATE'S DRE'MONT
JONES AS HE ENTERS THE
NFL DRAFT**

**NEWS 5 CLEVELAND
APRIL 22, 2019**

Former Ohio State defensive lineman Dre'Mont Jones is among the players expected to be selected in the early rounds of the 2019 NFL Draft. But before scouts approached him and Buckeye fans screamed his name, Jones was standout in Jane Ann Ehretsman's kindergarten class at Robert Fulton Elementary school in Cleveland.

"He was really tall, a good sized kid, but tall for kindergarten. I thought he was in the wrong room," Ehretsman said.

In Ehretsman's class, she aimed to prepare children academically for first grade as well as teach them character and kindness.

The video player is currently playing an ad.

"He was very well-behaved. He was smart and he was a good listener. He was very kind," Ehretsman said. "He had all the qualities that you really enjoy a child you teach to have."

When Jones finished the school year he didn't see his kindergarten teacher again until his freshman year at St. Ignatius. Ehretsman attended a basketball game of another former student and spotted Jones.

"From then on I watched him every game he was in," Ehretsman said, "All of his basketball games and his football games. I usually lasted until about the third quarter, but then I got too cold."

Right in front of her eyes, the little boy Ehrestman adored turned into an young man she is proud to support.

"On his basketball senior night they always give their parents a bouquet of flowers, and he had two bouquets," Ehretsman said. "I just remember clapping him as he and his parents went out there and then all the sudden he left the line of parents, and he came over to me and gave me a bouquet."

She added, "He was so kind and thought of me in such a beautiful way. I was just so touched."

Jones wanted to make sure she knew that he is grateful for her support.

"I appreciate her like she is another family member. I love her dearly," Jones said.

And while Ehretsman aimed to teach all her students character and kindness, she believes it was a lesson Jones never needed to learn because it is a part of who he is.

###

HEADING INTO YEAR 8, TITANS DL SEBASTIAN JOSEPH-DAY IS STILL WILLING TO DO THE DIRTY WORK

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JULY 25, 2025

NASHVILLE – When the subject is the Titans defensive line, the name Jeffery Simmons usually comes up first.

Then, more time than not, T'Vondre Sweat's name is mentioned.

It's understandable, of course. Simmons is a three-time Pro Bowler, and Sweat was the team's second-round pick in 2024, a guy with enormous potential.

Mentioned third on the Tennessee defensive line is usually Sebastian Joseph-Day, who didn't get a lot of attention when he signed a new contract with the team back in March. Joseph-Day, in fact, has managed to keep a pretty low profile this offseason, on a team with so many new storylines.

But that's just fine with Joseph-Day.

"Listen, man, it's OK," he said with smile. "I don't mind. I'm an under-the-radar guy. I just try and do my job at a high level."

The truth of the matter is the addition of Joseph-Day was one of the better moves made by the Titans last offseason. Joseph-Day ended up playing in all 17 games, with 12 starts, and he tallied 44 tackles, 2.5 sacks, 14 quarterback pressures and three tackles for loss in his first year in Tennessee.

Joseph-Day was a leader in the locker room who also turned into a reliable player on the field.

The Titans liked what he did so much they re-signed him back in March, and this fall he expected to play alongside Simmons and Sweat once again.

"Obviously it is a blessing (to be back)," Joseph-Day said. "I am able to be somewhere I am familiar – familiar with the coach, familiar with the scheme, familiar with everything. So, I don't have to start all over. It is great, especially for my family as well. It was nice to come back."

Heading into his eight NFL season, Joseph-Day said he believes in what's around him, and he wants to do his part to make a difference.

"100 percent," Joseph-Day said. "The draft for us went amazing, all the players we added. Everyone looks really good, and I feel like the chemistry is great, kind of like night and day. You see everyone is jelling, everyone is familiar with one another. I am truly excited for this year."

"As for myself, I want to be known as a guy that is dependable, is a great teammate, someone who does his job at a high level, and someone who brings positive, great energy to the building. I want to be known for being a pro's pro. You may not know who I am, but I want to be known as a guy who does all the dirty work, is a great teammate, and gets his job done."

A sixth-round pick of the Los Angeles Rams in the 2018 NFL Draft, Joseph-Day is still going strong at age 30.

In 88 career games, including 80 starts, he's tallied 274 tackles, 13.5 sacks and 91 quarterback pressures, in addition to two forced fumbles, and a fumble recovery while playing with the Rams, Chargers, 49ers and Titans in his career.

He played alongside Aaron Donald in Los Angeles, when the Rams won Super Bowl LVI.

In Tennessee, Sebastian-Day said he felt like he played the run well in 2024, and he had his moments rushing the passer.

"I felt like when I had my opportunities to rush, I did some positive things," he said. "But that's

one of the things I want to improve on. I want to be able to make every opportunity count when I rush, I want to try and affect the quarterback as much as I can whenever I have a rushing opportunity his year, I feel like that's where I can improve."

Joseph-Day said he likes the group around him.

He believes the defense can be better as a whole, with veterans leading the way.

Time will tell, of course.

"I love the guys around me," he said. "I feel like we have a really good shot to do something special as a group. We have a lot of veteran leadership, me being an eight-year guy, Dre'Mont Jones being a seventh-year guy, Arden Key, eighth-year guy, Jeff, seventh-year guy. Sweat, even though he is going into Year 2, he is still a very good player."

"We have a lot of guys who have been starters and played in meaningful games, so I feel like we have a lot of talent, veteran savvy and knowledge. And that can create something special."

###

LA RAMS NOSE TACKLE JOSEPH-DAY DONATES NEARLY 7,000 MEALS TO HELP FIGHT CHILDHOOD HUNGER

**BY FRANK PISCANI
POCONO RECORD
MARCH 29, 2021**

Brittney Smith isn't normally one to break down in front of her kids.

But in mid-February, the 35-year-old Houstonian sat atop the stairs to her house at nearly 3 a.m., sobbing. Texas' historic snowstorm had left Smith, a mother of three, without power for days. The temperature inside her house had dropped into the 30s. She knew she had to get her kids somewhere warmer.

Eliminating the possibility of escaping to a storm shelter was the fact her oldest son, Kentory, 17, had tested positive for COVID-19 just before the snowstorm. Luckily, Smith said, she was able to find a motel with heat and power that would offer her family a room where they could also safely quarantine.

Smith arrived at the motel with her three boys at 4 a.m. and waited in her car for over six hours before they could check in. When she finally could, it meant heat and electricity for the first time in days.

When he first saw the news of February's historic and devastating snowstorms in Houston, Sebastian Joseph-Day knew he had to take action. The news of Texans losing power and heat inspired the Stroudsburg native to do what he always has: help others.

Joseph-Day, the starting nose tackle for the Los Angeles Rams, reached out to then-teammate Michael Brockers, who grew up in Houston. More like brothers than teammates, the defensive linemen decided they would join forces off the field to provide support for Houstonians in need.

The Rams' community service team communicated on their behalf with the Houston Texans organization, which connected Joseph-Day and Brockers to Kids' Meals, Inc., a Houston-based charity that aims to end childhood hunger by delivering meals to children whose families are fighting the cycle of poverty and helping parents .

It was with the help of Kids' Meals that Smith made it to the motel.

Donations to Kids' Meals, Smith said, allow struggling parents to focus on finding employment and spend quality time with their children rather than stressing every second about whether there would be food on the table.

Former Los Angeles Rams teammates Sebastian Joseph-Day, No. 69, and Michael Brockers, No. 90, stand together on the sideline before their division round playoff game against the Green Bay Packers at Lambeau Field on Saturday, January 16, 2021. Although the Rams traded since Brockers to the Detroit Lions on March 17, Joseph-Day describes the veteran defensive tackle as his big brother.

"You could not put a price tag on the amount of, you know, strength that gives me," Smith said. "The worst thing I think a parent could go through, other than losing a child, is sitting there watching your children not being able to eat."

Asking for help wasn't easy. Smith worried that admitting she struggled to provide for her children could result in her losing custody of them.

Smith found the courage to seek support two years ago, after years of struggling on her own. In August 2011, Smith escaped from an abusive relationship, but it came at the cost of financial security.

The day she walked into Kids' Meals changed Smith's life. She met chief development and communications officer Cynthia Stielow, who, after hearing Smith's story, told her everything would be all right. Stielow has personally

played a key role in the support Smith receives.

"Cynthia has been more to me like a mother than ... a coordinator at Kids' Meals," Smith said.

With that help, Smith has been able to make major strides professionally. Currently Smith volunteers time at Kids' Meals, but Stielow and the organization have helped Smith improve her resume, build experience and skills in social work and search for jobs.

Smith is actively searching for a job that will allow her to support domestic violence victims.

On March 2, Joseph-Day and Brockers donated nearly 7,000 meals to Kids' Meals.

"Kids growing up, man, that shouldn't be their worries at all," Joseph-Day said. "Their worry shouldn't be next time they're going to eat a meal."

Relieving that worry allows kids like Smith's to focus instead on living their lives. Kentory, a senior in high school who loves video games and soccer, has been better able to pour energy into pursuing his goal of becoming an underwater welder.

Smith described seven-year-old Dorrian as inquisitive, art-loving and a perfectionist. Smith's youngest, four-year-old Jordan, loves motorcycles, four-wheelers and race cars. With food in their bellies, Dorrian and Jordan have the freedom to be little kids who can play outside and color and spend time with their mom when she's off work.

'Use your blessings to bless others:' The origin story of Joseph-Day's volunteer work

Even before he became an NFL player equipped with the resources of a professional athlete, Sebastian Joseph-Day always stood out among football players.

Sure, his talent was obvious, but the 2013 Stroudsburg High School graduate's welcoming personality, booming laugh and radiant smile set him apart from all other high schoolers. It was clear that even as a teenager Joseph-Day, also known as "Bash," was a role model to those around him.

"He was just such a great presence in the school," Stroudsburg High School principal Jeffrey Sodl said. "He just was kind of an inspiration to a lot of people."

Joseph-Day took the younger guys under his wing, creating a fun environment by always joking around but also offering help to anyone who needed it. Jim Miller, who coached Joseph-Day in football from seventh through ninth grade and all four years of high school track, added that Joseph-Day's willingness to help others also extended off the field.

Whether it be in school or outside of school, academically or athletically, Joseph-Day actively sought to help others and become involved in the community. He participated in Best Buddies, a nonprofit that seeks to create friendship and learning opportunities for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

While it was his kindness that others noticed, his size certainly played a role in highlighting it.

The image sticks in Sodl's mind today. Joseph-Day, the massive defensive lineman, reading a princess book to the elementary school student sitting on his lap when he volunteered at book fairs.

To help his wife, who organized the book fairs at B.F. Morey Elementary School, Sodl asked varsity athletes to volunteer and help spark young students' interest in reading. Joseph-Day was always among the first to sign up.

In addition to reading to the young students, Sodl said Joseph-Day would help students pick out books

and even help out the kids who didn't have money to buy one.

"He was always a very giving person," Sodl said.

When it comes to his charity work, Joseph-Day credits his family and faith for forming his passion for volunteering. One particular piece of advice from his father has stuck with him: "Always use your blessings to bless others."

That single piece of advice has most fueled the former Mountaineer's passion for charity and volunteering, which Joseph-Day focused in on helping youth.

"They're the future of this country," Joseph-Day said. "I just want to help them succeed as much as they can."

Empowering the future through authentic philanthropy

After seeing the news of the suffering the snowstorm caused in Houston, there was never a question in Joseph-Day's mind about what he'd do next. It was simply a matter of figuring out how to support kids in Houston.

His donation with Brockers to Kids' Meals came during a massive outpouring of global support for the Houston charity. Kids' Meals CEO Beth Harp said the organization now provides about 7,400 meals every weekday, with the COVID-19 pandemic forcing many more families to need the support. The snowstorm caused Kids' Meals to lose power, spoiling its inventory of perishables.

Combined with dangerous road conditions and staff members suffering from their own losses of water and electricity, Kids' Meals was unable to make deliveries for four days. Donations from all over the world like that from Joseph-Day and Brockers completely replenished Kids' Meals' shelves.

"It was just like Heaven's gates opening, it was amazing," Harp said. "A real tribute to the American spirit."

"I hope his hometown is proud," Stielow added. "That is just an authentic philanthropist."

Part of that authenticity is his efforts to be involved by volunteering his own time.

The fourth-year Rams defender comes home whenever he can, even though the COVID-19 pandemic has made that difficult. He planned to organize his own camp over the summer but was unable to with the pandemic. Joseph-Day said he still hopes to organize something similar in the future.

Most recently in Monroe County, Joseph-Day donated an autographed game-worn jersey to Big Brothers Big Sisters NEPA for a February fundraising auction. An acquaintance of Miller's asked him to text Joseph-Day to see if he could contribute, and Joseph-Day responded with an enthusiastic "yes" almost immediately.

"I don't even think he questioned it," Miller said. "He just, you know, got a jersey to them and that was it."

Miller's right that Joseph-Day acts without hesitation when it comes to charity, but there is one question he asks.

"If I don't do it, then who else, you know?" Joseph-Day said. "That's kind of just my mindset about it."

###

ARDEN KEY

TITANS LOVE WHAT THEY'RE SEEING FROM EDGE RUSHER ARDEN KEY FROM A LEADERSHIP STANDPOINT

BY JIM WYATT

JUNE 9, 2025

TENNESSEETITANS.COM

NASHVILLE – Arden Key is headed into his eighth NFL season, and now less than a year away from his 30th birthday.

The Titans edge rusher is preparing for his third year in Tennessee, and he's getting others ready as well.

In fact, Titans defensive coordinator Dennard Wilson recently bragged about Key, and his development as a leader.

"I love where he is at right now," Wilson said of Key. "He has taken a leadership position with the people in the group. I think he is maturing on and off the field, and you just see it each and every day.

"We talk about each one, teach one, and he is one of the first guys that is teaching the young guys how to be better, what to do, the tricks of the trade, things he's messed up throughout his career. Where Arden is at right now, I love where he is."

A third-round pick of the Oakland Raiders in the 2018 NFL Draft, Key joined the Titans in 2023 after playing with the Raiders (2018-2020), 49ers (2021), and Jaguars (2022).

In 2024, Key matched a career high with 6.5 sacks during a season when he also recorded 42 tackles, 38 quarterback pressures and 11 tackles for a loss.

Following the departure of Harold Landry, Key and others will be counted on to provide a big boost to the pass rush, while showing others the way.

Titans outside linebackers coach Ben Bloom credited Key for helping

players like rookie Femi Oladejo, and others.

"Arden has been around the league long enough, and he's had production as a pass rusher. He has played with different teams, been around different players," Bloom said. "So, he has a lot of knowledge about rushing the passer in different things, using his hands, and specific moves, and he does a nice job of sharing that and showing leadership in that area with the other players."

Key knows some of the faces have changed around him on the defense.

He's been around the league long enough to know nothing stays the same.

"Harold is not here, but we have to move on," Key said. "We have to make sure the room is right. We have a lot of rookies in our room, so a lot of technique areas we have to fix, and just getting them caught up in the NFL game of football. ... The new guys are energetic, especially Femi. But these guys are hungry to come in and play, and they know they have to help us. It's a great group."

Key, known for his big personality and outgoing way, said he's more than willing to help lead.

After a 3-14 season, he said there's an urgency around the team to fix the problems from a year ago.

He's ready to step up, and speak up.

"Femi, he comes up and asks questions about different pass rush techniques, because he is new at outside linebacker," Key said. "Yeah, we talk a lot. I feel like I am coaching now, but it's all good. I love it."

###

ARDEN KEY IS SET TO PLAY CRITICAL ROLE FOR TITANS' DEFENSE, WRITES MIKE HERNDON

**BY MIKE HERNDON,
COLUMNIST
PAULKUHARSKY.COM
AUGUST 2, 2023**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- It has been impossible not to notice Arden Key early in Titans' training camp.

When the free agent addition isn't popping up in the backfield again... and again... and again, he's – loudly – rooting on his defensive teammates and chirping at the offense. His energy level is intense and unrivaled among players on both the current Titans squad and any other version of the team that I've covered over the past six years.

Key brings an easy smile, a big personality, and a loud voice to a team that has sometimes lacked that type of presence. Defensive coordinator Shane Bowen talked on Tuesday about him being able to bring some teammates along, which can be an asset for a team over the grind of a 17-game season.

Of course, being loud and energetic means nothing if there isn't production to go along with it. Practice sacks don't count, but if they did, Key would probably already be ready to renegotiate his contract. His current running total – as estimated by Key and Austin Stanley of AtoZ Sports – is now at 14 through his first five training camp practices in Tennessee, including a seven-sack day last Friday.

Speaking of Key's contract, it's worth noting that he received the most guaranteed money (\$13 million) of any of the Titans' veteran additions this offseason, including DeAndre Hopkins (\$10.98 million) and the man often tasked with blocking him in camp, Andre Dillard (\$10 million). That's a pretty clear indication of how Ran Carthon and Mike Vrabel viewed

him as a free agent and it makes him one of a very short list of Titans players who are virtually guaranteed to be on the roster in 2024.

Key was the first name I mentioned back in February when I previewed the market for edge rushers. As I wrote then:

“The best options aren't big names, but could be good investments, starting with Arden Key, who saw his career get revived in San Francisco in 2021 and then provided good value as a rotational rusher for the Jaguars last season.

His 18.1 percent win rate was 15th among 49 edge rushers with at least 325 pass rush snaps last season, sandwiched between Montez Sweat and teammate Josh Allen. He'll be 27 next season and seems to still be ascending as a player at the NFL level after a slow start to his career.”

Key's career has become quite a redemption story. After breaking out with 11 sacks as a sophomore at LSU, he was largely viewed as a future first-round pick. Injuries and off-field issues, which included him checking into rehab for marijuana addiction, dropped his draft stock in 2017, leading to him being selected by the Raiders in the third round with the 87th overall pick.

In Oakland, he was thrown directly into the fire, playing more than 50 percent of snaps in 13 of 16 games as a rookie for the league's worst defense. Key struggled to produce, notching just one sack despite heavy playing time.

He was reduced to a rotational role in 2019 and had his season ended early by a foot fracture, producing no sacks and just 12 total pressures by PFF charting. After getting healthy before the start of the 2020 season, Key remained in a depth role, contributing two sacks in over 14 games. Before the start of the 2021 NFL draft, Key was released by the Raiders.

Key's time with the Raiders was clearly a failure, but there are some advanced numbers that suggested

the career rebirth that we've seen over the past two years was coming. His pass rush win rate, again as charted by PFF, went from 9.1 percent in 2018 (60th among 109 qualified edge rushers) to 11.2 percent in 2019 (38th out of 118) to 11.6 percent in 2020 (36th out of 117).

Next came an extremely smart move by Key.

He signed a one-year, \$1 million contract to go play under defensive line guru Kris Kocurek in San Francisco, a man widely viewed as the best in the business at developing young pass rushers. Despite playing just 35 percent of defensive snaps on a loaded defensive line that also featured Nick Bosa, Arik Armstead, Samson Ebukam, and D.J. Jones, Key produced career highs in sacks (6.5), total pressures (39), QB hits (14), and pass rush win rate (11.8 percent) while lining up all over the 49ers' defensive front.

That breakout season earned him a pay raise, and he signed a one-year, \$4 million contract in Jacksonville, where again, he found himself in a rotational role behind Josh Allen and first overall pick Travon Walker. Like in San Francisco, Jaguars defensive coordinator Mike Caldwell deployed Key all over the defensive line, giving him almost 100 snaps as an interior rusher as well as his rotational spot on the edge. Key's performance continued to improve, setting yet another career-best mark in pass rush win rate at 13.8 percent to go along with 51 total pressures and 13 QB hits.

While in Jacksonville, Key also produced the highest PFF run defense grade that he's earned in his career at 75.1, good for 17th among edge rushers, something that the Titans will want to see expanded as he transitions into more of a full-time role.

There is good reason to believe that Key's best football may be ahead of him as well. He's still just 27 years old, and by his own self-admission,

has grown a lot over the course of his five-year NFL career.



While talking to the media – and teammate Azeez Al-Shaair – on Tuesday, Key claimed that he “used to be fat” during his time in San Francisco, something he’s focused on during training over the last two offseasons. His performance in training camp to this point indicates that the increased focus on conditioning has paid off for the talented edge rusher.

What will be fascinating to watch as the season begins is how the Titans choose to deploy their pass rush pieces. Both Denico Autry and Key have inside-outside versatility from a rush standpoint as Key has primarily lined up as a defensive tackle on third downs for both the 49ers and Jaguars the last two seasons. That’s something Autry has done frequently since signing with Tennessee in 2021. In fact, Key mentioned Autry last week as a guy who he’s studied and modeled some of his game after even before joining him with the Titans.

That versatility should allow Bowen to hunt matchups throughout the season and keep defenses from knowing where any of the Titans’ top pass rushers might be lining up consistently.

To get a feel for Key as a player, let’s look at some snaps from last season in Jacksonville, starting with his usage as an interior pass rusher. This first clip features Key lined up in as a three-technique in the gap between the left guard and left tackle. He uses an impressive chop-swim combo to beat Dalton Risner and sack Russell Wilson.

Here is another similar rep.

Key’s positioning is even wider here as he’s lined up outside of Titans’ right tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere, but he quickly jumps inside and uses another swim move to beat Jordan

Roos and flush Josh Dobbs from the pocket. Key was a menace in both matchups against Tennessee last year.

While I think he’s most effective rushing from inside, Key can also create pressure as a traditional edge rusher. Here, he beats Broncos left tackle Calvin Anderson with a nice cross-chop move, forcing a rushed throw from Wilson.

And here, he uses his hands to get inside leverage against Cowboys left tackle Tyler Smith and pushes his way all the way to a sack of Dak Prescott.

As I mentioned above, Key scored highly as a run defender last season and the tape backs it up. He only played limited snaps on early downs, but when he was out there, he was effective at setting the edge as he does here against Tyler Smith. This is textbook from Key here.

I’ll finish with something that was a bit of a surprise for me when I really cut on the Key tape... his motor and instincts are outstanding. Here, he flashes high-level awareness as he notices the back leaking out for a screen during his pass rush, redirects, and breaks up the play, nearly grabbing a one-handed interception in the process.

Key’s motor was non-stop on tape, constantly making plays like the one below where he chases down a screen from the backside of the play and puts a massive hit on Chargers running back Joshua Kelly.

Key’s fit into this defense is excellent, especially from a pass-rush standpoint. No team likes to use games and stunts up front more than the Titans and Key should thrive in that scheme with his athleticism benefitting from playing with two of the best “pickers” in the NFL in Jeffery Simmons and Autry.

I’d describe Key’s game as a mash-up of Landry and Autry, bringing some elements of Landry’s athleticism and Autry’s length and power to the table for a unique blend of skills.

The Titans’ ability to mix and match where Simmons, Autry, Landry, and Key all line up along with the talent level of those four players give Mike Vrabel’s defense one of the best fronts in the NFL heading into 2023, and early returns on Key suggest that we all may be underrating what this group could be.

###

HOW TITANS RETURN MAN MASON KINSEY'S LIFE CHANGED TUESDAY

BY PAUL KUHARSKY
PAULKUHARSKY.COM
DECEMBER 12, 2024

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Mason Kinsey was very conscious of the time on Tuesday.

"I was checking my phone all day, like "Please, please, please, please," he said. "Then I was with my fiancée and I was like, 'Hey, check your phone, what time is it? And she said, "4:03" and I was like, 'We made it!'"

When a player is on an NFL roster at Tuesday 4 p.m. CT, it ensures he is paid for the week.

But this week for Kinsey, it was more important than that.

It meant he was on the 53-man roster for a third game, and three games make for a credited season. Three credited seasons with five years of service make him fully vested. Fully vested NFL veterans get a wide array of benefits.

Life-changing benefits for an undrafted rookie who came out of Berry College in 2020, was released from New England's practice squad twice and has been waived by the Titans on seven different occasions.

"It's awesome," he said. "Now I have the pension plan, which goes from being nothing to a decent amount of money per month when I turn 55 which is damn near a mortgage for a house, you know what I mean? With the health benefits and insurance, I recently just got engaged, and being able to put my future wife on insurance that will last after football, that's an expense I won't necessarily have to worry about. You're eligible for severance pay, so there is some money to be given out the first year that you're done with football.

"From my perspective, I think about getting a game check (for the weeks

I've been active, currently about \$55,000), just from being a p-squad guy a lot of my career. The money that you see in the long run, is 10-fold or more the amount of a game-check so it's more of a long-game goal that I've really focused on and hoped for, 'Man, I really want to get this.' To finally be able to get it, it's definitely a blessing."

Here is Kinsey with details of the puzzle that makes him vested when on the Titans' roster passed out Thursday he's listed as a second-year player:

"My rookie year was Covid, so you only needed one game to get a credited season, and I got cut. I was in New England, didn't get a game, they released me around Thanksgiving. They were out of playoff contention a week or two later and they called a bunch of guys up to get a credited season. So technically I was one game short my rookie year.

"My second year, I played in two games, so I was one short my second year.

"My third year I played in two games, so I was one game short my third year.

"Then last year I played six.

"Then this will be three this year.

"So I got my credited seasons from last year and this year. And they're going to go back and count 2022 as credited, which gives me the pension, the 401k, all the health insurance, the severance pay, all that stuff.

They give me 2022, because technically one of the rules is to become fully vested you have to have three credited seasons or five years of service, and when you have five years of service — just because the average NFL career is what, two years, two and a half years, whatever it is — once you get to that five years of service they go back and give you one of your practice squad years and count it as a credited season.

"I don't know necessarily why, I just know that's a rule and I'm glad that it is one. They will give you back your latest practice squad year.

"And they go back and they match your 401k, which is probably the biggest part, because they match it two-to-one. If you're a practice squad guy or a rookie they only match two to one up to \$1,500, the max you can get is three grand. If you get a credited season, they two-to-one match it to the max.

"From 2021, 22, 23, 24 I've maxed it out every year so they've got to go back and give me all that.

"In 2022, I want to say the max you could put in there was \$19,000 or 20,000 so I maxed it out then, so they owe me \$40,000, they already put \$3,000 in there so technically they owe me \$37,000.

"My first two years I was just struggling to stay in it, but around 2022 I became aware of all of this.

"Now I need to find something else to chase. I played six games last year, hopefully I can play these last few this year. Next year shoot to play the whole year. And an explosive return, punt return touchdown. We want to go get this one for Cally (Brian Callahan) and Colt (Anderson)."

###

**HOW – AND WHY –
TITANS TACKLE JC
LATHAM LOST 33 POUNDS
THIS OFFSEASON WHILE
SWITCHING SIDES ON
THE OFFENSIVE LINE**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
MAY 29, 2025**

NASHVILLE – JC Latham can't say he wasn't warned.

Leading up to and during his rookie season, the Titans offensive lineman said those around him told him to watch his weight, how it could sneak up on him if he wasn't careful.

When Latham was feeling good, and playing well, he wasn't overly concerned.

But the team's first-round pick from the 2024 NFL Draft didn't play up to his own expectations as his rookie season neared an end. He was especially troubled by his performance against the Texans during the second half of the year.

So, when the season ended, he made it a point to get his weight in order and come back in much better shape for 2025, when he'll switch from left tackle to right tackle.

"I felt a lot heavier, and slower (at the end of the year), and it was embarrassing for me," said Latham, who started all 17 games at left tackle last season. "That's when I had a talk with (offensive line coach) Bill (Callahan) about the level, and the standard that we want to play at, and that I can hold myself to, that I know I can play at.

"So going into the offseason my biggest focus was to get into a lot better shape and lose a lot of weight."

The 6-foot-6 Latham, who is listed at 342 pounds on the team's current roster sheet, said he ballooned to "365 to 370 pounds" at the end of last year.

Latham said he currently weighs 337 pounds, which was below the team's goal of being in the 340-345 range, and he wants to play at 325 pounds in 2025.

"Looking at a lot of the top tackles in the league," Latham said, "the majority of them are 320-325, or anywhere less, depending on their play style. So, I know they wanted me at 340, but we talked about it, getting to that 325-range is where I need to be."

Latham said he changed his diet after meeting with nutrition coordinator Lauren Silvio, and he got a plan for an ideal weight. He began counting the calories he can consume each day, and he followed a meal plan. He's cut out fast food, and is now eating more fish, and granola bars.

He can tell a difference in the weight loss in the offseason program.

"The conditioning, the running in between," Latham said. "In plays, in drills, being able to finish a lot longer, move a lot more fluid, the foot speed. Everything (feels better) because when you have weight on you it is going to slow you down in your movement."

In addition to his weight change, Latham is also changing positions.

With the addition of veteran Dan Moore Jr., who will play left tackle, Latham is now working at right tackle, a position he played at the University of Alabama.

Latham said he's happy with the switch, and he feels comfortable.

"I'm a team player, so wherever they need me to play, I'll play anywhere," Latham said. "It's all about the team and whatever I can do to help the team win, it's what it's all about it."

###

**FROM MOTOR CITY TO
MUSIC CITY: TITANS
FIRST ROUND PICK JC
LATHAM ARRIVES IN
NASHVILLE, AND HE'S
READY TO GET TO WORK**

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
APRIL 26, 2024

NASHVILLE – A lifelong dream became reality for JC Latham on Thursday night in Detroit.

A day later, the newest member of the Tennessee Titans opened up his portable gaming monitor on the plane ride to Nashville, and he played Madden – as the Titans.

"It was surreal," Latham said with a smile. "It's a surreal moment, knowing I'm a Titan now, and I'm finna be in the game. It's a great feeling."

Latham slept a few hours last night in Motor City, after being picked 7th overall in the first round of the NFL Draft.

When he woke up, he noticed the text messages and DMs had piled up even more from the night before. Former Titans lineman Taylor Lewan congratulated him, and new teammate Calvin Ridley followed him on social media. On Thursday night, Titans quarterback Will Levis and offensive lineman Peter Skoronski FaceTimed him, welcoming him to the team.

"At some point, I'm going to get back to everyone who wished me congratulations," Latham said. "But it's going to take a while. I probably got like a thousand."

Yes, after playing at the University of Alabama the last three seasons, Latham is now a Titan.

On Friday morning, he boarded a plane in Detroit with his mom, dad, stepmom, brother, girlfriend, and his best friend, and went from Motor City to Music City.

A few hours later he was entering the front door at Saint Thomas Sports Park, where he was greeted by Titans controlling owner Amy Adams Strunk, along with Kenneth Adams IV and Barclay Adams from the team's ownership group.

Titans General Manager Ran Carthon also greeted Latham with a handshake and a hug, and so did head coach Brian Callahan.

Levis was on the lobby as well, welcoming him to town.

"How was your draft night?," a smiling Levis asked Latham.

Latham said it was great, and his first day in the facility as a Titan was officially underway.

"It's been crazy busy," Latham said of the last 24 hours. "But it sums up everything I have been doing, having traveled all over the place and meeting so many people. This is kind of like a crash course on everything."

Latham, who made a pre-draft visit to the Titans earlier this month, took another tour of the facility on Friday. He saw his locker inside the team's locker room, and he walked around the indoor practice facility.

He also picked out his NFL number. Latham wore 65 at Alabama, but that number is retired with the Oilers/Titans organization. Hall of Famer Elvin Bethea wore 65 for the Oilers during his 16 seasons with the team.

"But 55 will do me just right," Latham said, smiling again. "That was my number originally."

The 6-foot-6, 342-pound Latham also grabbed lunch in the cafeteria.

"I had me some barbecue chicken," Latham said. "Had some macaroni & cheese, baked beans and some broccoli, too."

Latham, who made a total of 12 30 visits leading up to the draft, said after a whirlwind life the past few months, he's ready to play football.

Latham played in 41 games at Alabama over the past three seasons, with 27 starts. He was a first team All-SEC selection in 2023, when he started all 14 games at right tackle. Latham was also a second team Associated Press All-American in 2023.

Carthon said on Thursday night the team plans to start Latham out at left tackle in the NFL.

"Every night I am thinking about it, every time I put some music on," Latham said of playing his first game. "Every single hour of the day that goes by, it's like, 'pretty soon you are going to be (on the field).'"

"I'm just so happy to be here, and ready to get going."

###

TITANS DRAFTED JC LATHAM TO PLAY LEFT TACKLE — BUT HE PLAYED ON RIGHT SIDE AT ALABAMA

BY NICK SUSS
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
APRIL 25, 2024

JC Latham played 1,753 snaps in three years at Alabama. A big, whopping zero of them were at left tackle.

Meet the Tennessee Titans' new left tackle.

"We're going to start him at left tackle," Titans general manager Ran Carthon said Thursday night, minutes after selecting Latham with the No. 7 pick in the 2024 NFL Draft.

One year after drafting All-American left tackle Peter Skoronski in the first round and bumping him inside to guard, the Titans took a first-round right tackle and move him to the left side. They're confident in his traits. His 6-foot-6, 342-pound frame. His power. His ability to anchor himself in pass protection. His athleticism that led coach Brian Callahan to say: "There's not a whole lot of guys who look like him on Earth."

Latham played left tackle in high school, as the best linemen often do. But he flipped to the right side when he got to Alabama out of courtesy to upperclassman and eventual top-10 pick Evan Neal. Neal headed to the NFL after Latham's freshman year, but Alabama passed the left tackle baton to Tyler Steen, the Vanderbilt transfer who became a third-round pick in 2023. Heading into Latham's junior year, Alabama brought in five-star recruit Kaden Proctor, who immediately produced as a freshman All-American at left tackle, with Latham staying on the right side.

"There's a precedent. Guys have played right and played left and made the switch," Callahan said. "It's not super uncommon. It's

happened before. We have a comfort level with the player and the athlete and what he's capable of. Having him go to left and starting out there, look, if he doesn't feel comfortable there and it doesn't look natural, we'll move him back to right. Like I said the other day, we need tackles, period."

JC Latham: Tennessee Titans OT history

Latham is quick to point out this won't be the first time he has switched positions. Or the second, for that matter. When he transferred to IMG Academy in Florida after his sophomore year of high school in Wisconsin, he was a defensive end. And a good one at that, ranked the No. 8 overall prospect in his class by Rivals.com. But he got to IMG, arguably the nation's premier college feeder program, and had other talented defensive ends in front of him.

So, just as he'd later do because of Neal, he saw an opportunity and changed positions.

"I was the No. 2 player in the country, No. 1 at my position, after two seasons," Latham said. "One of my closest friend's family tells me that success is when preparation meets opportunity. I hold that near and dear to my heart. I apply that as soon as I get into the building and get to work."

But can he play left tackle for the Titans? Quarterback Will Levis was bullied, bruised and battered from his blind side as a rookie, and his predecessor Ryan Tannehill dealt with the same level of punishment for the year and a half prior. The Titans allowed a higher pressure rate on pass plays than any team in the NFL in 2023.

The team is clearly investing in and building around its passing attack with Levis, receivers Calvin Ridley and DeAndre Hopkins, dual-threat running backs Tyjae Spears and Tony Pollard, high-priced center Lloyd Cushenberry III and Callahan's experience as a quarterbacks coach and offensive

coordinator. Finding a left tackle was the last step, and arguably the most important one.

But as Callahan sees it, the Titans didn't explicitly need a left tackle. They needed a good tackle. And that's how they see Latham.

"He almost expected (to move to left tackle), which is the attitude you want guys to have," Callahan said. "I think he possesses the requisite traits to do it. There's not going to be too many guys that are going to turn down a chance to play on the left side, either. They all think they can do it. So I think he's fully capable of it."

###

INSIDE THE EDUCATION OF TITANS QB WILL LEVIS

BY ALBERT BREER
SPORTS ILLUSTRATED
MAY 28, 2024

NASHVILLE—Will Levis had been in Tennessee Titans coach Brian Callahan's office for all of five minutes, still in workout clothes after finishing a May OTA day filled with practice and meetings, and Callahan shot Levis a smirk as he fired up footage of the quarterback's first start.

I'd asked Callahan to take me through some tape to show why he was so all-in on Levis, to the point where the Titans, in Callahan's first year and in possession of the seventh pick, didn't so much as sniff around on the quarterbacks available high in the draft. The first play he showed was a first-and-10 at Tennessee's 36 in the first quarter, right after the Titans converted a fake punt, with Derrick Henry square behind Levis and tight ends to each side.

"This is one of them," Callahan says, now smiling as if to anticipate the reaction. "Some of these play-actions, some of these deeper shots. I watched this ..."

"This is a stupid f---ing throw," Levis interjects with a grimace.

"I didn't have to have to say it," Callahan responds. "But, yes. That's the point."

We'll go through this particular snap in-depth in a bit. But for now, in a nutshell, what would play out on the screen was a microcosm of how Callahan's initial, and more thorough, study of his quarterback had gone. On one hand, on this play, the coach saw a 24-year-old make a throw that no more than a couple of dozen people on the planet could execute. On the other hand, as Levis intimidated himself, the throw was also the wrong one to make.

So continues the education of Will Levis.

It's been a weird road here for the first pick in the second round of the 2023 NFL draft. He flashed early on at Penn State from 2018 to '20, but was stuck behind veteran Sean Clifford. His stock soared after his '21 transfer to Kentucky, with his arrival coinciding with the hire of offensive coordinator Liam Coen from the Los Angeles Rams. Things weren't as smooth in '22 after Coen's departure, which left Levis's draft projections—after five collegiate seasons—scattered all over the map. He fell out of the first round and landed with the Titans.

Now, he's here in Nashville, entrenched as the starting quarterback after nine up-and-down starts last year with a lot to prove. His first NFL coach, Mike Vrabel, is gone. He's fully aware of how things might've gone a different way with a different hire.

Instead, this latest turn just so happened to break his way.

Levis plans on taking advantage of it—and paying off the gamble by Callahan and the Titans. Reaching the comfort level the quarterback and coach have already, with brutal honesty on the agenda daily, is just the start, as Levis sees it.

June's almost here, offseason programs are in high gear and the NFL break is right around the corner. Here's what we've got in the takeaways ...

- Why Patrick Mahomes is even more valuable to the Chiefs than you might think.
- A timeframe for, and the trouble with, an 18-game schedule in the NFL.
- The only player who was the subject of trade talks at the top of the draft.

And a whole lot more. But we're starting with Levis, the Titans, and the chance for everyone to take advantage of a unique opportunity.

Tennessee Titans coach Brian Callahan

Callahan and the Titans are gambling on Levis developing into a top-tier NFL quarterback. / Nathan Ray Seebeck-USA TODAY Sports

Callahan's research ahead of the 2023 draft into Levis was cursory at best. He was the OC in Cincinnati, the Bengals have Joe Burrow, and there were better uses of his time than to grind tape on a player his team was never going to pick.

So while a little film work, and a little more from Bengals quarterback coach Dan Pitcher (who'd watched Levis more intently) gave Callahan some depth of knowledge going into his January interviews, he had catching up to do as he prepped for his four Zoom interviews. The one he did with Titans GM Ran Carthon revealed, to both, a level of chemistry everyone wanted to explore, which was one reason why Carthon pushed to get Callahan in-person for a second interview the Monday (Jan. 22) after the divisional playoffs.

With Tennessee up first, and Carolina and Atlanta slotted for their second interviews with him that Tuesday and Wednesday, Callahan crammed on those three. It meant studying rosters in general, quarterbacks in particular and, as part of it, Callahan watched four full games of Levis, along with cut-ups of all of his 2023 pass attempts.

"Every time I watched him, I was like, 'This guy's a pretty good player,' " Callahan says. "And I think everybody was a little shocked that he slipped the way he did [in 2023]."

Callahan communicated to Carthon, president of football operations Chad Brinker, and the rest of the Titans crew what he saw, which was captured succinctly on that Week 8 snap against Atlanta—Levis had what you can't coach, and could be coached up on what he wasn't bringing to the table yet.

Callahan told the Titans, in fact, that a lot of what he saw in Levis's 2023 rookie tape matched the Kentucky tape from '21, when the quarterback broke through working with Coen.

"You see he's athletic, he's strong, he's tough," Callahan says. "He'll stand in the pocket and he's got a great release. It's quick. And he's got a really legitimate arm. And he will play a little bit in that kind of swashbuckling style. He was trying to earn guys' respect. He was trying to show people he could play. That's part of earning your way as a young quarterback. He did some things that I think that his teammates rallied around, which was fun to watch."

Carthon's instinct on Callahan was confirmed quickly, and the Titans never let him leave Nashville—hiring him that Monday before he could even get on the plane to Charlotte. In turn, with the perception that Tennessee—with Ryan Tannehill a free agent—had uncertainty at quarterback, Callahan acted quickly. His first call after being hired was to two-time All-Pro and captain Jeffery Simmons, and his second call was to Levis.

He told the quarterback he wasn't going in with any preconceived notions, which was music to Levis's ears after his personality had been dissected nonstop before the draft. He told Levis he just wanted him to be himself.

"I remember being very at ease," Levis says. "He instilled a lot of confidence in me as a player and did his best to explain to me what he saw on tape with me and that he was excited to coach me and that he knew that I could be a great player in this league. To hear that from a dude who's going to be walking in, leading the charge for hopefully a long time from here on out, was cool."

And as Carthon, Brinker, Callahan and the coaches and scouts dove into their draft prep, it only reinforced what the coach said to the GM in their interview about Levis.

"I'd told Ran the truth," Callahan says. "I said he has real talent, real ability and I think he's got a chance to be a very good starting quarterback in the NFL. He's got enough tools to where his ceiling is high. If he's all the things mentally you need to be to play quarterback, his physical talent, it's a high ceiling. He's got a chance to be (a) really, really good, top-end starting quarterback. And I believe that. ...

"[The scouts] still do their due diligence and put grades on guys and all that. I had the conversation with Ran. Part of it was like, If Will's coming out in this draft class, I don't know that I feel like anybody is better than him at this point."

It may sound like a strong statement to make, given the type of class that was coming.

That said, it was backed with actions. The Titans didn't have any quarterbacks to Nashville for visits prior to the draft, and they didn't have big contingents at their pro days, either. The assumption had been, from the start, that Tennessee would take a tackle. That's exactly what it did, selecting Alabama's JC Latham with the seventh pick.

Meanwhile, the Titans spent the money they were saving in having a cheaper quarterback to support Levis, signing top free agents Calvin Ridley, Tony Pollard and Lloyd Cushenberry, which helped fortify the foundation of younger talent they'd be bringing along.

So, the idea goes, one way or the other, they'll know if they're right on Levis faster than they might have otherwise.

Tennessee Titans receiver DeAndre Hopkins and quarterback Will Levis

Levis tossed four touchdown passes in his rookie debut last year, including three scores to Hopkins. / Andrew Nelles / The Tennessean / USA

Now, we can go back to that first-quarter play against the Falcons, and a few more from that game that

explain the gamble, with Callahan holding the clicker and Levis following along.

The two paint a vivid picture of where they're going.

- On that first play, Levis carries out play-action to Henry to his right, and drops straight back in the pocket. As he sets up, Atlanta clearly isn't fooled. Nose tackle LaCale London's quickly in Levis's face, as he looked to his left. London gets to Levis, knocks him off-balance, and Levis somehow wills the ball deep downfield and to his right, just outside corner Dee Alford and past safety Richie Grant. It fell incomplete, but hit Treyton Burks on the hands.

Meanwhile, tight end Chigoziem Okonkwo was wide open in the opposite flat, releasing late into his route, as the play intended, to give Levis an outlet.

"This was not an advisable throw, nor was it an advisable position to be in," Callahan says. "It was like, Holy s--t, this is not smart. I look at it as I go. God, if Will can just learn that on a first-and-10, let's just throw the ball right there in the flat. That's Chigs in the flat. Chigs in the flat is going to catch this ball, and he's going to run for 12 yards and it's going to be first-and-10 again at the 50-yard line. Instead, Will's trusting his arm and his ability."

"That's a clear out," Levis adds. "We're trying to take the safety out of it, throw the dagger behind it. Dagger slips. I can sort of see out of the corner of my eye that the clear wins. I'm trying to pull him to the sideline. Just come down and take the check down."

"The other part of this, it's a f---ing unbelievable throw," Callahan continues. "You watch it from the end zone, there's a guy in his face, it's horrendous eyes, horrendous progression, guy bearing down on him. He can't step into the throw. This guy's 40 yards down the field, and he just sort of flicks it while he's getting hit and drops the ball right in his hands. It's an incredibly accurate

throw for what was going on. I'm watching this, I'm like, Goddamn."

Gathering himself, Callahan then summarizes: "First of all, decision-making can be coached. This right here, you don't coach that. Will's mom and dad gave that to him."

- The next play was a third-and-1 from the Titans 48, with Tennessee down 3-0 at the end of the first quarter. From under center in an I-formation with two tight ends, Levis carries out play-action to his right to Henry, then is patient in letting Henry leak out to the flat.

With Atlanta linebacker Nate Landman blitzing, Levis calmly stands his ground, and feathers a ball over Arnold Ebiketie's head to Henry, who turns it upfield for 5 yards and a first down.

"I was watching this game and I was like, Man, this reminds me of the junior year tape that I watched from Kentucky," Callahan says. "This doesn't seem like much, but this is a third-and-1, and this is thrown to a back that generally isn't a great catcher of the football. Just knowing that, he puts it in an accurate spot and puts a little touch on it so he can handle the ball. Small, minor thing, but just shows some awareness."

"This is one of my favorite plays of this game, too, just for that reason," Levis adds. "This wasn't the premier [option on the play]. We're trying to get to the shallow backside, have him get lost and come back. We always say if we have the back, take it. He's there. There's [a linebacker] in my face, not a throw that you necessarily practice. You got to get it up and down, put it in his hands, just let him get the first."

Callahan then says, "What I kept reminding myself of when I'm watching the game, I'm like, This is this kid's first start. He played the game like someone who's played the game. It didn't look, at any moment, like the game looked too big or too fast. I didn't feel like I was watching a rookie."

Levis, by the way, hit DeAndre Hopkins for a 47-yard touchdown on the next play.

- From there, Callahan pulls up a third-and-3 with 10:29 left in the first half. Levis identified the coverage, saw a look, and took a shot—standing in with Calais Campbell closing on him, and delivering a perfect pass down the right sideline that hit Treyton Burks on the hands. It was incomplete but subtly showed things the earlier shot did, too.

In watching it, Levis immediately mentions how off-rhythm he is during the play. The key, though, and the reason Callahan is showing it is because it almost didn't matter.

"Bad timing, bad footwork, but I like the decision," Callahan says. "I had a feeling that there was probably some alert here and there was a go route that was versus the press. Great, he's got it, take it. The timing was wrong. The footwork was bad. This is the same idea as the first play. These are all things that are incredibly easy to fix and incredibly easy to impart the knowledge where, OK, good, you want to take the go route."

Except that, as Callahan continues, "If you knew it was zone coverage and you just wanted to take a completion on third-and-3, that is situational awareness."

And, indeed, slot receiver Kyle Philips was open in the flat, running a pivot route out of a bunch look for an easy first down.

"Early in the game, we got pressed and I didn't throw it," Levis says. "Coach said next time we get any press with Treyton, let's hit the go. If it's first or second down, take it. Or third-and-long, yeah, take it. But that was in my head. It's third-and-3. I see press, I'm on it, but I know the situation. I know that pivot's going to get it."

- After that, Callahan puts up a first-and-10 at the two-minute warning that looks like, well, not much. Levis drops back off play-action,

subtly shuffles to avoid the rush, and puts the ball on Okonkwo a little low. Okonkwo drops it, but still there's a lot for a coach to like.

"Watch his pocket movement, a little slide away from the pressure, trying to buy himself an extra second, off-platform throw but still accurate, puts the ball in a good spot, obviously it's a drop," Callahan says. "That's NFL quarterbacking. That's what it looks like. That's what your pocket looks like. That's what the throws feel like. It was just the subtleness of how that played out, you're like, This doesn't feel like he's making his first start."

"This is the play all day," Levis says. "We're running play-action off split zone. Tight end's going to take the Will [linebacker] here. He's thinking he's blocking it. He's coming up the pipe. We're clearing out the safety and the corner on the front side. Those two receivers, it's really Chig down to the running back. ... I could lead him to the sideline more. The movement probably changes the location."

"If you're nitpicking," Callahan adds, "you'd love to see him hit him in stride on the move so he doesn't have to stop and turn."

- Callahan wrapped up the film session with the final two big-play touchdowns of Levis's four-touchdown afternoon. The first one was good for 61 yards to Hopkins and the second for 33 yards to Nick Westbrook-Ikhine.

On the Hopkins score, Callahan says, "He puts the ball ... it's in a great spot. It's a big touchdown. I don't know how you couldn't watch this and not be like, Hell, yeah, I want to coach this guy."

"Earlier in the game, we were seeing these safeties getting a little [aggressive] with the depth they were playing at, really when they ran their quarters coverage," Levis adds. "This is his cloud, and he's still very aggressive inside. Seeing that inbreaker (route), he's playing that, and we end up, we would call

it pump, so we'd pump to the inbreaker. He's just showing like he's coming in, safety stutters his feet for a second, throw it behind him."

Touchdown, Titans.

And on the second snap, playing the tape back, Levis rolled right, had two defenders coming free at him, and threw the ball back to the left corner of the end zone for the score.

"They're running the corner post here, and you get Jesse Bates in the post who's a smart player but a little over aggressive and you get the win," Callahan says. "To throw this ball with two guys bearing down and just putting it in an unbelievable spot, I didn't need to watch a whole lot more after I watched this game."

Tennessee Titans quarterback Will Levis

Levis goes through offseason workouts learning Callahan's offense. / Denny Simmons / The Tennessean / USA

Then, there was the other part of the assessment on Levis coming out—his personality.

Some of it Levis understands, and some of it he sees as ridiculous. And headlining the latter category is all of the stuff you've seen on social media. That he eats bananas with the peel on. How he puts mayo in his coffee. Which, he gets, is largely his own doing.

Carthon told Callahan that he'd addressed the stunts already with the quarterback. The GM's stance to his 2023 second-round pick was that if what everyone saw on video really is Levis, then roll with it. But if any of it was an act, or a swing at boosting engagement on Instagram or TikTok or whatever else, he should knock it off.

Callahan called the hysteria over it "really bizarre" and Levis agrees.

"It was mostly people that don't know me," he says. "Any team or any coach that got a chance to sit

down with me and understand who I am as a person realized that, sure, that's definitely part of my personality, but it's nothing that you should be worried about. I don't regret it at all. I still think it's funny. It's still something that I get a laugh at. That's the reason why I did it. I don't care how people responded to it.

"It's something that I enjoyed and got a little laugh out of. And, hopefully, that's the case [for other people]. Then I'm happy about it. It's all good, and it's something that's going to be tied to me forever. A little Hellman's marketing deal came out of it, too."

The other part is, well, actually important to Levis's professional success.

The same way teams raised it in the pre-draft process, Callahan and Carthon discussed it as they got to know each other—Levis can come off as, and really can be, wound pretty tight. And the coach was explaining it this Thursday afternoon as Levis was walking into the room. Callahan didn't stop, or pause, as the quarterback sat down. "Come on in, Will," he says before continuing. None of it was anything that they hadn't already talked through.

"It doesn't have to be head down all the time," he says as Levis sits down. "You can be relaxed and you can enjoy the process and you can enjoy practice and you're gonna enjoy communication back and forth. I think those things are where you start."

"It's been tough," Levis says. "I'm just hard on myself. That's [the] individual I am. I mean, I have very high standards. And if I'm not perfect, it's easy for me to get down on myself sometimes. But with a new offense, for the first time, taking the reins and having the ability to be the guy, I definitely felt that at first."

On the flip side was the intent of not just fishing around the quarterbacks in the draft, but giving Levis the job

from the start—the hope being that he, Callahan, OC Nick Holz and quarterbacks coach Bo Hardegree could accelerate the process of establishing trust.

That was key for a guy who hasn't had the same OC in consecutive years since he was a teenager and, as such, is more at risk of getting confused during the learning process.

"Right now, it's our first time as a team going through it all," Levis says. "And I'm able to live in that 100-200 world, but he's starting to mix in, sprinkle in the different layers and further the things that we could think about doing."

Callahan then explained how, from his vantage point, it's part of not just building an offense, but tailoring it to Levis.

The first stage is showing players everything that's available to them. From there, it's going over things a second time during OTAs, and then a third time in training camp to figure out what's best for the group, and the quarterback. That way, when the season starts, gameplans seem like light lifting.

And that'd be much more difficult to pull off if Levis was in some faux competition for the job. As Callahan saw it coming in, that's one big reason why establishing the guy he saw as clearly the best option at the most important position made sense.

Which, again, worked to unwind any tension Levis had, and strengthen their trust.

"I think you do a disservice to guys, particularly if you're drafting them, and you make them compete for a job. Guys need to play," Callahan says. "They need to be put in a position where they are the quarterback. There's something about that that matters to a team and a locker room. If you're going to do it, do it. It all sounds good—He should sit. That's not the reality. That's not the financial reality of the NFL, either. You're trying to take advantage of a young quarterback

on a rookie contract, that's the other part of it.

"There's something about being the quarterback and knowing ... when you walk into the building and walk onto the field, you know that you're the quarterback and you know that everyone around you knows that you're the quarterback. It allows you some freedom. Especially when you're a young player, there's no growth unless you make mistakes.

"The problem is, if you're competing for a job, you're not going to be willing to make the mistakes you need to make in order to improve at a rapid rate. You're more worried about the perception of the mistake than actually learning from the mistake. I think that does guys a disservice, and I think it stunts growth when you have to be constantly worried about it. If I know I can make this throw, but it's going to be kind of hairy, and I probably shouldn't, but I'm going to do it anyway. Maybe it takes a hell of a throw, but I can coach off that."

"It's the first time in my career where I've felt comfortable going to a coach and suggesting something, because I feel like I'm comfortable enough with the offense to where I know the machinations of it."

- Will Levis

It'd be silly, of course, to say in May that this will all turn out like things did for Callahan, Zac Taylor and Pitcher in Cincinnati with Burrow. Levis is far from that, which, of course, is something he'd readily admit.

But, obviously, all of these guys think that by doing things this way, like Callahan did with Burrow, Levis is getting his best chance to get there. And that's something Levis feels every day, even in May.

"It's the first time in my career where I've felt comfortable going to a coach and suggesting something, because I feel like I'm comfortable enough with the offense to where I know the machinations of it," Levis says. "That's been cool for me, to be

able to speak my mind. And even if they say no, I know at least I tried and we talked about it."

That effectively means that Callahan's intent, to accelerate Levis's development by getting him to trust his coaches and make and learn from mistakes, is being carried out.

For now, it's created a situation where both Levis and Callahan answer quickly when I ask whether they think that the NFL missed on the ex-Kentucky star by letting him fall all the way to the 33rd slot in the 2023 draft.

"Yeah," Levis says, smiling.

"I do, too," Callahan says.

Even better, now Levis has the chance to reward the people around him for having that faith in him—both those who were with him last year, and those that are here now.

"It definitely leaves a little bit of a chip on my shoulder and makes me want to go out there and work and keep showing people that teams might have made a mistake by not taking me," Levis said. "Hopefully I'm that guy that they talk about that did slip, and I can be that example for other kids that are in that same position in the green room like me."

"There's a part of that, I feel it from Will," Callahan adds. "I don't feel this, I'm going to show the world that they were all wrong. I don't feel that. What I more feel, and this is just my opinion of how I see his demeanor, it's more about I'm trying to prove these people right."

"I'm trying to prove this organization right," Levis says.

And the Titans are giving him every opportunity now to do just that.

###

HOW WILL LEVIS EARNED LIFETIME SUPPLY OF HELLMANN'S, AND HOW THE 'MAYO MOCHA' RECIPE WAS BORN

**BY NICK SUSS
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
NOVEMBER 22, 2023**

The leaves are changing. There's a chill in the air. Every day gets dark a little earlier. And there's a creamy dollop of Hellmann's mayonnaise plopped in your coffee mug.

You know, football weather.

Long before rookie Will Levis was the Tennessee Titans' quarterback of the future, he was the man who drank coffee with mayonnaise in it. Now he has the pleasure of being both. Back in August, Levis secured a lifetime endorsement deal with Hellmann's, America's biggest mayo brand, to be the condiment's athletic spokesperson. Hellmann's announced the partnership with a faux press conference, in which Levis proudly advocated on behalf of the Mayo Mocha, sipped his signature drink and even ate a mayo-topped muffin for good measure.

"It's hard to articulate, but people love talking about him," said Chris Symmes, director of marketing for Hellmann's. "He has this charisma that I don't think you see too often with athletes. He's clearly very comfortable in front of a camera. He likes to have fun. He's clearly a very gifted athlete. And people love talking about him. He does stuff that makes people want to talk about him."

The story behind Will Levis' lifetime mayonnaise endorsement

Levis had been on Hellmann's radar as a potential spokesperson since his culinary quirk started going viral on social media when he was still in college at Kentucky. In addition to his coffee experiment, he also gained notoriety for eating bananas, peel and all. The stunts were what they were: stunts. He's since said he

doesn't actually drink coffee with mayonnaise on the regular (he's a one-cream, one-sugar guy), but he knows gimmicks attract attention and get people talking.

Brands salivate at the value of charismatic athletes who are game to get silly. Hellmann's sent Levis a care package in February complete with a Letterman's jacket and bucket hat to rep the brand as well as a panini maker and recipes. Still, in the process of preparing for the NFL draft with a cadre of aspiring quarterbacks, Levis said the care package provided him, Max Duggan, Clayton Tune and Dorian Thompson-Robinson roughly a week's worth of meals.

Levis took to TikTok to thank Hellmann's for the haul. Symmes' courtship only intensified from there, culminating in the press conference ad in August.

"I think there's always some doubts like 'mayonnaise and coffee, it's a little peculiar,'" Symmes said. "But that wasn't really the intent. The key part of this was how Hellmann's can be used as a versatile ingredient."

Titans quarterback Will Levis squirts mayo onto a muffin in an advertisement for Hellmann's, the company he's a spokesman for.

Versatile for Will Levis, and for Nashville

Ahead of Levis' NFL debut in October, Hellmann's partnered with Humphrey's Street, a nonprofit South Nashville coffee shop with two locations, to make the Mayo Mocha available to curious Titans fans with adventurous palates. Humphrey's Street's baristas competed to perfect the recipe, going through several rounds of drink creation and taste testing, before landing on a concoction that's been described as having a brownie batter or chocolate ganache taste.

The drink was only supposed to be available from Oct. 25-31, but thanks to Levis' four-touchdown debut; positive press for Humphrey's Street's business model

of providing job training for teenagers in national outlets such as Axios and BuzzFeed; and customers actually liking the product, the Mayo Mocha has twice returned to menus.

"I personally wish we had done a blind taste test with customers so they didn't know," said Camille Cannada, senior director of development for Harvest Hands CDC, the nonprofit arm of Humphrey's Street. "Because I don't think they would've known."

For enterprising roasters, Hellmann's recipe for an at-home Mayo Mocha is simple to replicate:

Pour 1 ¼ cups of hot milk into a bowl and whisk vigorously for 1-2 minutes until frothy.

Pour two hot espresso shots into another bowl. Whisk in one tablespoon of Hellmann's REAL mayonnaise and one tablespoon of chocolate or mocha flavored syrup until smooth and well-blended.

Pour into a large coffee mug and top with frothed milk. If desired, add a sprinkle of cinnamon.

'It Must Be The Mayo'

As part of his sponsorship deal, Levis gets a "lifetime supply" of Hellmann's. The average consumer, Hellmann's says, goes through three 30-ounce jars per year. Since Levis' passion for the product outpaces the average consumer, Hellmann's is starting him off with six jars per year and he can request more whenever he's running low.

Levis says he's already on his second shipment.

After Levis threw for 238 yards and four touchdowns in his NFL debut, Titans fans online started rallying together with the cry "it must be the mayo." Symmes jokes that he didn't coin the phrase but he supports the idea.

Hellmann's can't comment on whether there are more projects planned with Levis or how the

partnership has helped sales or boosted their profile. But Symmes says the goal is to get people to use more mayonnaise, and targeting tailgaters and Super Bowl party hosts is part of the plan.

"As a marketer, it's fantastic to have an athlete/celebrity that is game to do fun stuff," Symmes said. "I think that was evident before he even joined the NFL or the Titans. So I think it gives us, as we think about what the future holds, I think it gives us a lot of freedom to think about ways to partner with him in the future. It's fun to have different ideas floating around given his willingness to not take himself too seriously and also just have a good time with things."

#

**FROM TITANS FAN TO A
TITAN: VETERAN WR
TYLER LOCKETT READY
TO DO HIS PART IN NEXT
CHAPTER, IN TENNESSEE**

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
APRIL 30, 2025

NASHVILLE – Tyler Lockett put on a Titans t-shirt after joining the offseason program this week, but it was hardly the first time he'd repped the team.

As a teenager, Lockett was a big fan of the Titans, even traveling to Nashville from Tulsa, Oklahoma, to root on the team in a playoff game at Nissan Stadium during the 2008 season.

On Monday, the veteran receiver officially signed with the Titans after playing his first 10 NFL seasons with the Seattle Seahawks.

"I became a Titans fan when the team drafted Vince Young," a smiling Lockett said on Tuesday. "I enjoyed watching Vince Young, Chris Johnson, Kenny Britt. I loved watching Cortland Finnegan play — and fight every single game. You had Keith Bulluck at linebacker, Albert Haynesworth at nose tackle, Michael Griffin. It was really fun.

"That (playoff game) was my first time being in Nashville as a kid. My best friend was a Ravens fan, and we sat in front of Joe Flacco's parents that day."

All these years later, Flacco is still playing in the NFL.

And, Lockett is now ready to begin the latest chapter of his career in Tennessee, this time as a player. His father, Kevin, a seven-year NFL veteran himself, told him to embrace change.

"I'm excited about it," Lockett said. "I've been at the same place for 10 years, and now this is a new atmosphere, a new building, you are learning everybody's names, and you are trying to ways where you fit

in. But it's really cool to see how the front office is coming together and communicating. And, this is my first time being with a team where the head coach (Brian Callahan) is an offensive style head coach. I've always been around defensive head coaches with Pete Carroll and Mike Macdonald, so it's going to be something new.

"But it's exciting, being a Titan now. My dad has told me it's refreshing to go to a new place because it challenges you, and you learn a new way. I'm looking forward to what's next."

Lockett made his mark in Seattle, on and off the field.

He ranks second in team history behind Hall of Famer Steve Largent in receptions (661), receiving yards (8,594), and receiving touchdowns (61), and he also ranks second in punt return yards (1,078) as well as average yards per kickoff return (25.1) and kickoff returns for touchdowns (2).

In Seattle, Lockett was also three-time winner of the Steve Largent Award, voted by players and given to the player or coach who best exemplifies the spirit, dedication and integrity of the Seahawks.

Already in Tennessee he's made his presence known.

Lockett welcomed his new teammates to the team on social media during the NFL Draft, including quarterback Cam Ward, a player Lockett is looking forward to playing with.

"I am very excited about Cam being able to come on board," Lockett said. "When I was in Seattle, I got a chance to watch him a lot when he was at Washington State. Me and Quandre Diggs are best friends, and have been best friends for a while, and he always used to talk to me about his cousin, even when he was leaving Incarnate Word, and going to Washington State, before Miami. Obviously being in Seattle, I got a chance to see his highlights all the time and saw him do amazing things

there and then at Miami. So, just being able to team up with him and do my part, I am definitely excited for that."

Lockett, released by Seattle back in March following a season when he caught 49 passes for 600 yards and two touchdowns, said he's not necessarily looking forward to proving those who doubt him wrong as he heads into his 11th NFL season.

He's proud of his career to date, which includes four 1,000-yard plus seasons, and five seasons when he's caught at least 70 passes. In 2023, he became the 94th player in NFL history to record 600 career receptions.

Lockett just wants to find a role in Tennessee, as a leader, and a contributor.

"I just want to be able to do my part," Lockett said of his potential leadership role. "I don't want to do too little or too much. Obviously if you overtalk, it kind of goes in one ear and out the other, and sometimes if you don't say enough, you let some stuff slide. I think it's just being able to find that middle ground. Obviously I am still new here, so just like anybody else that comes in new you still have to be able to put in the work to let people know that you belong, and over time you just continue to try and be that leader, whether it's lead by example, whether it's being able to speak up, whether it's meeting people where they are, whether it's being able to bridge the gap. There are a variety of ways to lead, just different styles, even if it's following at times. There are different styles that require different things when you talk to different players."

Lockett, who turns 33 next month, knows he's capable of helping on the field as well.

He's ready to do it, on his childhood team.

"But my biggest focus, if I can be honest, is to just focus on being my best self and just be able to give God

all the glory," Lockett said. "No matter how great I play, no matter what type of plays that I make, people are still going to have their opinions of whether I still have it, or don't. I understand the politics of the game, I understand sometimes there are so many things you need as a receiver to work out just for you to be able to get the ball. But there is so much more that people don't see that teams require and that teams need, which is the leadership role, or that selfless character, or different stuff like that. Sometimes it's not about stats, but it's about how you build each other up. So, for me, I sacrificed a lot of stuff last year (in Seattle) for the better of the team, and I just believe that is what you want to do in order to be able to try and help the team be at its best.

"So, coming here, I know that I can still play. I don't think I need to prove that to anybody. I just need to continue to build in a healthy way and not try to waste my time trying to do all this proving people wrong, because sometimes it works out for you, and sometimes it just adds extra stress."

###

SEAHAWKS' TYLER LOCKETT HAS A SECOND CAREER IN REAL ESTATE

BY BRADY HENDERSON
ESPN.COM
OCTOBER 2, 2023

KIRKLAND, Wash. -- It's an off day from Seattle Seahawks training camp in early August, but Tyler Lockett is at work.

His office on this Wednesday afternoon isn't the team's practice facility but a four-bedroom, 3½-bath home located 20 minutes up the road. It's new construction, freshly staged and almost ready to hit the market.

Lockett is there because his job is to sell it.

Yes, the wide receiver with 60 career touchdowns and more than \$70 million in on-field earnings is now a real estate agent in his spare time, with a license in two states and several multimillion dollar transactions under his belt.

Lockett arrives at the Kirkland home right after staggers finish setting up the furnishings and gives a tour. He starts in the kitchen, where he notes the stylish white cabinets and imagines aloud how many bar stools the counter could seat. Next is the finished basement, complete with a wine fridge and a kitchenette in the living area.

"This can be whatever it is that you want it to be," Lockett says. "It could be your man cave. It could be your woman cave."

On the top floor, he touts all the natural light shining through a large hallway window outside of the primary bedroom. Up on the roof, he shows off the deck with the west-facing view, which he thinks will be one of the house's biggest selling points. It'll eventually be listed for a little under \$3.3 million.

"We're still kind of talking about what that's going to look like as we continue to do the CMA

[comparative market analysis] to be able to see what some of these other homes have gone for," Lockett says. "... The one thing about real estate that I tell people is that the buyers are going to determine how much the house is [worth]. The buyers are going to determine the market. That's just how it goes."

Casually talking about CMAs, ceramic tile floors, soaker tubs and square footage might sound odd coming from most NFL players. But this is Lockett, whose interests and talents span well beyond football.

He's a published author, releasing a book of poems called "Reflection" in 2019, and has performed his work in spoken-word form. He won an Emmy award in 2022 for his NFL Network feature on the 1921 Black Wall Street massacre in his hometown of Tulsa, Oklahoma. He has been the Seahawks' nominee for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award the past two seasons.

Now, their 31-year-old Renaissance man is getting a head start on what he calls his "second career" as he continues to excel at his day job.

Heading into Monday night's game against the New York Giants (8:15 p.m. ET, ABC/ESPN), Lockett has 13 catches for 103 yards and a pair of touchdowns for the 2-1 Seahawks, including the winning score in overtime against the Detroit Lions in Week 2.

"Just for him to be able to do that and balance football and not miss a beat on the football field just speaks volumes of the type of person he is, the type of player he is," said teammate DK Metcalf, who hired Lockett to find him the home he recently bought. "He's taking it very seriously. That's all he wants to talk about on the side when we're not talking about football. I'm pretty sure I can get my real estate license with as many conversations as we've had."

"He's just always looking to expand himself, and this is one way of doing it."

THE SEEDS OF Lockett's real estate career were planted after he signed his first extension with the Seahawks in 2018. He started watching HGTV while preparing to buy his first home, and his interest was piqued.

"I just kind of fell into it," he said.

Early in the 2022 offseason, Lockett completed the 90 hours of online education required for prospective real estate brokers in Washington state, passed the test in February and became licensed in March. He later completed another 180 hours of coursework and that September got his license in Texas, where he spends much of the offseason. But by then Lockett was already off and running in Washington at Keller Williams Eastside, with business cards and all.

And business is booming.

In August, Lockett gave ESPN a tour of one of his listings in Washington. He is also a licensed real estate agent in Texas. Brady Henderson/ESPN

Lockett has been a part of seven transactions totaling nearly \$17 million in combined sales volume, with the Kirkland home still on the market and other properties about to be listed. This past spring, his team at Keller Williams, Liv N Serve Real Estate, became the official realtor of the Seahawks. It's a rare -- if not unheard of -- sponsorship deal between a team and one of its players (the two worked with the NFL to ensure the partnership was in accordance with the league's salary cap rules).

Lockett represents homebuyers and sellers, NFL players and regular folks alike. He has also ventured into commercial real estate, working with a buyer on the purchase of an apartment building in Aberdeen, Washington, last year. He's on the verge of listing another commercial property in Oregon.

"The biggest thing when it comes to real estate is the relationships, because that's what keeps a client at

the end of the day," Lockett said. "In every relationship, you've got to have great communication, and you've got to have complete and brutal honesty, and sometimes that's the hardest part. ... They have this idea of, 'This is what this house is going to be [sold] for and this is all I'm willing to accept.' And you've got to learn to not only be able to talk them down or talk them up, but meet them where they're at and communicate with them to a level where only they'd understand.

"It's kind of like when you're voted captain. You've got to be able to do that same thing with your teammates."

In some cases, those two worlds have met. Lockett, however, didn't get the listing for Russell Wilson's lakefront mansion, which hit the market for a cool \$28 million after the quarterback was traded from Seattle to the Denver Broncos last offseason.

"They always say don't go into business with your friends," Lockett said with a laugh when asked about not getting hired by Wilson, "so I'd rather keep our friendship how it is."

When Lockett does work with friends in the NFL, he prefers to represent them only as buyers. That avoids any money-related awkwardness, because agents' commissions -- typically 3% to each side in the state of Washington -- are paid by the seller.

Lockett and a partner at Keller Williams toured Seattle-area homes with Metcalf over the offseason before they found one in the summer. Metcalf called it a "great" experience and said his financial advisor came away impressed with Lockett's professionalism.

"He was like, 'Bro, Tyler's very thorough with his work,'" Metcalf said. "I was like, 'Yeah, that's Lock, day in and day out.' So he left a good impression on a lot of people."

In addition to Metcalf, Lockett helped NFL safety and former teammate Adrian Colbert find a

home in Texas in the spring. Lockett and one of his partners at Keller Williams had closed on a condo in the Seattle suburb of Bellevue the day before he toured the nearby Kirkland home in August.

"That's the best part," he said, "just being able to see your buyer with the keys. Or your seller happy that they were able to get a lot of that stuff off their backs."

HOW DOES LOCKETT juggle real estate and football?

"It's not hard," he said.

But it does require time management and some teamwork, especially when he's moonlighting during the season.

Lockett co-lists some properties -- like the Kirkland home -- with another agent at Keller Williams, Danny Nunes, which splits the work (and the commission). Lockett keeps a detailed list of where each of his clients are at in the buying or selling process, which helps him stay on top of his schedule and work ahead. Once a property is pending, he can lean on transaction coordinators to help with paperwork and other hurdles before closing.

The newly married Lockett estimates that 70% of his day is spent on football, while real estate takes up another 15% to 20%. That might mean knocking out some work during a break at team headquarters.

"During training camp, lunchtime, he's on Zoom calls, he's cold calling people trying to drum up business," Nunes said. "So it's not just like going to his teammates and helping them out. ... He'll be in the locker room after the game and he'll be texting about a deal. I'll be like, 'Pay attention to football.' But he has time for it all."

Lockett knows the optics of an NFL player devoting time to something other than the game might not sit well with some, but he has never been the stick-to-football type.

"The hardest part about being able to start your second career is everybody is always holding you to that one career," he said. "And because there's so many things that come ... with this game of football, people always say you only need to focus on this, if you're not doing good it's because you're doing all this other type of stuff. But we have dreams, too, and we have things that we want to accomplish ... not only for ourselves but our families and our future families as well."

Standing on the roof of the Kirkland home, Lockett made it clear that while he's setting himself up for life after football, he isn't on the verge of retirement. Why would he be? After this season, he'll have two years and roughly \$34 million remaining on the \$69 million extension he signed in 2021.

And he's still at the top of his game. Lockett has reached 1,000 yards in each of the past four seasons after coming up just shy of that mark (965) in 2018. His 47 receiving touchdowns since then are tied for fifth most in the NFL. He's closing in on becoming the franchise's second-leading receiver behind Steve Largent in both catches and receiving yards.

"For a real estate agent, I think he's doing a great job at playing wide receiver," quarterback Geno Smith quipped late last season.

That's the kind of recognition Lockett is after.

"You have to fight through so much just to be able to show people you're more than a football player," he said. "Going into this year, I've already been almost a year in, and now people see me as more than just a football player. They see me not as somebody trying to see what it's like to be a realtor, but they see me actually as a realtor now."

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**TITANS ASSISTANT LORI
LOCUST BREAKING
DOWN DOORS FOR
FEMALE COACHES IN
THE NFL**

**BY TASHAN REED
THE ATHLETIC
OCTOBER 23, 2024**

Editor's note: This article is part of The Changemakers series, focusing on the behind-the-scenes executives and people fueling the future growth of their sports.

All Joe Headen could hear was yelling. The Susquehanna Township (Pa.) High School football coach was walking out of a practice in 2010 when the sound of two adults going at it lured him back to the field. Once there, Headen found veteran defensive line coach Rick Pierce and first-year assistant defensive line coach Lori Locust in each other's faces in a heated argument.

Pierce and Locust had a strong relationship, but a disagreement sparked because Locust felt he was taking it too easy on a star defensive lineman. Although Pierce vehemently disagreed, Locust didn't back down. Headen let it play out without interrupting.

"Everybody's like, 'Coach, aren't you going to do something?' And I was like, 'Nah, she's got to earn her stripes,'" Headen said. "And, honestly, that was the moment I knew she was going to be all right."

Locust grew up nearby as a Pittsburgh Steelers fan and pretended to be Hall of Fame linebacker Jack Lambert in backyard pickup games as a child. But her connection to organized football was limited to fandom until the National Women's Football Association, a professional women's tackle football league, brought the Harrisburg Angels to her hometown in 2006. She tried out and made the team.

"I was like, 'Wow, I get a chance to play football,'" Locust said. "And

that translated a love of the game to a different love, right?"

In her fourth season, Locust suffered a torn ACL that ended her playing career. She grew up with Headen, and their sons played youth football together. Shortly after while they were sitting together at one of their practices, Locust told Headen of her desire to stay connected to the game. That's when he offered her the opportunity to transition to coaching.

"At that time, there were no female coaches in our area," Headen said. "And it was one of those things where she just fit right in. She knew what she was doing. She knew what she was talking about. The respect factor was there. It wasn't, 'Oh, that's Coach Locust or Coach Lo, my female coach.' It was just straight Coach Lo.

"I didn't realize how intense she was and how far she wanted to take it until we got to about the third year," Headen continued. "She really got bitten by the bug, and that's when she just started putting her nose to the ground and grinding like crazy."

That tenaciousness drove Locust to pursue any coaching opportunity she could find. Over the next decade, she held nine different coaching positions — including coaching at the high school, college and men's and women's professional levels.

In 2019, it culminated in Locust becoming the Tampa Bay Buccaneers' assistant defensive line coach, the first woman position coach in NFL history. The number of women coaching full-time in the NFL has now grown to 15, the most ever.

Locust is a changemaker in the NFL, but while she's part of the push for there to be more woman coaches, she has made it clear that she and her colleagues aren't looking for any handouts.

"You have to be the right fit," the 60-year-old Locust, now a defensive quality control coach for the

Tennessee Titans, said. "I've never been one to be like, 'Because I'm in, all women should be in.' You still have to earn it."

The track Locust took to get to where she is — and put herself on course for what she's still hoping to achieve — was filled with obstacles, ranging from unemployment to sleeping in her car to selling off most of her belongings. Navigating that has required unwavering perseverance.

"I never put parameters on how far I could go," Locust said, "and I still don't."

Locust's first role coaching men came in 2013 when she was hired as the tight ends coach for the Central Penn Piranha, a now-defunct semipro team. When team owner Ron Kerr initially brought her on, he received pushback from the staff and players alike.

"Back then, you didn't hear of it," Kerr, now the defensive line coach at Shippensburg University, said. "And they're like, 'Are you kidding me? You're going to bring a female to our team?'"

Locust shined through her attention to detail, tough demeanor and ability to give constructive criticism. Kerr coached the offensive line, so he often had a firsthand view of her work with the tight ends.

There were times during practice when she "dug into their rear ends" over mistakes. But there were also moments during games where she would take time on the sideline to calmly explain how to adjust hand placement while blocking. The players appreciated the balanced coaching style. They listened to her and respected her.

"She was better than some of our male coaches," Kerr said. "I was like, 'She's not going to quit until she makes it.'"

Three years later, Locust was hired as the defensive line coach of the Central Penn Capitals of the

American Indoor Football league. After she helped the Capitals knock the Lehigh Valley Steelhawks out of the playoffs, the Steelhawks hired her in 2017 as their defensive line/linebackers coach and co-special teams coordinator.

Locust often roamed between the offensive, defensive and special teams meetings to expand her football knowledge. Growth wasn't something she viewed as optional.

"She had this thirst to learn," former Steelhawks executive vice president/general manager Mike Clarke said. "She just always wanted more. ... Nobody worked harder than Lori."

Washington's Jennifer King, Bucs' Lori Locust making history

Although her coaching roles were paid, Locust's primary source of income was working as an insurance salesperson. Her combined salaries frequently weren't enough to cover the cost of living, especially as she raised her two sons, not to mention traveling to attend football clinics, conventions and college football all-star games to network and further her career.

One of her most frequent stops was Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va., a five-hour drive from Harrisburg. The school's defensive line coach, Jeff Comissiong, had become a mentor and would always invite her to spring practice. The drive was doable, but she didn't have money for a hotel room. Instead of telling Comissiong, she just slept in her car.

"She was just on a different level of wanting to become the best coach (she) could be," Headen said.

To Locust, it was worth it.

"I was trying to learn. I was trying to get better," she said. "And it just kept building."

Locust received validation in 2017 when she was invited to the inaugural NFL Women's Forum focused on increasing the number of

women in football operations positions. The connections she made there helped earn her a spot in the NFL's Bill Walsh Diversity Coaching Fellowship.

She was on another trip, this time to Philadelphia to coach in the Globe Bowl, an annual international all-star game featuring both college players and professional free agents, when she got a call from the Baltimore Ravens offering her a position as a defensive line coaching intern. The other coaches in attendance swarmed her in congratulations.

"To do all those things — be a mother, be a coach and then take care of (the) home and then pursue your dreams — it's the same journey that most of our players pursue, and we just wanted to be a part of helping her," said Mike Quartey, owner of East Preps LLC, which presented the Globe Bowl. "It was that breakthrough that gave her the opportunity, and she ran with it."

To keep doing so, however, would take more sacrifice.

Locust was the first woman coach the Titans franchise has hired. (Denny Simmons / The Tennessean / USA Today)

Two weeks before her Ravens internship began, the insurance company Locust worked for told her they wouldn't accommodate her temporary relocation to Baltimore. She was essentially forced to choose between making ends meet and chasing her dream.

In addition to her own living expenses, she was helping to pay for each of her sons' tuition costs and sending them spending money. She knew the internship alone wouldn't be enough to keep that going. But even though it meant getting fired from her insurance job, she took a chance on football.

"It was extremely difficult," Locust said. "I went to Baltimore with no job and no benefits and no income other than the internship."

The experience only strengthened Locust's desire to coach, but the Ravens didn't hire her to a full-time job afterward. After training camp ended that August, she returned to Pennsylvania with no plan for what would come next.

Locust spent the next few months working odd jobs. She worked at the Chewy pet food warehouse, walked dogs and picked up a marketing job for a fire restoration company. She moved out of her apartment and tried selling off her furniture and other belongings.

"Anything that I had of value I just got rid of because bills don't stop," Locust said. "I didn't want to not be able to provide for my kids. ... It was terrifying to be without medical benefits and to feel like I might not be able to help my kids if they needed it."

In December 2018, Locust received a call from the Birmingham Iron of the Alliance of American Football with an offer to become their assistant defensive line coach. She readily accepted, but the league went bankrupt and folded just two months into the position.

Before the AAF went under, there were rumors the league's future was in jeopardy. Concerned, Locust reached out to then-San Francisco 49ers offensive assistant Katie Sowers to inquire about potential opportunities. Sowers had attended the NFL Women's Forum that year and heard that then-Buccaneers head coach Bruce Arians had committed to hiring a woman for a full-time role on his coaching staff.

Sowers gave Arians' email to Locust, who immediately began constructing an introduction. Locust reminded Arians that her ex-husband, Andrew Locust, had played college football at Temple during Arians' tenure as head coach there (1983 to 1988). She was also close with several members of Arians' coaching staff who worked with him at Temple and had reunited with him in Tampa. She hoped Arians would remember her.

Unbeknownst to Locust, Iron GM Joe Pendry had recently spoken to Arians about her at a coaching clinic. The two men had a longstanding relationship, and Arians trusted Pendry's recommendation. Within an hour of receiving Locust's email, he told her he'd get back to her.

"And then a couple of days later, he called me on the phone," Locust said. "We talked for like 10 minutes and he offered me (a job). I left and like, four or five days later, the (AAF) folded."

Locust was hired as the Bucs' assistant defensive line coach in 2019. In 2021, Locust and assistant strength and conditioning coach Maral Javadifar became the first woman coaches to win a Super Bowl when the Bucs beat the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl LV. It was a dramatic reversal of fortunes that Locust described as "divine intervention."

"I benefited from relationships," Locust said. "I was around great male mentors that taught me like they would teach any other coach and treated me like they would treat any other coach. So it set the tone for me with the other coaches on staff and it set the tone with the players."

The Buccaneers' unsung Super Bowl LV MVPs

Following the 2022 season, the Buccaneers fired Locust.

"A lot of guys called me afterward and said, 'Now you're a real coach.'" Locust joked. "You're not a real coach until you get fired and then hired back."

The getting hired back piece of the equation worried Locust. She had a year left on her contract when she was let go, so she would still get paid, but she didn't want to stay inactive for a full season. She and her agent contacted multiple NFL coaches in search of opportunities.

Three days before Locust planned to make the 8.5-hour drive from

Tampa to Mobile, Ala., for the Senior Bowl, she got a call back from then-Tennessee Titans head coach Mike Vrabel. Locust interviewed with Vrabel twice and, by the end of the week, he offered her a job as a defensive quality control coach. Vrabel was fired this offseason, but Locust was retained and feels she's working her way back toward becoming a position coach again.

Locust knows it remains difficult for women in this line of work. She's confident the demand for woman coaches is there, but the supply ebbs and flows.

"I feel like the pool of candidates right now is slim," Locust said. "We're kind of building it backward."

Beyond serving as an example for other women to follow, Locust has taken other steps to help improve the pipeline. She has taken on a larger role in the NFL Women's Forum and helps recruit woman coaches from the high school, college and professional ranks.

The forum is informative and is a good place to make connections, but Locust thinks there needs to be more robust opportunities for women to sharpen their skill sets. That led her to help the Tropical Bowl, a postseason all-star game for FBS college seniors, launch its Lori Locust Women's Coaching Internship Award for rising woman coaches in 2021. The interns work on the coaching staff at the Tropical Bowl and interact with NFL coaches and executives in attendance. For Locust, it's a means of helping to develop the next generation of woman coaches.

"They're credentialed, have been around, know their stuff and they're good," Quartey said. "And, in the end, as long as the women are judged on those merits — that they're good or have the potential to be good but maybe just need an opportunity — I think that's all we need, and she's a big part of that."

"That's why I say she's a trailblazer. She's the one knocking down a lot of those doors for the ladies."

###

TENNESSEE TITANS' LORI LOCUST WORKS TO BE A FOOTBALL COACH, NOT A FEMALE FOOTBALL COACH

BY NICK SUSS
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
JUNE 19, 2024

Football is a toothless snarl. Football is a menacing glare through a full-cage facemask. It's grass stains and blood and broken bones and the chronically deranged mentality players have to possess to get back up and keep snarling in the face of all those grass stains and blood and broken bones.

To a young Lori Locust, football was Hall of Fame Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker Jack Lambert.

"There was just this intensity that he had when he played the game," Locust, the Tennessee Titans' first-year defensive quality control assistant and first female coach in franchise history, tells *The Tennessean*. "The whole toothless thing. To me, he was the epitome of '70s, hard-nosed, real football. It was brutal."

She pretended to be Lambert when she'd scrap her way through backyard pickup games growing up in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. That meant playing mean. Playing intense. Hitting people and enjoying it.

Decades later, as a 60-year-old mother of two, Locust still has that un-exorcised Lambertian spirit in her. That spirit earned her four knee surgeries, a bone graft from her hip, a plate and a cervical fusion in her neck and one shoulder ripped out of place in four seasons of semi-professional women's football. And even that wasn't enough to expel the football from her.

Football is perseverance. Football is action. It's scars and limps and sacrifices and living every moment so that the scars and limps and sacrifices weren't in vain.

Lori Locust's story isn't that of a woman in a male-dominated field.

It's a football story.

Lori Locust's journey to NFL

Playing semi-professional women's football in the mid-2000s made you Jack Lambert about as much as singing "The Night The Lights Went Out In Georgia" at a karaoke dive makes you Reba McEntire. But Locust and her teammates on the Central PA Vipers didn't play in search of glory.

Locust found out about the team from a newspaper ad. Mary Pratt-Lauchle, the Vipers' center and Locust's close friend, tried out after hearing a radio commercial. Both were professionals and full-time mothers looking for connection, looking for an outlet. So they made time for passion.

Passion, unfortunately, didn't pay. It actually cost roughly \$1,500 to be on the team. Players also paid their way to road games, carpooling up to 10 hours in minivans and staying eight to a hotel room. They rarely had locker rooms, often changing in cars or parking lots.

Field conditions were spotty. Some fields were overgrown, others were littered with trash. Pratt-Lauchle remembers an afternoon in Connecticut where temperatures were so hot and playing surfaces so questionable that the bottom of a teammate's cleat melted midgame. Squads in bigger cities like Philadelphia and Boston had relatively good coaching, but smaller markets like Harrisburg had to make do with whoever was around.

So Locust, from her defensive end spot, emerged as something of a player-coach. Pratt-Lauchle remembers players joking about Locust's deep, guttural "Lori coach voice." One of Locust's innovations was devising a numbered system with the defensive tackles and linebackers calling out stunts and blitzes.

Locust remembers in slow-motion her signature play, a blindside sack against Cleveland. She remembers the crunch of the quarterback's ribs. But memory is all she has. The game was a rare one where the Vipers had someone filming from the stands, but the videographer was focused on the scoreboard during her moment of glory.

Injuries eventually added up, so Locust turned to coaching. First with the Keystone Assault, a rebranded iteration of the Vipers co-owned by Pratt-Lauchle and several teammates. Then with local high school, semi-pro and arena league teams. None of those jobs paid the bills, of course.

"Obviously I love football. That's at the heart of all of it," Locust says, explaining her decade of moonlight-coaching. "But there's something about being able to translate something that you believe in and seeing that come to life. Seeing the lightbulbs go on and helping people get better at something they also love and have worked so hard to also get to . . .

"I'd rather still be playing. At the end of the day, I'd still like to have the helmet and shoulder pads on myself. But this just feels like a gift every day I get to walk in here."

Lori Locust's big chance

Her break came in the form of a 2018 coaching internship with the Baltimore Ravens. It didn't last long, but it convinced Locust to abandon the half-measures and dive fully into football.

She was fired from her job in digital marketing sales two weeks before the internship and she made no effort to return to the corporate world. She was a house sitter for a friend's friend. She walked dogs. She worked in a Chewy warehouse. She found part-time work doing fire-restoration marketing. All in anticipation of the opportunity that finally came in 2019 — an assistant defensive line coach for the Birmingham Iron of the Alliance of American Football.

Naturally, that league folded after one season.

No matter. Within the year, Locust landed with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, coached by fellow central Pennsylvania native Bruce Arians, who was the coach at Temple when Locust was a student there and her ex-husband played on the team. By Year 2, Locust was one of the first two women in NFL history to win a Super Bowl as a coach.

"She started at the bottom," Pratt-Lauchle says. "She was coaching high school and semi-pro and didn't get paid. She coached indoor men's and didn't get paid. And worked in a factory and walked dogs and slept on couches. She went from having this six-figure career to only having enough to live on because she wanted to pursue her passion.

"She did that for years to get to where she is. She made connections and worked her way up. That's the story people need to hear. It's the journey it took for her to get there. It's the perseverance that's truly inspiring."

Lori Locust: Tennessee Titans coach, not trailblazer

Pratt-Lauchle jokes about how teammates used to hate watching football with her and Locust. It was like watching a whodunit with Sherlock Holmes and Bruce Wayne. They saw everything coming before it came.

That anticipation and football savvy is essentially Locust's full-time gig now. On a Friday in early June, for example, Locust's job was to write a report on the Seattle Seahawks' 2023 offense to scout the tendencies of Chicago Bears offensive coordinator Shane Waldron and what he might have brought with him from Seattle as its former coordinator.

The Titans play the Bears in Week 1. In September.

Locust doesn't try explaining her job to people anymore. There's too much to explain. There's on-field coaching, advance scouting, analytics, administrative planning, teaching. And a knack for anticipation.

"If she's like, 'Are you going to take them into the indoor to walk them through something?' and I'm like, 'Yeah, I think I might,' she's like, 'OK. I'll make sure to talk to equipment and get things set up,' " says Ben Bloom, the Titans' outside linebackers coach who Locust works closely alongside. "There's a lot of logistics of things that go on throughout the day. Sometimes they happen and you've got an extra 20 minutes of meeting time that you didn't think you were going to have, so how are we going to use that?"

Locust distanced herself from women's football early in her coaching career. Making it in the men's game meant having to avoid being pigeonholed. But going back to assist at women's camps now, she realizes the advantage her past affords her. Locust says women want to know the "why" more. It's not enough to say "blitz the B gap." Everything has to click, so there has to be more of a holistic approach to teaching why blitzing the B gap makes everything on the defense work.

"Which really forces you to come down and be progressive in your coaching style, which I think is beneficial across the board," Locust says. "I think a lot of coaches that have been successful have been progressive and have built on the basics and the fundamentals as opposed to this exotic drill or this play or whatever."

Locust, obviously, has found success. The Super Bowl ring in her safe-deposit box in Tampa is proof. So is the display at the Pro Football Hall of Fame showcasing the sneakers she wore that night, little shreds of confetti still embedded inside.

Nevertheless, she doesn't like the phrases "role model" or

"trailblazer." She thinks trailblazers set out with one specific objective and find what they're looking for, and she thinks being a role model infers the path you took is a road map to replicate.

Locust prefers "possibility model," if she has to have a label at all, hoping her story is proof that anyone can coach if they want it bad enough. She'd like to be a position coach, but knows those jobs are earned by succeeding in jobs like hers now. She says it'd be nice to see a woman head coach or coordinator someday, provided that woman was truly the right person for the job, but she's not holding her breath. She says it'll take time before a woman rises to coordinator, let alone head coach. But she views it as a "probability down the line."

Pratt-Lauchle, for what it's worth, does see Locust as a trailblazer and an inspiration. But she's not surprised her friend shies from those labels. Locust doesn't seek out the limelight and doesn't want to be reduced to her gender. She's a coach, not the woman coach.

Football is Locust's sanctuary. She can't put on a helmet and shoulder pads anymore, especially not after another knee surgery this spring. But she can put foam rollers on her arms and whack at edge rushers' helmets in individual drills. It's the closest she gets to living her passion again, and she relishes the opportunity.

Locust loves football, and loves football history. She met Lambert once at an autograph signing at a Delaware mall, marveling at how he still walked like a football player, still had the broad shoulders of a football player. Now she gets to count some of the best defensive linemen of their generation as students: Ndamukong Suh, Vita Vea, Jason Pierre-Paul, Jeffery Simmons, Denico Autry.

Being a part of that history keeps Locust going.

"This is something that is, in my brief time, it still feels like rare air to

me," she says. "Not just because of 'woman coach' or whatever. It's because these kids have worked their entire lives, young or not, to be where they are right now. That's special. The men that I get to be around, the other coaches I get to be around, the knowledge they have, it's just something that is so motivating and fueling. You're lucky enough to find that one job that gives you that type of passion, that type of feeling every day that you walk in the building. This has always been it for me."

###

**'KEEP DREAMING:'
HEMPFIELD GRAD DAVID
MARTIN-ROBINSON
READY TO JOIN THE
TENNESSEE TITANS**

**BY JASON GUARENTE
LANCASTERONLINE.COM
APRIL 29, 2024**

David Martin-Robinson's first team was called Mean Green because of the color of its T-shirts. The 5-year-olds played at LANCO Fieldhouse.

If Martin-Robinson didn't know it then, he knew it soon. He loved football, even the flag variety, and he wanted to play in the NFL someday.

"That was my first dream ever," the Hempfield grad said. "Everyone who has been part of my life through this whole process knows I used to talk about that as a child."

Martin-Robinson is about to get his chance. The 6-foot-4, 255-pound tight end from Temple has signed with the Tennessee Titans as a free agent.

The deal came together during the seventh round of last week's NFL Draft. Martin-Robinson had an offer from the Dallas Cowboys and interest from the Carolina Panthers. His choice came down to the Philadelphia Eagles and the Titans.

The Titans showed the most consistent interest as 257 names were called during the three-day draft. Martin-Robinson agreed to terms Saturday.

It's always a longshot for an undrafted player to make a 53-man roster or even the 16-man practice squad. The Titans only have three tight ends plus Martin-Robinson and Iowa's Steve Stilianos, who also signed after the draft, on their depth chart.

Martin-Robinson decided this was his best hope to stick around past Week 1.

"The foot's in the door," he said. "That's all that matters right now. I'm just gonna go after it. Every opportunity they give me, I'll make sure I'm as prepared as I can be."

It wasn't an easy road from Landisville to Nashville. Martin-Robinson graduated from Hempfield in 2018 and played six seasons at Temple. Injuries and COVID-19 stalled his progress. He caught just 21 passes combined in his first four years.

The lowest point came in 2021 when Martin-Robinson was limited to five games because of a broken collarbone and broken foot. He said he struggled with depression and began to ask himself difficult questions.

"I'd say my time at Temple built my character," Martin-Robinson said. "The lows definitely were lows. Every time I would get injured, I would question whether football was trying to give me a sign. If this was really for me."

Martin-Robinson's college fortunes started to shift in Year 5 and continued last season when he caught 40 passes for 537 yards and four touchdowns while being named second team all-conference.

A great all-around athlete, who played basketball and ran track for Hempfield, was recruited to play wide receiver in college. Temple shifted Martin-Robinson to tight end his first year.

Conestoga Valley grad Jose Barbon gets his NFL chance with the Dallas Cowboys

Conestoga Valley grad Jose Barbon gets his NFL chance with the Dallas Cowboys

The 110s nearly broke Jose Barbon. He made the required time for a few before his legs start...

Martin-Robinson returned home for the weekend and had a party with friends and family as the draft reached its conclusion. Although some teams gave him a draft grade,

he knew he was likely going to sign as a free agent.

It doesn't bother Martin-Robinson that he wasn't selected. All he wanted was an offer.

"Everybody's path is different," he said. "It's all about staying consistent, keep showing up and keep dreaming. That's really what it was for me. It was a test of my perseverance through all these years and my development as a football player."

Martin-Robinson follows in the footsteps of Conestoga Valley grad Jose Barbon, who also went to Temple and signed as an undrafted free agent with the Cowboys last year. Barbon signed with the Montreal Alouettes of the Canadian Football League in January.

Both played flag football at LANCO. Both were MVPs at the Tri-County All-Star Game six years ago.

Martin-Robinson will attend rookie minicamp starting on May 9 and will try to make a strong first impression with the Titans. That's where his next chapter begins. He said he won't be intimidated when he walks into that locker room.

"It's gonna be surreal in the moment," he said. "I've been playing football for so long and I have belief in myself. When I get on the field, it's a comfortable thing."

From Mean Green to the Titans, Martin-Robinson has kept his childhood dream alive.

###

**WHAT TENNESSEE
TITANS' ROGER
MCCREARY IS LEARNING
FROM VETERAN
DEFENSIVE BACKFIELD**

**BY ALEX DAUGHERTY
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
JULY 25, 2024**

Cornerback Roger McCreary is confident in his chances to be one of the Tennessee Titans' starters on defense.

He also knows — given the additions general manager Ran Carthon made to the Titans' defensive backfield this offseason — the task won't be easy.

In March, Carthon signed eighth-year cornerback Chidobe Awuzie and traded for fifth-year cornerback L'Jarius Sneed. Then, two weeks before training camp began, he added three-time Pro Bowl safety Jamal Adams.

McCreary, a third-year player who finished third in pass breakups (6) and fourth in combined tackles (86) on the Titans last season, is suddenly one of the least experienced players in the Titans' defensive backfield.

"Those guys are who you look up to and just want to play with," McCreary said at Ascension Saint Thomas Sports Park on Thursday. "They make you better just by how they play."

Awuzie, 29, played seven seasons with the Dallas Cowboys and Cincinnati Bengals before signing with the Titans. He has 369 tackles and six interceptions in 86 career games.

Sneed, 27, played four seasons with the Kansas City Chiefs where he was part of two Super Bowl wins. He was traded to the Titans for a third-round pick on Mar. 29.

"Those guys are great," McCreary said of Sneed and Awuzie. "We studied them up close when we played them. They are veterans, and

they give me tips on what I should do."

Tennessee Titans' Roger McCreary wants to be aggressive like Jamal Adams

While McCreary learns technique and skill from Sneed and Awuzie, he's learning to be more aggressive from the Titans' newest addition Jamal Adams.

Aggressive play near the line of scrimmage is the calling card of Adams, who is looking to reestablish his NFL presence after missing 24 games over the last two seasons. Injuries suffered while playing with the Seattle Seahawks seemingly derailed his career and had many wondering if he would play again.

Adams signed a one-year, \$1.125 deal with the Titans on July 11, something he sees as a "prove it" deal.

One of the most physical safeties in the game during his time with the Seahawks and New York Jets, Adams has 21.5 sacks and 494 tackles in 80 career games. McCreary says he's eager to grow the physical side of his game learning from Adams.

"I've seen his games, I know how he plays," McCreary said about Adams. "He's aggressive and I see how he is in that box. I'm trying to be aggressive like him."

As the Titans continue through training camp, McCreary has a clear shot to be one of the Titans' starting defensive backs. With Awuzie and Sneed ahead of him, he would slot as the nickel corner, a position that Adams has also played in his career.

With more defensive veteran leaders in the room, McCreary is also ready to establish himself as a leader.

"For me, I'm trying to be more of a vocal guy," McCreary said. "We got new guys coming in, so my main goal is to be that vocal leader and set the example."

###

TO UNDERSTAND ROGER MCCREARY'S PATH TO TENNESSEE TITANS, START WITH THE STERN WORDS OF A COACH

BY BEN ARTHUR
THE TENNESSEAN
JUNE 12, 2022

In 2017, at a Williamson High School football practice in Mobile, Alabama, Antonio Coleman chewed out Roger McCreary.

The defensive coordinator, Coleman felt his star senior was going through the motions. McCreary's activity level looked lackadaisical, so Coleman reminded him that next for him was Power Five football, where lagging could cost his team a touchdown. Lagging in the NFL could cost him his job.

"Do it right all the time!" Coleman told McCreary. "Do it right every time!"

McCreary didn't talk back or pout.

He cried.

"Coach, I apologize," he said through tears. "I get exactly what you're saying."

As Coleman tells it now, "That really let me know that the game of football and what I was saying to him really meant something to him."

Nearly five years later, McCreary is beginning his NFL career with the Tennessee Titans. A second-round draft pick, he'll compete for starting snaps at cornerback and nickelback during his rookie season.

In the offseason program, McCreary already is impressing his new coaches with his mindset.

"He wants to have the right answers all the time and that's unrealistic as a rookie," defensive coordinator Shane Bowen said.

It's an approach molded by his upbringing.

'We often said he had ice water in his veins'

Felicia James, McCreary's mother, ingrained a routine in her son from the time he was a toddler.

She had delivered him before starting 10th grade. By 2 years old, he accompanied her to her high school basketball practices and games, and they always went outside. A single mother, she taught him how to catch a football and baseball. How to dribble and shoot a basketball. He played soccer, too.

James shuttled him between practices and the park as he grew older. If work kept her from taking him to the next sport or activity, she had somebody waiting to do it for her.

Keeping McCreary busy and his mind focused was a priority for James. Free time increased his chances of drifting into the streets of their Mobile neighborhood, where shootings and stabbings were commonplace. The bad influences landed a nephew who grew up with McCreary in jail.

So she automated her son's schedule. If he wasn't at school or playing sports, he was at home getting ready for bed or waking up getting ready for the day.

"Just trying to keep his head going right instead of going left," James said.

James played football growing up. She was a nose tackle and linebacker, playing on organized teams in Mobile with boys. She built a reputation as hard hitter, according to Coleman.

A strict disciplinarian, a vocal James could speak with authority on football, where her son starred at

multiple positions in all three phases for Williamson.

"She was one of those parents who'd cuss me out if I didn't do (well) in the game. She would cuss the coach out," McCreary said. "That's the kind of strong, tough love she would always give."

It fueled his drive.

Since high school, he's made off days work days. At Williamson, McCreary called Coleman to open the weight room on Saturdays and Sundays. On Mondays at Auburn, McCreary came to the football offices eager to find a competitive advantage against the elite receivers the Tigers faced weekly in the SEC.

McCreary could take a piece of information once and be able to absorb and apply it, Auburn defensive backs coach Zac Etheridge said. If there's something he's unsure about, he'll ask about it, preferring to pull the coach off to the side for a one-on-one conversation.

"He understands formations and splits and alignment on the field and what that tells him is coming," said Miami defensive coordinator Kevin Steele, McCreary's defensive coordinator at Auburn from 2018-20. "He's not just out there covering routes and guarding people. He's a smart guy that studies the game, that understands concepts and what people are trying to do to him."

Despite his smaller frame — the Titans list him at 5-foot-11 and 190 pounds — McCreary excelled as an outside cornerback at Auburn, where he led the SEC and tied for seventh in the FBS in passes defended last season. His former coaches point to his strength being a key part of his success in single coverage.

Coleman recalled McCreary benching 355 pounds when he weighed around 170 pounds in high school.

"I wasn't benching that much and I was a defensive lineman," said Coleman, who played two NFL

seasons after a career of his own at Auburn. “So you could tell there was something special about him.”

McCreary’s demeanor is unwavering on the field, according to his former coaches. He stays emotionally neutral after good or bad plays.

“We often said he had ice water in his veins,” Steele said. “Nothing bothered him.”

‘I always tell him to stay in the moment’

At the end of every season, on the Friday night before the final game, Etheridge honors his senior defensive backs departing the program. They go bowling. Expectations for the final game are discussed.

For the 2021 rendition, at the team hotel, McCreary got up to speak. The clarity and delivery of his message about the next day’s Iron Bowl against Alabama floored Etheridge. It fired up the entire room, he said. McCreary had never talked like that before.

He proceeded to have perhaps the best game of his career in the quadruple overtime thriller, a loss for Auburn. McCreary posted four of the Tigers’ seven pass breakups. He locked up future first-rounder Jameson Williams and second-rounder John Metchie III.

The performance cemented his status as a top cornerback in the 2022 draft.

“Everything that (we had) worked on since the time I got (to Auburn) to one of the biggest games of his career and facing those top receivers, he was just in a different mode and you could just tell that it paid off in that game,” Etheridge said.

It meant Coleman’s message four years prior – when he ripped into McCreary at practice – had paid off.

He took nothing for granted before and during the game of his life.

“Our relationship will always be great because it’s about Roger succeeding at whatever he wants to do at the highest level and enjoying life and working hard because he earned every moment that he’s having right now,” Coleman said.

“I always tell him to stay in the moment.”

###

**TENNESSEE TITANS'
ROGER MCCREARY
WILLING TO SACRIFICE
BAKED BEANS TO
IMPROVE**

**BY MARK INABINETT
AL.COM
MAY 5, 2023**

During his rookie season, Tennessee Titans cornerback Roger McCreary played more defensive snaps than any player in the NFL. Despite his ironman status, the former Auburn All-American wants to go into the 2023 campaign even better prepared physically for the rigors of an NFL season.

“You can’t get much faster than what you are now, really,” McCreary said on Wednesday, “so really I was just focusing more on my body – being more professional, being more healthy, and all that stuff because the season is long and I learned that guys are just going down, so I feel like that’s what I need to focus on, just being more healthy and just trying to focus more on my body.”

How serious is McCreary about his preparation? A player whose scouting report said “likes cereal and bologna sandwiches and baked beans” made changes to his diet.

“I’ll admit diet, I still need to work on that,” McCreary said. “That’s something I still need to work on. I’m getting better. ...

“I’ve been trying. I’ve been doing good. I haven’t had baked beans in a while.”

While at Auburn, McCreary ate a bowl of baked beans topped with sugar for his Friday night meal before games.

McCreary is hoping the changes lead to improved performance on the field.

Among the NFL’s cornerbacks in 2022, McCreary ranked fifth in total tackles and second in solo tackles. But only one defensive player was

thrown at more by opposing quarterbacks, and he gave up six touchdowns in coverage last season as he spent much of 2022 as the nickel or slot corner for the Titans.

“I spent a lot on just watching over the last games – the bad plays, the good plays,” McCreary said. “First starting out with the bad plays. I pay attention mostly to that. Playing that slot, that was something different for me, so I feel like that was something I needed to focus on and look to see what I need to improve on the most, and I noticed what I needed to work on in the offseason. ...

“I feel like I wasn’t at the top of my game at the nickel, so I feel like it would be great just to get back from Day 1 to how they want me to play the nickel, literally everything from off to press to knowing the plays to better reaction to knowing how the game speed goes and everything, so I felt it was just great seeing myself on tape.”

The Titans have started their offseason program after posting a 7-10 record in 2022. Seven consecutive losses to close the season ended a three-year playoff streak for Tennessee that included the AFC South title the previous two seasons.

McCreary is experiencing his first full NFL offseason.

“It’s been great just to have that little down time just to get your body back right after a long season, after the rookie season and everything,” the former Williamson High School star said. “It was all great, and coming back here, meeting the new people that have come on the team, new coaches and stuff, it’s just great, again, how we’ve started to find a foundation here, and I feel like the stuff we got going on now in the offseason is going to be great. ...

“Last year, I did a lot. I feel like I did a lot. Now I feel like I know a lot. I feel like I know what’s coming at me now, so just coming out there, going over the plays, I just feel

confident, I just feel comfortable that I know what I’m doing. I did it before.”

###

NEW TITANS LINEMAN DAN MOORE JR. FEELS LIKE HE FOUND THE PERFECT FIT IN TENNESSEE, AROUND SOME FAMILIAR FACES

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
MARCH 20, 2025**

NASHVILLE – Veteran NFL lineman Dan Moore Jr. first met Titans guard Peter Skoronski a few years ago, when they began training together in Dallas.

More recently, another Titans lineman, JC Latham, joined the group in Texas, and they immediately hit it off.

"As an older guy, I think JC naturally kind of gravitated toward me," Moore said. "Now, I consider him my little bro."

The personal connection between the three became even more special when Moore, the starting left tackle for the Pittsburgh Steelers the past four seasons, signed with the Titans at the start of free agency.

The move to Tennessee seemed perfect for a lot of reasons for Moore, who was raised not far from Houston and knows all about the roots of the franchise, as well as his new linemates with the Titans.

"It's pretty cool how it all ended up falling place," Moore said. "It's kind of like it was meant to happen, I guess."

The 6-foot-5, 315-pound Moore joined the Titans after starting 66 games at left tackle for the Steelers from 2021-2024. In Pittsburgh, he became the first Steelers rookie to start at left tackle since 1970. During his four years in Pittsburgh, Moore only missed two games out of a possible 68.

In Tennessee, he wants to prove the Titans right for going to get him, and for rewarding him with a nice contract, in free agency. The 26-year-old Moore wants to reward the

team with his play on the field, and his impact on the team.

"Obviously I want to exceed expectations," Moore said. "But it's not only about proving the team right, it's about proving myself right. I feel like my expectations will always be higher than anyone else's are for me. I feel like by meeting my expectations, I'll exceed the team's expectations."

"So, not only do I want to prove them right, I want to prove them damn right, where (they're thinking): 'We got our guy. He didn't just do what we needed him to do, he did that and more.' That is the consensus I want in the organization."

The Titans attacked the offensive line position in free agency.

Not only did the Titans sign Moore, they also signed NFL veteran Kevin Zeitler, most recently with the Lions. The addition of Moore will allow the 22-year-old Latham to move to right tackle in his second NFL season. Moore likes the group, which also includes another player he's familiar with in center Lloyd Cushenberry.

"With JC moving to the right, it's great for him. It's always easier for a tackle when you have a smart guard next to you and he'll have that in Zeitler. It will allow him to just go out and play," Moore said. "I know about big Lloyd Cushenberry, too, he's a great player. I played against him when he was at LSU (and I was at Texas A&M). And Pete, just knowing who he is, and training with him the last couple of years, he's a workhouse. Going into Year 3, I just want to help Pete get the most out of his career. And hopefully I can help his game and in return he can help mine, too, and we can secure that left side."

"I really like the group, and as an organization, I like what the team is trying to accomplish, what they are prioritizing. I think they are wanting to put an emphasis on the front, and I think that is where games are won, in the trenches. Obviously in the

AFC South we have some really good rushers on the other side of the ball, and you have to make sure your front five is on point. I think what we did in the offseason and the young guys that we have in that room, I think we have the potential to be one of the best groups in the division, and one of the better groups in the league as well."

Moore said he wants to do his part as well.

He believes Titans offensive line coach Bill Callahan will get the most of him, and help him reach his potential.

Over the last four years, Moore ranks third in the league in offensive snaps (4,109) played by tackles, trailing only Penei Sewell (4,328) and Jawaan Taylor (4,135).

In each of Moore's four seasons with the Steelers, running back Najee Harris surpassed 1,000 rushing yards. In 2023, the Steelers offensive line allowed only 36 sacks, which ranked ninth in the NFL.

In Tennessee, he'll have running backs Tony Pollard and Tyjae Spears behind him.

The team's starting quarterback for 2025 remains to be seen, however.

Moore said he's focusing on himself, and making those around him better.

"Every year I feel like I have progressed and have gotten better each offseason – that's something I take pride in," Moore said. "Obviously, Pittsburgh wouldn't have had me as the starting left tackle the last four years if not. I think this past season I was able to tap into some things that I wasn't able to in the past, just being an older guy, things slowing down for me, things happening more naturally for me. I really feel the game is coming to me now."

"Me and Bill had a good conversation, and he talked about how he can help me and my game."

'HE'S DONE EVERYTHING FOR US': KALEL MULLINGS' REDEMPTIVE ARC TO BECOME MICHIGAN'S RB1'

BY MICHAEL COHEN
FOXSPORTS.COM
SEP. 26, 2024

In a cavernous and crestfallen Michigan locker room, amid the stunned silence of a dream season gone unexpectedly and unfathomably awry, an unlikely protagonist waited for the inquest he knew was coming. Inch by inch, reporters tiptoed closer and closer to running back Kalel Mullings, a converted linebacker whose goal-line fumble in the second quarter had swung momentum even further toward the emboldened underdogs from Texas Christian. The media members danced around the ball security-shaped elephant in the room with questions about the stunning nature of the Wolverines' second consecutive loss in the College Football Playoff semifinals and about Mullings' move to tailback following a season-ending knee injury to starter Blake Corum.

But the unavoidable questions could only be avoided for so long. And soon enough, the painful subject was delicately broached: What happened on the botched handoff between quarterback J.J. McCarthy and Mullings, who was aligned as a fullback in a three-point stance and then lost the ball in a pile of bodies when Michigan faced first-and-goal from the 1-yard line, a double-figure deficit already showing on the State Farm Stadium scoreboard?

"I just went to take the handoff like usual," Mullings said. "I didn't really get it too cleanly. I kinda went to put it away and fall forward for that half yard, really. And then it just slipped, obviously. And then it took me like — I didn't even process that the ball had — it was so fast that, like, I didn't even process that the ball was on the ground. By the time I went to go try and get it, they're D1 football players, too. If the football

is on the ground, they're gonna hop on that."

And sure enough, they did. The Horned Frogs recovered Mullings' fumble in the end zone for a touchback that robbed Michigan of its best scoring opportunity in a lopsided first half. Another touchdown from TCU extended the lead to 18 points by the 4:56 mark of the second quarter in a game the Wolverines never led, their undoing largely attributed to self-inflicted wounds: questionable playcalling, unusual substitution patterns from running backs coach Mike Hart, two pick-6s thrown by McCarthy, a mistimed snap with the game on the line in the fourth quarter, and the mishandled goal-line exchange with Mullings. When it finally ended after nearly five hours of real time, the Horned Frogs advanced to the national championship game with an unforgettable 51-45 win.

That Mullings stood dutifully by his locker and faced the music spoke volumes on an evening that was unquestionably among the most painful of his career. He politely fielded questions from any and all media members who sought an explanation for his fumble, even as some of his more prominent Michigan teammates — most notably McCarthy, who had thrown two interceptions and fumbled twice in the most turnover-prone game of his career — refused to fulfill their postgame responsibilities. It was Mullings who personified accountability.

All of which has made Mullings' early-season redemptive arc in 2024 that much more satisfying for a player who changed positions multiple times, alternating between linebacker and running back during the first few years of his career, before finally earning his place as the No. 1 tailback in a run-heavy, run-dependent Michigan offense that would suddenly be lost without him. Mullings carried 17 times for 159 yards and two touchdowns in last week's pulsating win over No. 11 USC, including a breathtaking 63-yarder in which he broke tackles, dragged defenders and willed the

stagnant Wolverines toward the end zone for an eventual game-winning score. He leads the team in carries (53), rushing yards (429) and rushing touchdowns (four) through the first four weeks of the season.

"He can take it the distance, as he's shown," Michigan head coach Sherrone Moore said after Saturday's win. "He can run you over. He's just done everything for us. He's a great pass protector. He's been incredible. Last year he averaged 6 yards a carry. So it's not a surprise with how good he is and what he's done. But to see him take the next steps and really make those explosive plays [is awesome]. And when the game is on the line, he wants the ball in his hands and he makes plays happen. He's a star. He's a game-breaker."

The quote from Moore is one that, a few months ago, most fans might have expected would be attached to Donovan Edwards, the former five-star recruit who appeared poised to inherit the workhorse role once Corum's career concluded. After all, it was Edwards who had exploded for 104 yards and two touchdowns in the national championship game against Washington. And it was Edwards who rampaged for 520 combined yards and three combined touchdowns in games against Ohio State, Purdue and TCU to conclude the 2022 season after Corum tore his meniscus and underwent surgery.

But despite entering the year as Michigan's unquestioned lead back — and being voted a team captain along the way — Edwards has been the statistically less-effective runner than the 6-foot-2, 233-pound Mullings in three of the Wolverines' first four games:

The production Mullings managed against USC was particularly herculean given the Wolverines' change in quarterback from Davis Warren, a pocket passer, to Alex Orji, a non-vertical threat. So limited was Michigan's downfield passing attack with Orji running the offense that it wasn't until the team's final drive that he finally completed a pass for more than 9 yards.

Instead, Moore and offensive coordinator Kirk Campbell entrusted Mullings to carry the ball eight times for 83 yards on what proved to be the game-winning possession, even as the Trojans understandably stacked the box with defenders who knew Michigan was unlikely to pass.

"I just feel like that's just a representation of who we are, you know?" Mullings said after the game. "Always straining until the very end. Throughout that drive, you know, it was just grit and grinding out. We like to say, 'grinding meat.' We were just grinding meat that whole time, killing the clock and getting down there.

"Shout out to the O-line, shout out to [H-back Max Bredeson], shout out to everyone, man, clearing out holes. And we were just able to execute. At the end of the day, a lot of football is about what you do when you face adversity, so it feels good to be able to face some adversity and overcome it."

The punishing 10-play, 89-yard drive that won Michigan the game underscored key differences between the running styles of Mullings and Edwards, with the former appearing to be better suited to anchor the offense, regardless of who plays quarterback for the remainder of the season. Mullings churned out 5.65 yards per carry after contact against a revitalized and revamped Trojans defense coordinated by D'Anton Lynn. And he's averaging 5.3 yards per carry after contact across the Wolverines' first four games, which ranks fourth nationally behind Ashton Jeanty of Boise State (6.3), Kaleb Johnson of Iowa (5.8) and Jonah Coleman of Washington (5.4). Edwards, meanwhile, is averaging 2.9 yards after contact per carry, including a lowly 1.6 against the run-minded USC defense.

Even Moore couldn't deny what has become obvious for the outside world to see when asked if Mullings should be the team's No. 1 tailback against Minnesota on Saturday

(Noon ET on FOX and the FOX Sports App) and beyond.

"I think he earned the right to be in that conversation and talk about it, have those conversations with both of those guys," Moore said earlier this week. "But those are the things we'll talk about with them. Kaleb played a heck of a game, and you can't deny the effect that he had on the game. So we'll just have those conversations as an offense."

#

‘THAT’S HOW I LIVE’: THROUGH HIGHS AND LOWS AND ACROSS POSITIONS, KALEL MULLINGS STAYS LEVEL

**BY NOAH KINGSLEY
THE MICHIGAN DAILY
SEPTEMBER 19, 2024**

It’s hard to find Kalel Mullings without a smile on his face.

Lately, the graduate running back has plenty of reasons to smile. He’s in the midst of a breakout season for the Michigan football team and is coming off of the best game of his career. After four years of flipping between linebacker and running back, waiting his turn, Mullings is taking full advantage of his opportunity.

Mullings’ smile isn’t merely circumstantial, though.

“The best thing about Kalel is, I love the dude, he just lights up the room,” Mike Mason, Mullings’ defensive coordinator at Milton Academy and current Mustangs head coach, told *The Michigan Daily*. “He’s always smiling. There’s never a bad day in his world. It can be, I’m sure he has many, but you never see it. He’s always got a smile on.”

Off the field, that’s Mullings’ default — he’s seemingly always in a good mood. Whether he’s gearing up for a big game, showing someone around campus or performing in Milton’s all-male a cappella group, the Miltones, he does it with a smile.

On the field, though, Mullings approaches things a little differently. He still never strays too far from his off-field default, but his default isn’t entirely as joyful as it is when he’s going about his day-to-day life. Mullings has seen plenty of ups and downs throughout his career with the Wolverines, and not all of them make him smile.

But whether he’s going through his lowest moments or reaching his highest peaks, Mullings always stays level.

Back in 2019, during his senior season in high school, Mullings had a bad day — or at least a bad first half. The Mustangs were losing 21-6 heading into halftime, and their opponents delivered a hit on one of Mullings’ teammates right before the break, which Milton collectively deemed a cheap shot.

According to Mason, Mullings was fuming. But he didn’t let that stop him from taking charge and creating a change.

“In the locker room, (the coaches) didn’t even go in,” Mason said. “Kalel and another senior took over, they spoke to the team. We came out of halftime, we scored 28 straight and won the game.”

Mullings single-handedly led the charge, scoring four touchdowns during the game. No matter how poorly the first half went, no matter how angry he was about the cheap shot, he kept his cool and moved forward.

That second half much more closely resembled the rest of Mullings’ 2019 season. Playing at running back, linebacker, wide receiver and on special teams — wherever the Mustangs needed him to — Mullings excelled in his final year in high school. To cap it off, he was named the 2019 Gatorade Player of the Year in Massachusetts.

But even as things went his way, Mullings stayed level.

“Any game we played, he always stayed the same,” Mason said. “He could score five touchdowns, and you’d think he had a bad game. He could have a bad game, and you’d think he’d scored five touchdowns. He was level all the time.”

At Milton, Mullings found ways to stay steady through highs and lows, setting himself up for the level of public scrutiny that some of his moments have had at Michigan.

Mullings played linebacker for most of the Wolverines’ 2022 season, same as he had during his first two years in Ann Arbor. But when then-junior running back Blake Corum got hurt in the penultimate game of the regular season, Michigan called on Mullings to revisit his old position ahead of a top-five clash with Ohio State.

And on a pivotal third-and-1 in Buckeyes territory, Mullings reintroduced himself to the world as a running back — or more accurately, a quarterback.

Mullings took the handoff and started running up the gut, before suddenly pulling up before the line of scrimmage. He leapt into the air and tossed the ball 15 yards downfield to tight end Luke Schoonmaker, who brought it in for a key first down. For as much as onlookers were in disbelief at a linebacker being called upon to throw the ball on a trick play, Mullings himself could barely believe it.

“(I) got it completed, even though I could have led him a little bit, but got it completed,” Mullings told *The Daily*. “We won the game, and that’s all that matters. Just surreal honestly, and just craziness going on in my head.”

Successfully executing a key trick play in his first game at running back in three years, and against Ohio State, to boot, was about as high as it could have gotten for Mullings. Barely more than a month later, however, Mullings experienced a similarly large low.

With the Wolverines trailing TCU 14-3 early in the Fiesta Bowl, Mullings came in on the 1-yard line to attempt to punch the ball into the end zone. But Mullings never got possession of quarterback J.J. McCarthy’s handoff, a Horned Frogs defender recovered his fumble and Michigan walked away empty-handed.

Once again, the spotlight was on Mullings — only this time, it was in

a negative light. While Mullings' confidence didn't take a hit, he felt like he let his team down. Outsiders, meanwhile, weren't as kind to Mullings, once again wondering why a linebacker was involved in a key play. They didn't understand why he was getting the ball on the goal line.

Of course, Mullings had plenty of experience playing running back prior to Michigan. But that didn't change the fact that he was a scapegoat.

And still, even with hate swirling around him, Mullings stayed level.

"Just overcoming that and working through that, and accepting that, but at the same time knowing that there's room to grow, that was really just the biggest thing," Mullings said. "It's never being too down with the lows and never being too high with the highs. That's how I live."

After a rollercoaster finish to Mullings' 2022 season, his 2023 was comparatively mellow. Both Corum and then-junior Donovan Edwards came back for another season, leaving very few touches available for now-full-time running back Mullings. Mullings had fewer ups and downs throughout the season, but the lack of playing time was a low in and of itself.

Just like he always does, though, Mullings didn't get too down.

"He's not the type of kid that said that should be me," former Milton coach Kevin MacDonald told The Daily. "He's the type of kid that said, 'when my time comes, you know, my time will come and I'll be ready to go.'"

After three years away from running back, and three years building a linebacker's frame, Mullings admits that he lost his knowledge of the position a little bit. When Mullings transitioned back and refound who he was as a running back, he was no longer the speed-focused back he

had been for the Mustangs. But with Edwards and Corum ahead of him, his size provided more of a pathway to carve out a role for himself.

"Looking at Blake, looking at Dono, they're great backs, but they don't have my size," Mullings said. "If I'm gonna try to get on the field, I have to bring something that those two guys aren't necessarily bringing. ... That's really when I tried to hone in on getting some power in my game, and bringing that kind of physicality"

Mullings still barely got on the field on offense during the 2023 season, totaling just 38 touches and 254 yards from scrimmage. But he got more experience under his belt as a running back at the college level, and got the chance to learn from Corum and Edwards.

While others might have gotten down about the lack of playing time, Mullings took a different perspective.

"I looked at it like, if I can take this break from running back, come back, and get any playing time with these two guys, I mean, I can't be that bad right?" Mullings quipped. "I gotta be some type of good."

With Corum now in the NFL, Mullings is finally getting to show how good he can be this season. He has the power that he developed while staying steady last season, and has shown it by bruising his way through would-be tacklers. After two years shaping his frame back to that of a running back, he's finding his speed once again — even if Edwards and the rest of the running backs mess with him about being slow.

As the Wolverines' offense has labored through growing pains, Mullings' impact has only grown. No longer is anyone wondering why he's touching the ball — they're calling for him to touch it more. Against Arkansas State, Mullings showed just how far he's come, totaling a career-high 153 yards and two touchdowns while breaking off three 30-plus yard runs.

And for as level as Mullings tries to stay while he's on the field, when he saw nothing but green ahead of him to score his first touchdown in nearly a year, Mullings couldn't hold himself back.

"One thing I always say is that one of the best feelings in sports, and really all of life, is getting out an open field knowing you're about to score," Mullings said. "... I couldn't do anything but smile."

Through highs and lows, through anger and jubilation, Mullings stays level. But with the way things are going for him this season, he just can't help himself from breaking back into his smile.

###

A MICHIGAN MAN

BY JAY N. MILLER
THE PATRIOT LEDGER
OCTOBER 21, 2019

Milton Academy's Kael Mullings was presented his jersey for the 2020 All-American Bowl on Oct. 15, 2019. Mullings will play in the annual East vs. West matchup on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2020 in the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas. The Bowl will be nationally televised, live on NBC and will feature the nation's top 100 high school football players. (Courtesy photo/All-American Bowl)

MILTON -- It's safe to say Kael Mullings was an early bloomer. Milton Academy football coach Kevin Macdonald first saw Mullings play as a fifth-grader, and knew he wanted the youngster to one day become a Mustang.

Starting for Milton Academy by the time he was a freshman, Mullings got to November of that year and had defensive coordinator Don Brown from the University of Michigan offering him a full scholarship. Earlier this fall, after sifting through more than 40 college offers, Mullings indeed committed to join head coach Jim Harbaugh's Wolverines next year as a linebacker.

Oct. 15 was another celebration for the Mustang senior, as more than 200 of his schoolmates crowded into the Milton Academy gym to see him officially recognized as an All-American, and receive his official jersey for the All-American Bowl -- an East vs. West matchup of top-notch high school players scheduled for Jan. 4 in San Antonio's Alamodome, broadcast live on NBC. Mullings is the only Massachusetts player invited and is widely judged to be the top gridiron recruit in the Bay State this year.

Boston City Councillor Matt O'Malley started the festivities with a pair of official proclamations, one a resolution from the Boston City Council lauding West Roxbury resident Mullings for his glittery

athletic career and academic excellence. Boston Mayor Marty Walsh also sent a certificate recognizing Mullings for his achievements as well as his commitment to West Roxbury and Boston.

"To be the No. 1 player in Massachusetts, and offered a scholarship to Michigan at age 14, as a high school freshman is just amazing," said O'Malley. "At that age I was just hoping someone would invite me to the school dance. Kael now goes on to join the Michigan football tradition that includes Ty Law, Tom Brady, Charles Woodson ... and President Gerry Ford. I mention that because Kael is a real renaissance man, whose mother tells me he is also quite the saxophone player, but also an outstanding student. Kael is exactly what this country needs."

Mercedes Resendis, representing the All-American Bowl and NBC Sports, took the podium next. Posters of some previous participants in the game flanked the stage, including Tim Tebow (2006), Patrick Peterson (2008), current Ohio State defensive end Chase Young (2017) and current Clemson quarterback Trevor Lawrence (2018). Resendis noted that the All-American Bowl is the most elite high school game in the country, and going into its 20th year. Explaining that only 100 players from all over the United States are invited, she noted that the game has been the highest-rated high school sports event on television.

Macdonald then admitted he'd seen few athletes with Mullings tools when he first laid eyes on that fifth-grader.

"Kael was clearly the best fifth-grader in the state," said Macdonald. "I was not surprised when he was starting for us on varsity as a 13-year old freshman, and he more than held his own against 17-, 18-, 19-year-old kids. The best part is that Kael never changed -- he's the same kind, affable, outgoing kid he was when we first met him."

Macdonald then told of how a parent with a student playing sports for Roxbury Latin had written the Milton Academy Athletic Department a letter about Mullings, not knowing he was a football star. The parent had come to Milton Academy to see their child's team play against a Mustang squad, but was momentarily lost on campus. They asked the first student they saw for directions to the field and game they were seeking, and Mullings not only helped them, he walked them across campus to the field, asking about their school and team and telling them all about Milton Academy. That simple request for directions led to a warm and wonderful encounter with such a warm and gregarious young man, the letter read, that this parent had to write and note the indelible impression of the school and Mullings it had left.

Mullings himself was short and sweet when he got up to speak.

"My selection to this bowl has been one of my goals since my freshman year," said Mullings, who has helped the Mustangs off to a 5-0 start this season. "My past four years at Milton Academy have been a dream come true, and I plan to represent our state well. I fully admit none of this would be possible without my teammates, my classmates and everyone else here -- we are a family at Milton Academy, and I thank all of you for embracing me. This is your award, too. I am happy to join the list of players who've played in this game before, Ezekiel Elliott, Odell Beckham Jr. and Jalen Ramsey, among others."

Later, offstage, Mullings said he was excited to play in the bowl game after his Mustangs career concludes.

"It's a great feeling to know that all of my hard work paid off," said Mullings. "It will be hard to leave here, because everyone has supported me, and cares about me here. I don't have too much preference whether they play me on

offense or defense in this game -- I just want to play ball."

The two proudest people in the gym had to be parents Del and Calicia Mullings, as speaker after speaker lauded their son.

"Kalel started playing football at 7 years old," Del Mullings explained. "Although he stood out, we realized he was often bigger, stronger and faster than the other kids, so we never tried to hold him back. We always let him 'play up,' against the older kids, so he always knew he had to keep working hard. As a 13 year old playing varsity, his size didn't matter like it had, but he still did well."

"I'm a sports fan overall and so I guess kind of a Michigan fan," Del admitted. "Coach Don Brown was our contact here, and he is, of course, well known from his years coaching UMass and at Boston College. He and Coach Harbaugh made an agreement with us early on, when they first offered Kalel in his freshman year. They just asked us to remember they'd been the first ones to offer him a scholarship, and please allow them Kalel's last official campus visit -- you are allowed five different campus visits as a senior. They said if we could agree on that, they would not harass us, and they kept their word."

"It came down to five schools basically at the end," noted Del Mullings. "Michigan, Boston College, Wisconsin, Stanford and Northwestern. Interestingly, Northwestern and Michigan wanted him as a linebacker, and the other three all wanted him as a running back. But we were more focused on schools with top academics, so it came down to Michigan, Stanford and Northwestern. And ultimately we decided playing in 'the Big House' fulfilled all of our hopes and desires, playing on that kind of stage, and also getting the benefit of top-notch academics."

Kalel will be heading off to play for Harbaugh, a former NFL quarterback and head coach, and defensive coordinator Brown next

season, but in the meantime has he heard from that other Michigan guy living and working in the Boston area?

"We haven't had any contact from Tom Brady yet," Del Mullings chuckled. "But there is a connection, so you never know. Kalel's first Pop Warner coach was Dan Kraft, one of Bob Kraft's sons. And Joey Kraft, Dan's son, was one of Kalel's best friends at that time when they were both playing. Joey has gone on to become quite a lacrosse player, but he and Kalel were good friends as young kids, and Dan was their first Pop Warner coach."

###

**FEEL BETTER, PLAY
BETTER: TITANS TE CHIG
OKONKWO EXCITED
ABOUT HOW HIS BODY
FEELS, AND VIBES
AROUND TEAM**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JUNE 19, 2024**

NASHVILLE – Feel better, play better?

Tight end Chig Okonkwo believes changes he's made this offseason, as well as a new feel on the team this offseason, could pay off for the Titans this fall.

Time will tell, but right now it's all smiles for the third-year pro.

"A fresh start is always good, especially when you are coming off losing a lot," Okonkwo said. "The building, the vibes are immaculate right now. They are great. The future is exciting right now.

"I feel like guys are more relaxed now, in the building. Guys are coming in and they're not as tense, not as stressed out. And it allows people to be a lot more free in the locker room, a lot more free on the field."

A fourth-round pick of the Titans in the 2022 NFL Draft, Okonkwo is looking to be at his best in 2024.

In 2023, Okonkwo caught 54 passes for 528 yards and a touchdown while playing in 17 games, with 11 starts. A year before, Okonkwo caught 32 passes for 450 yards, but with three touchdowns, and a 14.1 average per reception (compared to 9.8 yards in 2023).

This offseason, Okonkwo said he focused on making changes to the way his body moves on the football field.

Earlier this offseason while in Florida, he worked to prepare himself to make strides.

He did a lot of stability work, in an effort to get in and out of his cuts better. Okonkwo said he could tell a difference in practices in May and June.

"I feel like I maximized the potential I had in my body, and if I wanted to get better, I had to change the structure of how I move and stuff," he said. "(I feel) a big difference, even the way I feel, my body. I feel a lot better when I move. After a long day of moving, I don't feel as sore."

A new coaching staff, and new offensive weapons around him, also has Okonkwo optimistic about what's ahead.

Brian Callahan is known for his offensive mind, and receivers Calvin Ridley and Tyler Boyd coming aboard alongside DeAndre Hopkins should make things better for the offense.

And, the way Okonkwo sees it, all of the team's tight ends should benefit, from himself to Josh Whyle and Nick Vannett.

"I think more down the field, attacking stuff, I would say," Okonkwo said of potential changes for the tight end. "Using our speed to get those balls down the field. A lot of stuff has been shorter stuff in the past. I think we're going to be able to open up a lot more things.

"It is very exciting when you see the stuff we're bringing in. It feels like we're going to be relying a lot on the pass, and that is going to be a big part of my game, too. So, I am very excited for that. I am very excited to have those guys on the outside, and get a lot of the attention, and then make plays on the inside."

###

He is obviously one of the best coaches in the NFL. So many players have developed under Bill Callahan, and I know that. Just talking to him, I know he's going to make me better and get the most out of me. Bill thinks he can help my game a lot, and I believe he can as well. Hopefully we can do some great things together, and Bill can tweak my game here and there, and shoot, maybe I'll be looking at a Pro Bowl or an All-Pro in the future."

Moore, who was born and raised in Beaumont, Texas, roughly 80 miles east of Houston, said he's happy to be back in the south.

He said he believes in history, and southern hospitality.

"I am familiar with Tennessee organization, being a Houston area kid," Moore said. "The hometown team used to be the Oilers. When I came up, the Texans were already kind of established, but you hear stories about Warren Moon and some of the great Oilers, the colors.

"I love the fact Tennessee has taken over the branding of the Oilers, it's kind of cool."

Moore wants to do his part on the field, and off it.

"I feel like I am a hard worker, without a doubt," he said. "Definitely a guy who is going to lead young guys, try to be vocal in the room when need be. I am a guy who is easy to get along with. I would like to say I have somewhat of a big personality at times. I love to bring smile and joy to people. So, hopefully I can bring energy to the room.

"I also want to bring a type of demeanor and a type of swagger that we need on the offensive line to go and compete against some of these defensive ends and defensive tackles in this league. I want to put the onus on the offensive front, and I want us to be the leaders of the offense and be the reason why our offense is successful. I am just going to carry that mentality, that energy with me every single day and

hopefully the team and the players and the coaches will see that."

#

**‘JUST A FINAL SHOVE,
MAN.’ A DAY IN THE
TRAINING CAMP LIFE OF
TITANS TE CHIG
OKONKWO**

**BY JOE REXRODE
THE ATHLETIC
AUGUST 2, 2023**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Chig Okonkwo emerged from the Tennessee Titans locker room at 9:25 a.m. Tuesday, the second day in full pads for a team and player pursuing the same objective — block better.

Okonkwo showed as a rookie fourth-round pick out of Maryland last season that he can run, change speeds, nail routes, win downfield and make plays in the passing game. Fellow second-year pro Treylon Burks has been the early standout of camp, and that in tandem with the addition of DeAndre Hopkins makes the Titans look a lot more dangerous on the outside than anyone would have guessed as of mid-July. Add Okonkwo and healthy second-year slot receiver Kyle Philips to the equation and Ryan Tannehill has intriguing options at hand when he’s not handing to Derrick Henry.

And when he has enough time to throw behind a highly unproven offensive line. One thing that can help this offense is Okonkwo getting to the point where he can more effectively help that front when needed, which will also get him on the field more often. Which will remove his presence as any sort of tell for defenses. The Athletic watched Tuesday’s practice from the perspective of Okonkwo as he continues to work on blocking, special teams and the skills that should allow him to improve on last year’s 32 catches for 450 yards and three touchdowns — 24 of those catches, 278 yards and two touchdowns in the final seven games.

Okonkwo guzzled a bottled water and started jogging toward Field 3, the most distant of three grass practice fields at St. Thomas Sports Park. He gave a “Shhhh” sign with his right index finger into the filming camera of social media coordinator Katie Moseley, then did some head bobs into the filming camera of social video producer Troy Wisneski. Team stretch ended at 9:40, at which point Vrabel gathered the entire team close for a few words that could not be picked up by observing media or fans.

Then it was time for individual drills. The first two for Okonkwo were special teams drills on Field 2, and Vrabel was front and center for the first, stopping it often to give technique instructions as would-be blockers tried to hold up would-be tacklers. Most of the participants were receivers, but Okonkwo, rookie tight end Josh Whyle and rookie linebacker Thomas Rush took turns engaging each other.

Then it was a kickoff return drill for Okonkwo, with special teams coordinator Craig Aukerman running the show. The point was to “flatten your guy out so he can’t cut across your face and make the tackle,” Okonkwo said later, and he did his best to stay in front of receiver Nick Westbrook-Ikhine and redirect him. Then Rush did the same with Okonkwo sprinting toward him.

At 9:51, it was time for Okonkwo to leave the skill group on Field 2 and get with the big uglies on Field 1. Combination blocks were the order of the day. Okonkwo and Jamarco Jones — who is trying to earn the starting right tackle spot for the first six games while Nicholas Petit-Frere sits out a gambling suspension — lined up next to each other and fired forward when offensive line coach Jason Houghtaling barked, “Turbo!”

Petit-Frere was waiting for them with a blocking pad, and they combined to drive him backward.

Players rotated spots often, Okonkwo holding the pad for a rep and combining on another rep with Chris Hubbard, the primary competitor with Jones to fill Petit-Frere’s spot.

“Pad level! Pad level!” Houghtaling reminded one and all, and it’s leverage and precision that have occupied Okonkwo’s focus in an offseason of trying to become a more well-rounded player.

“And you can feel it too, when you’re going, if you can stick a guy versus not quite getting it right,” he said. “Technique is a lot more important than strength. Strength doesn’t matter. Everybody’s strong.”

At 9:57, Okonkwo got back into skill mode on Field 1. A Titans practice tradition is a gathering of the entire team and Vrabel in the center. An offensive player and defensive player face each other. At Vrabel’s whistle, the offensive player circles back and is flipped the football, the defensive player circles back the other way, and they meet in the middle to see if the ball carrier can elude the defender. There’s no tackling to the ground, but there’s an “Oooooooooohhhhhh!” every time a defender is juiced and left grasping air.

Okonkwo elicited no such reaction, but he made a nice move on linebacker Chance Campbell, getting past him going left with Campbell getting a touch on Okonkwo. The 6-3, 238-pound Okonkwo got a defensive rep too — he may not play as much on special teams this season, but he has to be ready — and that was more impressive. He was all over one of the shiftiest players in camp, 5-11, 196-pound rookie receiver Kearis Jackson.

At 10:04, it was time for a 25-minute team period on Field 3. The closest thing the Titans have to real football in practice. No tackling to the ground. No hitting quarterbacks. But serious hitting all the same. And the first play of the team period

illustrated the work Okonkwo is trying to get done.

He lined up as an in-line tight end, on the left side of the line. In front of him was new outside linebacker Arden Key, whose energy, voice and playmaking have been constants throughout camp. Key has been trouble at times for new left tackle Andre Dillard. On this play, it was Okonkwo who engaged him with a big pop on a handoff to Derrick Henry, and Henry cut left off the block to reach the second level.

To the naked eye, it also looked like Okonkwo may have given Key's jersey a tug. Key said later it was not holding, and Okonkwo said of the finish to the block: "A shove. Just a final shove, man."

But the fact that it looked like it might have been speaks to the details Okonkwo and the Titans are pursuing.

"I think the biggest thing for Chig is going to continue to be his hand placement," Vrabel said. "I don't think we're going to make him any bigger, he's not going to be a 260-pound player. But I think we have to just continue to focus on his hands and making sure that they're inside, that they're strong and they're powerful. (He's) not going to be able to sustain against Arden or any player with your hands outside. You just don't have enough power. He's willing. I just think that the technique has to improve."

So ... holding then?

"No, I felt like on the first glance ... like he let go when Arden broke the framework of his body, and tried to give him a shove, as what we coached to," Vrabel said. "I looked at it with a critical eye and I didn't see restriction at the point of attack. But again, I'm not an official. I just try to look and see what they call. I felt like he did let go and he did try to give him a shove. Then we'll see if that guy, in that case, Arden, can tackle Derrick. So again, I think it could have been better. I thought that it was smart not to grab him and

tug him. It was smart to give him a shove at the end like we teach. So started off not so well and probably then finished OK."

That's the level of analysis that can go into one rep. For the rest of the team period when the first-team offense was on the field, Okonkwo was in the lineup more often than not. He moved all around, did some more blocking — including a good pass protection rep on a completion to Hopkins — and ran several types of routes downfield. Tannehill targeted him on a short pass over the middle, but Amani Hooker read it perfectly and broke up the pass.

Okonkwo got open with sharp routes against Kristian Fulton, Sean Murphy-Bunting and Kevin Byard, but the ball went elsewhere each time. When the twos and threes hit the field, he mostly stood close to Tony Dews, who has switched this season from running backs coach to tight ends coach. Dews' instruction, for Okonkwo and other tight ends, was frequent.

More special teams drills followed the team period, with Okonkwo and others getting low to bat a large blue ball back toward Dews three times while shuffling from left to right — a drill designed to work on lateral quickness. After that, Okonkwo and Whyle were back at each other, one trying to block and the other trying to slip past. At 10:47, it was time for another long team drill. But this time, as planned before practice, just the twos and threes would go.

Okonkwo and other starters ran 10 sprints on Field 2 while it got started. Then they jogged over and cheered on their teammates. The horn sounded at 11:12 after a series of plays run by Malik Willis and Will Levis. Vrabel gathered the team close in the middle of Field 3. And at 11:16, it was time to break — some players heading to fans to sign autographs, some doing media interviews, some getting in individual work such as catching passes from the JUGS machines.

Okonkwo and Dews stood by those machines for several minutes, Dews

grabbing Okonkwo's arms and getting into some technique intricacies. Reporters gathered around Okonkwo a few minutes later and he was asked about playing for Dews.

"It's been fun, it's been interesting," Okonkwo said. "The man's loud. A loud guy, man, he likes to coach you really hard. It's a different coaching style, you just have to understand it, and you just have to get used to it. He just coaches you hard and that's how I wanted to be coached."

And that was after a light day. Heavier ones are on the way.

###

**TITANS TE CHIG
OKONKWO, P RYAN
STONEHOUSE NAMED TO
PFWA'S ALL-ROOKIE
TEAM**

***BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JANUARY 24, 2023***

NASHVILLE – A pair of Titans have been named to the Pro Football Writers Association's All-Rookie team – tight end Chig Okonkwo and punter Ryan Stonehouse.

Okonkwo, a fourth round draft pick of the team from Maryland, finished the 2022 season with 32 catches for 450 yards and three touchdowns.

Stonehouse, signed as an undrafted free agent from Colorado State, finished the 2022 season with a gross average of 53.10 yards per punt (90 punts for 4,779 yards). Stonehouse broke Sammy Baugh's single-season NFL record of 51.40 yards per punt, which was established in 1940 and was never matched among qualifiers (2.5 punts per team game) until Stonehouse's rookie campaign.

The rookie team was chosen in voting conducted by the Professional Football Writers of America (PFWA).

###

**CHIG OKONKWO'S
CREW: TITANS REMIND
HIM OF HOME, REFLECT
NFL'S AFRICA PUSH**

**BY JOE REXRODE
THE ATHLETIC
AUGUST 22, 2022**

Titans rookie tight end Chigoziem Okonkwo got the football bug in second grade, his first year of playing and the first year he realized he could make some money off it.

So obsessed was young Okonkwo with the sport that he made sure it was on any TV he was around in his hometown of Powder Springs, Ga. He read whatever he could read, memorized every stat, every player, every bit of analysis he could find. He so impressed his classmates at the lunch table that he started charging them \$1 apiece — or an ice cream cup, their choice — for his commentary. They paid it, until the principal found out, halted the operation and called Okonkwo's parents.

"I told (the principal) it would never happen again," Okonkwo's mother, Isioma, recalled of a conversation from 15 years ago. "But I was so proud of that boy. He came home and thought he was in trouble, but I said, 'That's a very, very good thought, that is our culture, and maybe some time in the future you can bring that out. For now, allow your friends to come listen to you talk about the football for free.'"

Entrepreneurship is a staple of the Igbo people of Nigeria, Isioma said, and that's the first thing that came to mind for her and her husband, Charlton, when they heard of their youngest child's exploits. Nigerian culture is something they talked about throughout the raising of Okonkwo and his two older sisters. It is something Okonkwo became more aware of at 15 when his father tragically passed away of a heart attack while out to dinner with his mother. And it is something he celebrates daily now.

Saturday, a night that saw Okonkwo catch a touchdown pass from Malik Willis in a 13-3 preseason win over Tampa Bay at Nissan Stadium, could be the last time a group of Titans who have bonded over their shared heritage are all in uniform together. Tuesday is another roster cut day, to get it down to 80. The Titans waived four players Monday, so one more must go. Okonkwo and four Nigerian teammates have very different stories and football trajectories.

Okonkwo, a promising fourth-round tight end out of Maryland, will be on the team and potentially a handy addition to the passing game. Ola Adeniyi, born in Nigeria, raised mostly in Houston and a Nashville revelation last season, should again provide quality outside linebacker depth. David Anenih, born in Dallas to parents who had recently moved from Nigeria, has been a pass-rushing standout in two preseason games, and the rookie looks like a practice squad candidate at least. Rookie tight end Thomas Odukoya, born in Amsterdam to a Dutch mother and Nigerian father, can occupy that practice squad without costing the Titans a spot — that's the advantage of the NFL's International Player Pathway program, which got Odukoya to Nashville.

"But I feel like I've got to come out every day and prove I deserve that spot," said the 6-foot-6, 253-pound Odukoya, who dominated club football in the Netherlands, sent highlight tapes to coaches all over the United States, played for two junior colleges and finally found success at Eastern Michigan.

The guy to watch Tuesday is defensive tackle Sam Okuayinonu. "Sam O.," as they call him around Titans camp, is a popular figure around the team. He's close with Okonkwo, his Maryland teammate, and that relationship is part of why Okuayinonu signed with the Titans after going undrafted. He was a captain at Maryland and he's doing all he can to add his name to an NFL trend and pursuit — the league is pouring resources into outreach

efforts in Africa. Last season it reported more than 100 players on active rosters who were either born in Africa or whose parents were born in Africa.

Okuayinonu also is quite undersized for an NFL defensive tackle at 6-1, 269, and based on his opportunities and play in camp he's an active roster long shot, a practice squad hopeful and a Tuesday cut candidate. Ask Okonkwo about Okuayinonu and he'll tell you he's "an inspiration to me" and someone who shouldn't be underestimated. He's certainly been through more than most, seeing things as a young child that no one should have to see.

Born in Monrovia, Liberia, to a Liberian mother and Nigerian father, Okuayinonu was raised there by his mother, Clara, and was attending her college graduation party as a 5-year-old in 2003 when gunfire turned the celebration into chaos. The Second Liberian Civil War, which had been raging since 1999, had reached the doorstep of Monrovia. He ended up separated from his mother, fleeing with his aunt and cousin.

"The gunfire was so heavy, we couldn't turn around," said Okuayinonu, who ended up south of a primary bridge near the city, hiding in an uncle's house, protected from becoming a child soldier but not from seeing dead bodies floating in the water or starving people resorting to cannibalism.

He found out his mother was still alive when her first shipment of food — delivered by clandestine kayak — arrived. They could not speak or communicate for months, until the August 2003 ceasefire resulted in the reopening of the bridge and thousands of people streaming across to find their loved ones. That's a memory seared into Okuayinonu's brain.

"An incredible moment, a blessing," he said. "My mom's my everything. I got to reunite with her, and a lot of kids didn't get that privilege."

They moved together a few years later to Lowell, Mass., where some of their family members had already relocated. That's where he fell in love with American football. That's how it usually goes for kids from other parts of the world with a sport that dominates American culture but does not have the global pull of sports such as soccer or basketball, and that's what the NFL wants to change. That's how it went for Chic Ejiasi, too.

Ejiasi was born in Houston to parents who had recently emigrated from Nigeria. The family moved a few years later to Iowa, where Ejiasi's parents worked as nurses and he became an Iowa Hawkeyes enthusiast. He eventually walked on to Kirk Ferentz's program, lettering all four seasons as a defensive back and contributing to Big Ten championship teams in 2002 and 2004. He graduated with a health and sports studies degree in 2005, tried coaching briefly but ultimately returned as the program's first director of player development — helping players transition from high school to college, helping them excel in college, helping them find internships and employment.

The Titans hired him away from Iowa in 2016 to be their director of player engagement. He has been with the franchise since and he and his wife, Ellie, have a 2-year-old son named Obi — officially Miles Obioma, Obioma translating to "kind hearted." Ejiasi's job is much the same, helping Titans transition to this life. He loves serving and seeing young professionals benefit from and give to their community. He might be having as much fun during this preseason camp as he's had in this job.

"Taking over the league," Ejiasi said with a smile of the increase of African players in the league and with the Titans, which has meant in recent weeks a lot of sharing of stories, conversations about culture and even discovering others on the team with African heritage — such as receiver Nick Westbrook-Ikhine and safety Josh Kalu.

"It's like we kind of all have that understanding of how we grew up," Ejiasi said, and they all have strong feelings on how that culture led them here.

Ejiasi: "For me it was, we were very academically focused in our family. All about giving our best and trying and being the best we could be, especially academically."

Anenih: "I would say it's a pretty big difference from American culture. In terms of how to live, maturity. Like my parents, they've done a really good job of teaching me how to live and good habits to have. ... Respect. Respect for your elders, that's probably the biggest thing I would say."

Adeniyi: "We see our elderly, we respect them. We respect everybody we come around. Coaches, custodians, cafeteria ladies. That's what it is."

Okuayinonu: "To me it's like there's a little bit more pressure to go harder, knowing the sacrifices my mom made to make this possible for me."

Odukoya: "Obviously there's the genetic component of being big and strong, and I'm proud of that, but I also think Nigerians are known for their hard work and work ethic, which you need in the NFL. That shared culture, we definitely take pride in that."

Okonkwo: "Relentless hard work. That's the only way you're going to get anything in life."

Okonkwo also realized he had misperceptions of Nigeria until he visited for the first time. This was in 2017, three years after the tragic passing of his father, to visit extended family and celebrate the life of his father with them.

"People obviously have a negative perception of Africa. They think it's like dirt, everything is poor. That's not the case. It's literally like anywhere else," Okonkwo said. "If you see my uncles' houses over there, they're bigger than multi-

million dollar houses here. That's a big thing I took away, the perception and reality. Everything isn't dirt and poverty."

Okonkwo would like to go back soon to get involved in outreach efforts, NFL-devised or otherwise. Adeniyi is committed to doing so next offseason, as part of NFL Africa. Former Giants star defensive end Osi Umenyiora, who was born in London to Nigerian parents, brought the idea to NFL commissioner Roger Goodell years ago and led in June in Ghana an event called NFL Africa: The Touchdown.

It included a combine-like development camp, a flag football clinic and fan events. The idea is to find and develop talent but also to increase international exposure to the game. The Philadelphia Eagles, for example, are marketing in Ghana as part of an effort to create regional fandom for various teams in different parts of the continent. This had to make business sense for the league to happen. The NFL reports 85 foreign-born players took at least one snap in the 2021 season — compared with 62 in 2014 — and that Nigeria, Canada and Australia are driving the growth.

But for Umenyiora and others with African roots who took part and will continue to take part, it's personal and about providing opportunities. The NFL isn't the only pathway for football to change a life. College football can open many more doors for kids with ability. Foreign-born FBS players more than doubled from 2014 to 2020, from 162 to 325. Roman Oben, the NFL's vice president of football development and the first Cameroon-born player drafted into the NFL, said he got emotional on the trip to Ghana.

"The school kids, the genuine passion and excitement they had, the appreciation, it takes you back," said Oben, a 12-year offensive tackle who won a Super Bowl with the Bucs. "It makes you think about where you came from."

And sometimes that's best explained with a story. Second-grade Okonkwo was surprised that day he came home from school and his parents weren't mad about his entrepreneurial efforts. A couple years later, he came home proudly showing them a 93 he got on a math test.

"A 93?" Isioma Okonkwo said to her son. "Did somebody get 100? Why weren't you the one who got 100?"

###

**CONNECTED BY THEIR
WEST AFRICAN LINEAGE,
TITANS TEAMMATES
CHIG OKONKWO AND
SAM OKUAYINONU
DISCUSS THEIR JOURNEY
TO THE NFL IN MUSIC
CITY FOOTBALL, TRACK
2**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
AUGUST 4, 2023**

NASHVILLE – The second edition of Music City Football takes a look into the NFL journey for second-year Titans teammates Chig Okonkwo and Sam Okuayinonu, two players with African lineage.

The 11-minute feature, titled "Afrobeat", went live on Thursday night on Tennessee Titans YouTube channel.

There are more than 125 African-born or first-generation players in the NFL, including Okonkwo and Okuayinonu.

At the start of the episode, Okonkwo and Okuayinonu sit down with Director of Player Engagement Chic Ejiasi, whose parents are from Nigeria, for a dinner, and it spawns into a deeper dive into the personal lives of the two Titans.

Okonkwo, a tight end, discussed the impact his father's death had on him at a young age. Okonkwo was just 15 when his father died of a heart attack.

"In the Nigerian culture, I became the man of the house right then, at 15," Okonkwo said. "All I wanted to do was make sure my family was straight. ... When my dad died, it opened my eyes to, Man, the world is real."

Okuayinonu, a native of Liberia, lived in the country until he was 12 years old, when he escaped the country's civil war.

"Growing up in Liberia, it was great," Okuayinonu said. "My mom and my grandmother, my grandmother worked really hard to get us into a comfortable place in Liberia. (Then) in 2003, the civil war broke out in my country, and it was a really tough time. A lot of kids didn't get to see their parents again.

"Me and my mom ended up getting separated during the war, and that was a tough time for me, because my mom is my best friend. She's my everything."

Okuayinonu and his mom reunited after the war. Okuayinonu returned to Liberia in 2021.

Music City Football, which will air exclusively on YouTube, will include roughly four to six stories that will air into the fall.

The premier episode, which debuted in May, featured new Titans General Manager Ran Carthon.

"We have incredible access, and we feel like with that access, there's another level to the layer we can tell," said Surf Melendez, Vice President and Executive Creative Director for the Titans. "We're trying to create a closer connection with our fans, with our team, so they see things they don't normally get to see. We want to be close with our fans."

Also in the works:

-A feature on new Titans linebacker Azeez Al-Shaair and his road to the NFL. A crew went to Tampa, Fla., to visit with Al-Shaair and his mother, showing his long journey, which included a time when he was homeless.

-A feature on Titans fan Colin Jones, a drummer in Circa Waves with a Middle Tennessee connection. Jones, who lives in London, is a big Titans fans who even named his son "Tennessee."

All the episodes will be roughly eight to 12 minutes.

"Every episode has its own story," said Michael Fertig, Producer, Video Content with the Titans. "We're trying to humanize our players, coaches, and members of the organization. We're trying to go beyond the podium, beyond what people see on a Sunday. We're trying to show these are real people with real lives, and they struggle with real things just like everybody else, but they're a part of this great organization."

Subscribe to the Tennessee Titans YouTube and never miss an episode of the Music City Football, presented by SeatGeek.

**ROOKIE EDGE RUSHER
OLUWAFEMI OLADEJO
LOOKING TO MAKE HIS
MARK WITH THE TITANS**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
MAY 14, 2025**

NASHVILLE – Keith Bulluck wore the No.53 well for the Titans for 10 seasons, doing so with athleticism, enthusiasm and a relentless approach to reach greatness.

On stage at the NFL Draft in Green Bay, it was Bulluck who called Oluwafemi Oladejo's name when announcing the second-round pick of the Titans.

So, it seemed almost fitting when Oladejo took the field wearing Bulluck's old number in Tennessee.

Now, Oladejo is on his own quest to reach greatness.

Just a few weeks into his own NFL journey, Oladejo has already displayed plenty of athleticism and enthusiasm on the practice field himself, just like Bulluck did playing linebacker from 2000-09 in Tennessee, where he earned All-Pro and Pro Bowl honors, and eventually a spot into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame.

But Oladejo is going to have to put in the work to settle in and excel, and he knows it. He's still adjusting to playing on the edge, after making the transition in college.

This much is pretty certain: He'll be doing it with a smile.

"I would say as a kid, I was always the extrovert, leading chants," a smiling Oladejo said after rookie minicamp. "I think it is just who I am, and I try and impact players in a positive way."

Oladejo's common response when asked how he's doing: "Can't complain. It's a great day to be a Titan."

The Titans picked Oladejo, who played at UCLA, with the 52nd overall pick of the NFL Draft.

The 6-foot-3, 259-pounder sure looks the part with his size – during rookie minicamp, Oladejo flew through drills with teammates, and he was physical hitting the sled, or practice dummies.

Oladejo tallied 57 tackles, 13.5 tackles for a loss, 4.5 sacks and six quarterback hurries for the Bruins in 2024, when he started all 12 games. He earned the Kenny Clark Award for the most outstanding defensive lineman at a year-end team banquet.

This came following a season when he began focusing on a new position, playing at outside linebacker. In Tennessee, Oladejo said he's focusing on improving his hand placement, and knowing what to expect from tackles in the NFL by the way they line up across from him.

"Right now, I'm just focusing on continuing to be a better pass rusher," Oladejo said. "(Setting) the edge, playing football, and (I want to) help the team win.

"I have learned a lot of the basics of playing edge, but there's a lot to improve on. I feel good, but I'm not satisfied."

In four college seasons, Oladejo started 27 of 46 games while playing at UCLA (2023 and 2024) and California (2021 and 2022) and he recorded 238 total tackles (120-118-238), 20.5 tackles for loss, six sacks, one forced fumble and three fumbles recovered across his collegiate career.

Oladejo was invited to the Senior Bowl, where he was among the week's standouts.

He made a 30-visit to Tennessee during the pre-draft process.

"Femi is a tough, physical kid that really just started playing outside backer the fourth game of the season this year – he was playing MIKE before," Titans General Manager

Mike Borgonzi said after Oladejo was picked. "So, he is developing as a pass rusher, so I think he has a lot of upside there as well. But I tell you what, he can set the edge, is physical, is violent and the kid loves football, too – that was a big part of it."

Oladejo began practicing with the veterans this week, something he'd been looking forward to.

He wants to learn from them, and make the team better.

He's just getting started.

"I'm very excited, being to be with the vets, getting under their wing," he said. "I want be a great teammate."

###

**OLUWAFEMI OLADEJO'S
BEAUTIFUL VIOLENCE
HAS UCLA BELIEVING IN
ITS PASS RUSH**

**BY HALEY SAWYER
LOS ANGELES DAILY NEWS
AUGUST 26, 2024**

When UCLA linebacker Oluwafemi Oladejo went to Nigeria for the first time in nearly 13 years over the summer, he showed his friends and family videos of him slipping and dodging opposing players or thrusting them to the ground.

"I was showing videos and they're like, 'What's the point of that? You guys are hurting yourself, basically,'" Oladejo said. "So they don't understand it. Some do, but most don't."

True to his optimistic self, he continued training and working out while abroad while football remained largely unmentioned. He came back to Southern California refreshed and ready to rejoin a UCLA pass rush that was equally starting anew.

The Bruins ranked 10th nationally in total defense at the end of last season, allowing an average of 301.5 yards per game. Additionally, they had the No. 2 rushing defense with just 80.8 yards allowed per game and averaged 3.31 sacks per game, which was fifth-best in the country.

Players like edge rusher Laiatu Latu, defensive ends Gabriel Murphy and Grayson Murphy as well as linebacker Darius Muasau were all critical components of that aggressive defense.

All four moved on to earn roster spots in the NFL, and defensive coordinator D'Anton Lynn moved to USC, forcing UCLA's defense to rebuild.

"I feel like a lot of us are looked at as like a ragtag group just put together," defensive lineman Devin Aupiu told reporters during fall camp. "But it definitely adds a

motivational factor for us to go get it and be our own players, be our own type of group and create the same pass rush, just in a different way."

The duality of Femi

Oladejo, also known as "Femi," is one of multiple players who could be shuffled around the field at different positions and has spent time learning how to play edge at the college level throughout fall camp.

He finished the 2023 season with 54 total tackles and recorded multiple tackles in every game except for one. His 6-foot-3, 250-pound frame moves around the field smoothly and fearlessly, but it's his athleticism that allows him to oscillate between the linebacker and edge rusher.

His cheerful disposition helps, too.

Oladejo crashes into whatever is opposite of him with startling physicality, testing the seams of tackling dummies and the will of human opponents. Every tackle is a crescendo, but his attitude off the field is gentle.

"Right off the first approach, people are intimidated," Oladejo said. "But as I start speaking a few sentences, I see people kind of warm up a little bit more."

There's a video on social media of Oladejo rallying his team after a weight room workout, getting his teammates to chant, "Don't cheat yourself, treat yourself" with him. He's thoughtful and well-spoken with the media as well as his team, which has earned him respect ever since he transferred from Cal (Berkeley) ahead of the 2023 season.

Oladejo says he's always been a vocal person – a trait that was amplified when he shouted out directions as a power forward in basketball, which he played since he was 9 years old.

His positivity stems from his faith. His first name translates to "God

loves me," his middle name is Moses and he had always attended church growing up, but his religious journey didn't truly begin until he was baptized in the Pacific Ocean while at Cal. He's now a signatory for Chosen Campus Ministry at UCLA.

"Faith isn't a feeling, it's a decision," he said. "It's based on what you do, so I started living it out. I've just been a cheerful guy, having a good spirit. Bringing good energy to people and just letting people know they can do it. It's believing in people, being a good person."

Pass-rushing as a team

Oladejo's infectious positivity is being spread to multiple position groups. His versatility could also improve his stock as a potential NFL draft pick. He's not the only one who will move around the field.

"We've got some great pieces," defensive line/outside linebackers coach Tony Washington Jr. said midway through fall camp.

"We're starting to figure out who can do what and moving some guys around a little bit, trying to figure out who can play with who, switching up the groupings. They're not always used to the same people next to them but overall I like how they've been responding."

While coaches have not indicated specific multi-position players aside from Oladejo, they have pointed out some driving forces of the defense. Washington said that defensive lineman Jay Toia is "a dog on the field" and defensive coordinator Ikaika Malloe believes the depth at linebacker will be an asset.

Kain Medrano, Ale Kaho, JonJon Vaughns and Carson Schwesinger are all returning linebackers with significant playing experience.

"Pass rush is an art that people overlook," Malloe said. "We pass rush as a team so everybody can learn the same thing and speak the same languages. If we can get better

at that, then those fundamentals can transfer over to the team regardless of our scheme.”

Oladejo’s beautiful violence is a brushstroke in the art of the pass rush. The duality that’s been shaped by his faith and revisiting the culture of Nigeria makes him one major piece of the UCLA defense.

#

CAL FOOTBALL: FEMI OLADEJO'S LEADERSHIP SKILLS FIRST BLOSSOMED IN AAU BASKETBALL

BY JEFF FARAUDO
SI.COM
APRIL 11, 2022

Cal coach Justin Wilcox calls sophomore inside linebacker Femi Olajadejo a natural leader. Those qualities first began to show themselves when Oladejo took up basketball as a 10-year-old.

Playing for his uncle on the Predators in an AAU league, Oladejo saw himself as a defensive player first, of course.

"I'm just a vocal person," Oladejo recalled. "On a screen, 'We've got to switch, switch, switch.' Kind of the same thing applies to football."

Oladejo, who grew up in Elk Grove, played in nine games as freshman last season, totaling 36 tackles and 2.5 tackles for loss. He is emerging as a likely starter along with Washington transfer Jackson Sirmon at a deep and important position on the Cal defense.

Providing leadership is part of the job description, as Oladejo sees it.

"Personally for me, being a leader in everything in life that's kind of my mindset," he said. "If I see something wrong, I'm going to correct it. If it's right, I'm just going to say, 'OK, we can do this a little bit better.'"

"So overall, yes, I'm trying to become a leader. Just got to keep developing as an overall player."

Wilcox says he's liked everything he sees in Oladejo since he arrived on campus.

"His demeanor, first and foremost, is very, very impressive. He is a leader by nature," Wilcox says in the video above. "The way he approaches everything, whether it's meetings, practice, his workouts, his

life off the field, he just has a very special way about him.

"On top of that, the physical tools that Femi has . . . he is a big, physical guy. He loves contact, he loves football. He's going to get better and better the more he plays. And he played really good for us as a young guy last year. He's just got a very high ceiling and he's got the demeanor and attitude that you're looking for at that position and just as a football player in general."

Oladejo says his experiences last year have helped make him a more confident and fluid player. "I have a better feel for the playbook now, so I can just go play fast. I don't have to think," he said.

He believes the Bears can be better than most onlookers will probably envision. "We expect to be a Pac-12 championship team," Oladejo said. "That's what we're working toward every single day."

Inside linebacker is perhaps Cal's best position, with Nate Rutchena, Muelu Iosefa and Trey Paster also very much in the mix.

Content is unavailable

"Everybody in that room can play football. It's really a good group to compete with, grow with and to learn from," Oladejo says in the video above. "Everybody in our group is connected. There's no hatred toward one another, no envy, nothing. It's just all love in there. It's a great room."

The newcomer is Sirmon, whose 92 tackles last season at UW are the second-most among any returning Pac-12 player. He is the son of Cal defensive coordinator and inside linebackers coach Peter Sirmon, but Oladejo says it's been obvious since he arrived that Jackson Sirmon will be an asset to the Bears.

"The first week or two I was in the weight room with Jackson, I just knew he was a worker. That caught my attention. I just knew from there it was going to be all good," Oladejo

said. "Jackson's also a leader. He's a great guy."

Because the Bears have more talent at inside linebacker than outside, Wilcox said it's possible one or more players could switch positions. That hasn't happened yet, and it's unlikely to be the 6-foot-3, 250-pound Oladejo.

"Right now we're really focusing on keeping Femi at inside linebacker," Wilcox said. "We feel he has the ability and the instincts and the demeanor to be a very, very good inside linebacker."

Oladejo also says he can play some hoops. He and several of his teammates will sometimes venture over to Haas Pavilion or the RSF to play some casual pickup ball.

He views himself as one of the team's better players. "I can get some buckets, too, coach."

The football team's best basketball player?

"Believe it or not, Robby (Rowell) can hoop. Quarterback Robby," Oladejo said of the 6-2 redshirt senior walk-on who played three years of varsity basketball at Acalanes High in the East Bay. "He has a shot on him. Robby can hoop, for sure. He might be No. 1 on the team."

Oladejo's full name is Oluwafemi Moses Oladejo, and he explains in the video below the evolution of how he's asked to be addressed over the years.

###

FORMER YSU RECEIVER OLIVER MAKES HIS MARK AS A ROOKIE

BY NEEL MADHAVAN
THE VINDICATOR
FEBRUARY 8, 2025

Tennessee Titans wide receiver Bryce Oliver (80) is tackled by Minnesota Vikings cornerback Shaquill Griffin (1) after catching a pass during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Nov. 17, 2024, in Nashville, Tenn. (AP Photo/John Amis)

After a record-breaking final season at Youngstown State in 2023, Bryce Oliver went to work in pursuit of a long-time dream — a career in the NFL.

Despite going undrafted in the 2024 NFL Draft, the Penguins alum was offered an undrafted free agent contract with the Tennessee Titans and he made the most of his opportunity, having just completed his first season in the league.

“It’s a blessing, man. It’s a blessing just to be able to get those reps under your belt and just to see how the game is played, to see how guys operate and how guys play, and to get the whole flow of the game down,” Oliver said in a phone interview. “When I come back for OTAs next year, God willing, it’ll be nothing unfamiliar. I’ll have multiple game reps under my belt, so I won’t be shocked by anything I see. I’ll be a little more seasoned than I came in last year.”

Oliver had his options after the draft, receiving UDFA offers from the Dallas Cowboys, Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the New England Patriots, in addition to the Titans.

But for him, the Titans stood out because of the veteran receivers that the team had at the time, including Calvin Ridley and DeAndre Hopkins, and due to his familiarity with the team’s former general manager Ran Carthon.

“I had guys I knew on the team already, with Calvin Ridley being another South Florida native I could look up to, then just being able to compete with guys like DeAndre who was here at the time,” Oliver said. “Being able to be led by those two leaders would be the ultimate blessing. That’s ultimately why I chose to come to Tennessee, because I wanted to be able to compete with the best of the best and be able to learn under those guys as well.”

After signing the deal with the Titans, Oliver reported to rookie minicamp in mid May, where he received his first taste of life in the NFL.

Organized team activities (OTAs) then progressed throughout the summer and culminated with mandatory minicamp in June, before training camp began at the end of July.

It was a whirlwind experience for Oliver, as he slowly began to acclimate himself to the next level.

“It was very difficult — it’s a big learning curve from college to being a professional,” Oliver said. “The playbook is tremendously bigger than my one in college, even though some of the terms and stuff are similar, the depth of the playbook is way more. The details are much more spot on. In the NFL, you have less room for error.”

While Oliver went through drills and received reps on offense at receiver, the Titans’ coaching staff also tried him out on special teams, despite not having had much experience there previously.

“It’s good to be uncomfortable,” Oliver said. “I put myself in very uncomfortable situations with doing some of the special teams stuff that I really wasn’t accustomed to doing when I was in college just because Coach (Doug Phillips) never really had me on special teams.”

By the end of training camp, Oliver had the chance to showcase himself during the Titans’ preseason.

In three preseason games, he had eight receptions for 90 yards and two touchdowns. In the final preseason game against the Saints, his 5-yard touchdown reception from quarterback Malik Willis in the final minutes proved to be the game-winner for the Titans.

But Oliver’s strong showing during the preseason games was just representative of how he had captured the attention of the coaches and scouts during camp.

He picked things up quickly, steadily improved and demonstrated consistency during camp to the point where he was right on the cusp of possibly earning a spot on the Titans’ 53-man final active roster, according to multiple media reports on the team’s training camp.

By the end of training camp and preseason, the waiting game for Oliver began.

“I was actually very nervous because I was one of the last people they brought in,” Oliver said. “So I was thinking the whole time that I had made the 53.”

On deadline day, the Titans waived Oliver, but almost immediately, they signed him to the practice squad.

“They called me in and told me to bring my iPad, so I was thinking the worst at that point,” Oliver said. “I felt like I played very well in the preseason games and was doing well in practices, so I wasn’t really mad. I was sure I had played well enough to at least make the practice squad.”

Oliver spent the first half of the season on the Titans’ practice squad, where he bided his time, waiting for his opportunity.

The day before Tennessee’s Week 9 game against the Patriots, Oliver finally got the call, as he was promoted to the Titans’ active roster.

“At that point, it was just all about taking advantage of my opportunity,” Oliver said. “I knew

that most of my role was going to be on special teams, and I just tried to take pride in that. This is how I'm going to be able to stay on the 53-man roster."

Oliver spent the rest of the regular season on the Titans' active roster, hauling in six receptions for 95 yards and tallying five tackles and three kickoff returns for 113 yards on special teams.

"It's just about the opportunities you're given," Oliver said. "You want to use them all, you don't want to leave no stones unturned."

Now that his season is over, Oliver has already set his sights on trying to keep his place on Tennessee's 53-man roster for next season.

"Every year, I want to have the same approach I did when I was coming in as a rookie," Oliver said. "I want to make the 53-man roster. Ultimately, I want to have a pivotal role on this team, whether it's being on special teams or whether that's being a starter on offense as a receiver. It really doesn't matter, I just want to be able to contribute."

###

**TONY POLLARD'S
JOURNEY FROM
FAMILY'S MEMPHIS
BARBECUE JOINT TO
TENNESSEE TITANS
RUNNING BACK**

**BY PAUL SKRBINA
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
SEPTEMBER 25, 2024**

MEMPHIS — Tony Pollard wasn't there.

Tony Pollard is always there.

Everywhere.

Arms outstretched, the first-year Tennessee Titans running back is on a poster on the wall to the left of the menu hanging behind the counter at Pollard's Bar-B-Q. Two words are spelled out in white.

WELCOME HOME

There he is a few feet to the right, in the window and next to it, on posters touting his college success at Memphis.

CHANGE THE GAME

PLAYER OF THE YEAR ALL-AMERICAN

Tarrance Pollard, Tony Pollard's father and the owner of Pollard's Bar-B-Q, and Terrion Pollard, Tony Pollard's brother and an employee at Pollard's Bar-B-Q, pose for a portrait at the counter in the family's restaurant in front of a poster celebrating Tony Pollard's return to Tennessee with him in his Titans uniform in Memphis, Tenn., on Friday, September 13, 2024.

There he is again, around the corner, framed and matted in black and Memphis blue, in a Commercial Appeal story with a larger-than-life headline.

A SPECIAL PLAYER

Add the entire wall dedicated to Tony Pollard inside the brick building with the red roof on 4560 Elvis Presley Blvd., and you get the

point: Tarrance Pollard is proud of his son, who led the Titans with 82 yards and a touchdown on 16 carries during the team's season-opening loss to the Chicago Bears.

"I wish all of 'em could have been like Tony," he said.

The smell of the ribs he had started smoking was still stuck to his black T-shirt when he took a seat at a table near the front window.

"Truthful. Never got in no trouble," he continued.

'A stampede of kids trying to fight my brother'

Well, almost never.

Tony Pollard showed his moxie as a running back early — and out of necessity — all the way home from a friend's house.

He was there with his brother, Terrion. Most of the boys were much older than him.

"We were on a trampoline, jumping around and stuff," said Terrion, who helps run the family business with his father. "Tony hit some kid, busted his nose by accident."

The boy didn't take too kindly to it and went after Tony. So did a lot of the other boys.

"It was basically a stampede of kids trying to fight my brother," said Terrion, who played collegiately at Lane, an HBCU in Jackson, Tennessee. "I remember him running up the street, a line of guys chasing him. He ran back home so fast I couldn't even catch him."

Neither could anyone else.

His speed also came in handy one day in third grade after he returned home from school and thought the family's home had been robbed. Some cabinets had fallen off the wall and it looked "like chaos."

Tony panicked. Visions of the time his family's apartment was robbed danced in his head.

Tarrance, who was returning home, caught a glimpse of his son "running till he got almost clean off the two acres of land."

'He told me he wanted to run'

Once upon a time, Pollard was afraid of football.

He was 4 years old playing against older boys, some twice his age. Terrion, four years Tony's senior, was one of those kids.

"He's standing out there with his little uniform as I pull up to a practice," Tarrance said of Tony. "The coach had a line of dudes running, and Tony gets the tackle. He tackled maybe two or three of those little boys."

And then?

"And then the next one came," Tarrance continued. "Man, came and laid him out.

"Them eyes were really heavy with the water, but he wouldn't let it run out."

That day, Tony Pollard told his father he wanted to quit football.

The way Tarrance remembers it, Tony didn't play again until he was 8. Terrion remembers it differently, said Tony never quit.

Either way, Tony was a lineman by then, "a tackling machine."

"But he used to nag me all the time, told me he wanted to run," Tarrance said.

Tarrance "nagged" the coach. Tony eventually ran in practice. Tony eventually ran in a game.

He's been a running back since.

Derrick Henry helped convince Tony Pollard to play for Titans

How did Tony Pollard end up playing for the Tennessee Titans?

The man he's trying to help replace, Derrick Henry, had something to do with it.

Pollard and Henry, who signed a two-year deal with the Baltimore Ravens in March after eight seasons with the Titans, work out together in Dallas. That's where Pollard used to play for the Cowboys.

"Derrick let him know it's going to be real good in Tennessee," Tarrance said. "He told Tony it was great, he loved it in Tennessee."

Playing close to home was a consideration when the 6-foot, 209-pounder pondered where to sign. That's what he did in March, for three years and \$21.75 million.

"That definitely went into my decision making," said Tony, who was picked by the Dallas Cowboys in the fourth round of the 2019 NFL Draft. "Just being close to family, having games so close to home so I can have a good home crowd coming out to support. Just coming where I was wanted."
'I was getting paid something'

Tony Pollard worked one summer at Pollard's Bar-B-Q, before his sophomore year at Memphis Melrose.

He helped ring up orders, cooked burgers and hot dogs and smoked sausage.

"I don't remember what I was getting paid," he said, pausing to try to recall. "But I was getting paid something."

Then football got in the way.

"I just got too heavily involved in football," Tony said.

'We think this is going to be his best year'

Tarrance Pollard learned how to cook barbecue from his grandfather, who worked at a packing house and helped raise him in Memphis.

He seared rabbit. He slaughtered cows. He made barbecue.

He began working at Gridley's Bar-B-Q in Memphis when he was 16. Two years later, he joined the Navy.

He began his business in a food truck in 1995. He moved to a small carryout location a year later and landed on Elvis Presley Boulevard in 2011. Four months later, the restaurant was featured on The Food Network's "Restaurant: Impossible," a show that helps renovate and reinvigorate eateries.

Tarrance feels right at home here. He thinks his son will feel right at home being so close to home with the Titans, for whom he hopes to cook barbecue the way he and Terrion once did for the Dallas Cowboys.

Tony Pollard has come full circle. The 2019 NFL Draft was held in Nashville.

"We think it's going to be his best year," Tarrance said.

###

Your best player appears to be
thinking about it, too.

###

WHY NEW TENNESSEE TITANS RB TONY POLLARD FEELS RIGHT AT HOME IN NASHVILLE

**BY PAUL SKRBINA
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
JULY 31, 2024**

Tennessee Titans fans leaned over the blue padded wall at Nissan Stadium and took turns screaming his name.

Tony! Tony! Tony! Tony!

A woman with a blue Titans flag. A young boy with a football. A young girl with a mini helmet. A boy with a powder blue Oilers jersey.

They all wanted the attention of new Titans running back Tony Pollard.

They got it.

Pollard obliged requests for autographs and fist bumps and selfies for more than 20 minutes Saturday after a Titans open practice, part of the team's "Back Together Weekend."

Shadowing him most of the time was his girlfriend, Kania Taylor, and their 1- and 3-year-old daughters.

Pollard, who grew up a Titans fan in Memphis, feels at home in Nashville after signing a three-year, \$21.75 million free agent contract in March. His professional career was born in Nashville, too, where the 2019 NFL Draft was held, and the Dallas Cowboys picked him in the fourth round.

"That definitely went into my decision making," he said. "Just being close to family, having games so close to home so I can have a good home crowd coming out to support. Just coming where I was wanted."

Pollard, who spent the past five seasons with the Cowboys, had just finished posing for pictures with his family in the end zone before he spoke.

Tony Pollard shows off, shows out

Fans at Nissan were screaming Pollard's name earlier Saturday, too.

Quarterback Will Levis acquainted Pollard's hands with the football 40-some yards downfield and watched him run another 33 yards to the end zone, causing fans to rise to their feet in salute of the feat. Pollard had snagged the ball away from cornerback Roger McCreary's reach.

They cheered again when his last-second block in the backfield allowed a scrambling Levis to find a receiver downfield.

"That's a little showcase of what Tony's capable of," first-year Titans coach Brian Callahan said. "He runs routes and catches the ball like a receiver. He runs the ball as good as any running back."

Pollard was a receiver during his senior season at Melrose High School. With the Memphis Tigers, his receiving yards outdid his rushing yards 1,292 to 941. He also tied an FBS record with seven kick-return touchdowns.

"I love being able to show all of my ability on the field," he said. "I was more natural, more comfortable at running back but I was always good at open field."

Pollard was signed to try to help fill the void left by Derrick Henry. Pollard's contract makes him the 10th-highest paid running back in terms of average per year.

A little help from his friends

With Henry gone to the Baltimore Ravens, the load of the Titans' backfield has been left to the legs and hands of Pollard and Tyjae Spears.

They are similar backs who both can run and catch the ball.

Pollard, who topped the 1,000-yard mark the past two seasons and was given the franchise tag by the

Cowboys last season, is used to sharing responsibilities.

He shared a backfield with Ezekiel Elliott for four seasons, during which he accumulated 3,621 rushing yards to go with 23 touchdowns. He also caught 176 passes for 1,319 yards and five touchdowns.

He shared time in the backfield with Darrell Henderson at Memphis, where Pollard is second all-time in all-purpose yards (4,860) and Henderson third (4,790).

How he and Spears will complement each other remains to be seen.

"That's a good question," Callahan said earlier during camp. "I think Tyjae's got a little bit different route-running ability. Tony, he's a smoother runner. They're both really explosive. Of all the groups that we have, I think those guys are the ones that are the most exciting for me."

###

CALKINS: TONY POLLARD A SPECIAL PLAYER FOR MEMPHIS

**BY GEOFF CALKINS
COMMERCIAL APPEAL
OCTOBER 13, 2016**

The sign looms over Elvis Presley Boulevard, just past Graceland itself. It's the kind of sign you'd see outside any barbecue joint, with individual block letters arrayed to spell out the day's best deal.

"GO TIGERS," it says. "ASK FOR THE TONY POLLARD SPECIAL."

So, naturally, I did.

"It's chicken tenders, french fries and a drink," said Tarrance Pollard, the proprietor of Pollard's Bar-B-Que.

And when did Pollard's start offering the special?

Need a break? Play the USA TODAY Daily Crossword Puzzle.

"After Tony returned that kick," said Torria Pollard, wife of Tarrance. "We wanted to celebrate."

Tiger Football Mailbag: Memphis-Tulane, RBs and more

So celebrate they did. With the Tony Pollard Special. It gives a whole new meaning to fast food.

Memphis running back Tony Pollard — the son of Tarrance and Torria — ran about as fast as you can run for 95 yards and a touchdown against Temple at the Liberty Bowl.

He settled under the football, headed upfield, and ran straight toward his family at the other end of the stadium.

"There were uncles and cousins and a whole bunch of us in the stands," said Tarrance.

University of Memphis kickoff returner Tony Pollard runs back a

95-yard kickoff return against Temple during a 34-27 victory at Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium on Oct. 6, 2016. It was Memphis' first kickoff return for a touchdown since Nov. 9, 1996.

"They had to tell me to sit down," Torria said.

"He's always been good at scoring touchdowns," said Tarrance.

"It was special because he's from Memphis," said Torria. "It just means a little more."

And it does, doesn't it?

Hometown kid breaks homegrown streak.

Torria and Tarrance Pollard are the proud parents of University of Memphis football player Tony Pollard.

For 20 years, no Memphis Tiger managed to return a kickoff for a touchdown. The streak and the ignominy grew and grew.

Then the Tigers put a guy back there who got his start when he suited up for the Whitehaven Ravens at the age of four.

Then they put a guy back there who played his high school football at Melrose, less than two miles from the Liberty Bowl.

Then they put a guy back there who knew about the streak because he had been hearing about it for years, and took it personally.

"Me being from here, when they put me back there, I felt that it was only right that I had to break the streak," Pollard said. "Memphis gave me my first scholarship offer out of school.

And here, Pollard unspools his recruitment story, which may remind you of another recruitment story, the one that delivered Paxton Lynch.

Like Lynch, Pollard was overlooked because injuries kept him away from the field in high school. A

broken ankle forced Pollard to miss most of his junior year. .

Analysis: Tigers' comeback over Temple a tone-setter

Like Lynch, Pollard drew the attention of Memphis coach Justin Fuente, who flipped on the tape, and was immediately intrigued by Pollard's raw tools.

Like Lynch, Pollard had a lot of new suitors late in the recruiting process — Mississippi State and Missouri came at him hard — but, again like Lynch, Pollard stuck with the school that had offered him first.

"He never wavered," said Memphis running back's coach Darrell Dickey. "He was true to his word." And then he showed up on campus, and the Memphis coaches realized they had a dilemma. Where to play the guy?

"When we put him at safety, we really liked him there," Dickey said. "When we put him at wide receiver, we really liked him there. When we putting him at running back, we really liked him there."

Fuente finally put Pollard at receiver for his redshirt season. But when Mike Norvell took over, that changed.

"We'll always be looking for guys who we can get the ball to in space and they'll make big plays," Dickey said. "Instead of making a decision, we said, 'Let's see if he can learn both running back and receiver.' That's what he's doing now."

Pollard spends most of his time at practice with the running backs, but he's gotten more snaps as a slot receiver in games. He's already blocked a punt, returned a kickoff for a touchdown, rushed for a touchdown and caught a touchdown pass.

A wall at Pollard's Restaurant showcasing the athletic achievements of Tony Pollard is updated with new art.

Thus, the question for the Memphis coaches becomes: Is it clear what Pollard will be in two years?

“Yes,” said Dickey. “An unbelievable weapon. He can line up in the backfield and be a Division 1 legitimate running back. And, without substituting, he can be out there at receiver and be a legitimate Division 1 wide receiver. He’s going to be a matchup nightmare.”

So it should be fun, watching Pollard — who is still just 19 — develop over these next few seasons. His parents have some idea what to expect.

“We used to promise to get him a treat after he scored a touchdown,” Tarrance said. “I thought he’d want to go to McDonald’s or someplace like that. But he wanted to go to Houston’s and get a big steak. He scored so many touchdowns, we had to change the rules after that.”

Now it’s chicken tenders, french fries and a drink. Which you, too, can buy for just \$7.50!

“Just order the Tony Pollard special,” said the proud father.

"Special" being the operative word.

#

**'JUST GO GET THE BALL:'
CALVIN RIDLEY, CAM
WARD START CARVING
OUT TITANS
CONNECTION**

**BY PAUL KUHARSKY
PAULKUHARSKY.COM
JUNE 3, 2025**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Before the Titans dug into the meaty part of Tuesday's practice, when five targets were breaking formation and spreading themselves out, Cam Ward launched a deep ball for Calvin Ridley that settled perfectly into his top receiver's arms as he crossed into the end zone.

It did not mean a lot, but the moment made me think of all of the struggles Ridley had getting timed up with Will Levis last year as they were getting to know each other, and in a small way, I saw some promise in it.

For Ward to have the rookie season Tennessee is hoping for, the Ward-Ridley connection will have to be more reliable, more often, and sooner, so the receiver who was a big free-agent acquisition from Jacksonville a year ago can go beyond the 64 catches for 1,017 yards and four touchdowns he collected in 2024.

That was a solid season, but consider what it might have been if Ridley started better. In the Titans' first six games, he pulled in just 12 of 36 targets for 183 yards and one score.

He said he sees lessons in last year's slow connection with his quarterback that will benefit him now with Ward.

"Just go harder," he said. "Just go get the ball. I'm telling myself, 'If he throws the shit, go get the ball Rid, man.' Be the way you need to be, be healthy, take care of your body and just be on point so there is none of that. ... I want to be in the spot where he wants me. 'What do I need to do to make you feel better?' He's easy to relate to, fun. I just like him."

Ridley said a quarterback can't be an overthinker or a jittery guy, and Ward's calm makes it clear he's not that.

"You've got to have that 'Fuck-it' mentality, Ridley said, "and he's kind of got that."

Ward had previously praised Ridley for being a pro and one of the most experienced players on the team.

In a seating scramble in the locker room, it was no accident that Brian Callahan put Ward between Ridley and Lloyd Cushenberry, the center with whom he'll have to make regular clean exchanges.

Again, this week, after an open practice, the young quarterback was raving about his most skilled receiver.

"That man's a dog," he said. "He can win versus press-man, he knows zone, I think he's one of the top five receivers in the NFL if not the best. I'm blessed to play with him. He's going to make me look good every chance I get to throw the ball to him."

I had Ward as 11-for-20 in seven-on-seven and team periods, suffering from two drops and one play where there was a major miscommunication, as no one was near his throw.

As I felt the two other times I've seen him, he was OK, fine, but there was nothing dazzling going on.

And for what he had going with Ridley, that early deep ball was a nice moment.

But there is work, of course.

He hit him once mid-range over the middle.

Later, they held a quick chat about positioning, with Ridley walking Ward to a spot, showing him something about the specifics of where he would be and the movement there. They agreed on the point and slapped hands.

In the middle of three late snaps of third and long, Ward overthrew Ridley who was one-on-one up the left side with safety Mike Brown.

And then on Ward's final throw of the practice, after Thomas Odukoya had dropped one, Ward threw one far enough behind Ridley that it was hard to call it a drop when Ridley couldn't turn his hip enough to get his hands back to it.

Ridley's brought a new training device to practice this year, a weighted football that Tyke Tolbert throws to him when he's alone (or working with Tyler Lockett) during special teams periods. But he's got all the receivers giving it a shift and working with it at other times.

"It's just a way to make the ball lighter, the actually ball is like a feather then, you just pluck it out of the air," Ridley said.

Ridley said Evan Engram had it when they were teammates in Jacksonville.

###

NEW TITANS WR CALVIN RIDLEY HAS A NEW TEAM AND PLENTY OF MOTIVATION

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
MARCH 15, 2024

NASHVILLE – Calvin Ridley has a new team, and plenty of motivation.

Ridley, who officially signed a lucrative, multi-year contract with the Titans this morning, said he's ready to go.

"This is my first day, and I'm learning what it is to be a Titan," Ridley said at a Friday morning press conference. "But it's amazing, man. This is my third team. They gave me some years here, so I am excited to show my talent and my skills and learn the city and learn the fans. Honestly, I am overwhelmed."

A first-round pick of the Falcons in the 2018 NFL Draft who jumpstarted his career last season with the Jaguars, Ridley agreed to terms with the Titans earlier in the week after drawing interest from a number of teams.

Ridley said he's looking forward to a new start.

He knows he has something to prove.

"I do listen to some of the stuff," Ridley said, "just to give me a boost to go out there and play well."

During his five-year NFL career, Ridley (6-1, 190) has totaled 4,358 yards and 36 touchdowns on 324 receptions while playing in Atlanta (2018-22) and Jacksonville (2023).

Last year for the Jaguars, Ridley recorded 76 receptions for 1,016 yards and eight touchdowns. He registered four of his 15 career 100-yard performances in 2023.

"I'm a good player," Ridley said. "I am the type of player who deserves this contract, I am going to say that. I am the type of player you want in

the building, someone who is going to work for your organization. ... (The Titans) got a player who is going to come in and work for whatever ya'll gave me. Ya'll got a player."

Selected 26th overall by the Falcons in the 2018 NFL Draft, Ridley got off to a great start in his first three NFL seasons, recording 1,374 yards and nine touchdowns on 90 catches during the best season of his NFL career in 2020 after posting 60-plus catch and 800-plus receiving yards seasons in 2018 and 2019.

After a shortened 2021 season, Ridley was acquired by the Jaguars in a trade with the Falcons while he was suspended for the 2022 season for a violation of the league's gambling policy.

Then came the 2023 season, which helped change the course of his career.

Ridley wants to change the recent fate of the Titans as well.

"I want to bring this team through the roof," Ridley said, "and do everything I can to help. From now on, I'm only going up, because my work ethic is good. I am going to put the work in to be good. I am only going up from here. I am ready to take off."

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**BROTHERS CALVIN
RILEY RIDLEY GIVE
BACK TO SOUTH
FLORIDA PROGRAM
THAT HELPED THEM IN
THEIR YOUTH**

**BY DAVID FURONES
SOUTH FLORIDA SUN
SENTINEL
JULY 13, 2019**

For every career milestone Calvin Ridley has reached, younger brother Riley Ridley has been right behind him to achieve it a year later.

A year after Calvin went off to college at Alabama out of Monarch High, Riley went to Georgia – but from Deerfield Beach High. After Calvin was selected in the 2018 NFL draft by the Atlanta Falcons following a three-year college career, Riley did the same, going to the Chicago Bears in the past draft.

The similarities don't stop with football milestones.

After Calvin Ridley hosted his inaugural charity bowling event last summer benefiting TUFF Start, a nonprofit organization that helps underprivileged youths in Broward County, Riley Ridley on Friday night at AMF Margate Lanes made it a joint effort. The two combined to put on the second-annual "Bowling for the Boys," a night of fun for kids currently in the same program that helped the Ridleys when they were younger.

"I [saw] what my brother did last year, and it was a really cool thing," said Riley Ridley, who heads into his rookie NFL season after going to the Bears at pick No. 126, a fourth-round selection. "It was just to give back to the community, give hope to the young kids and just come show face and have fun with younger guys that we were in their shoes at one point."

"I'm very proud of him," said Calvin Ridley, who had 64 receptions for 821 yards and 10 touchdowns as a rookie. "Just happy he's here with me and makes it more

fun for him to be here and for us to enjoy this."

Zack Rehman, who started TUFF Start in 2012 by offering free training sessions to kids at an open field in Margate and has now grown it into an organization that has its own facility and nearly 500 members, recalls the Ridleys being some of those initial participants.

"It's awesome to have both of them come back," Rehman said. "Our youth is important to us because it's our future. I know they see it, they believe it. ... [The kids] are able to see, talk and touch somebody that's on TV and a superstar in the NFL. It's amazing for them."

Calvin Ridley and Riley Ridley, a Deerfield Beach alum who played at Monarch while his brother was there, added a youth football camp and 7-on-7 tournament at Fort Lauderdale's Joseph C. Carter Park on Saturday to this year's installment. Along with them at Saturday's camp: Bears safety Eddie Jackson, who is a Boyd Anderson product.

Having Jackson in Chicago has helped Riley Ridley during organized team activities and minicamp this offseason.

"Eddie's a local guy from around here, so it's respect," Riley said. "It's competition and we do what we got to do."

For Calvin, he looks to expand on a standout rookie season.

"I just really need to relax," he said. "I'm more relaxed right now. I know the playbook pretty good. I know what's pretty much coming."

And having Calvin's rookie season to aspire to, Riley heads in motivated.

"He sets a high standard and you just want to always try to compete the best you can, but when you have a brother that's doing good, you just want to keep things going," Riley said.

TUFF Start looks to provide a combination of athletic training, tutoring and opportunities for children to enhance their reading, art and music skills among much else.

"We're just trying to take up their time, trying to make sure they don't have that idle time out there in the streets, running around unsupervised," Rehman said. "For them, it was football, but for other kids, maybe it could be being a teacher, a motivator, being the next President of the United States."

###

THE RIDLEY BROTHERS: SEC STARS MAKING MOMMA PROUD

**BY WALTER VILLA
SATURDAY DOWN SOUTH
2016**

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — It can now be revealed.

The secret as to where Alabama wide receiver Calvin Ridley, a projected first-round pick in 2018, and Georgia wide receiver Riley Ridley, his talented younger brother, got their abilities is simple.

The answer is Kay Daniels, their 49-year-old stay-at-home single mother.

“When the boys were coming up, I used to run with them and throw footballs with them,” said Daniels, who has two other, younger sons who are not big-time athletes. “I wanted to make them stronger.

“Football, basketball, track — those are (usually) men’s things. But I was a single parent. I felt I had to go out there and teach them. I wanted to keep them active.”

Daniels said she was a track star at Fort Lauderdale High, running the 100 and 200 and doing the long jump, among other events.

“I didn’t go to college — that’s where I messed up,” Daniels said. “I was supposed to be in the Olympics because I could run fast — I’m serious. That’s where the boys get their speed.”

Daniels said her mother, Dorothy, was a prep basketball player in South Carolina.

Calvin and Riley’s biological father was Colin Ridley.

“He was deported to Guyana when Calvin was 7,” Daniels said. “They never saw him again.”

It all began at Sunland

When Calvin was in middle school, he and his brother began playing football at Sunland Park in Fort Lauderdale.

At their side was their cousin Shawn Burgess-Becker. And soon enough, they met another outstanding young athlete, Ronnie Hoggins.

All four ended up at Monarch High School in Coconut Creek, one of many small cities that essentially are an extension of Fort Lauderdale. And all four became Division I college football players.

Calvin started his career as a freshman at Fort Lauderdale Dillard and played as a sophomore at Hollywood Chaminade.

But when he transferred to Monarch, he and Riley joined forces with Burgess-Becker, a defensive back/wide receiver who would later sign with Alabama before transferring to Central Florida, and Hoggins, a defensive back/running back now at South Florida.

Monarch also had a young Jerry Jeudy, now a star senior wide receiver at Deerfield Beach and another Alabama recruit.

“Somebody’s gonna be in trouble,” Hoggins said when asked for his reaction when he heard Calvin and Riley had arrived at Monarch. “They couldn’t stop us.”

Indeed, that 2013 Monarch team, during Calvin’s junior season, went 8-3 and made the state playoffs for the first time in program history. They were only stopped, Hoggins said, because Monarch lacked enough talent “in the trenches.”

Hoggins said he covered Calvin in practice every day. Once he got to college, Hoggins said there were no big surprises. He had already spent countless hours trying to stay with a fast, elusive, college-level wide receiver.

“Steel sharpens steel — we both benefitted from each other,” Hoggins said. “Calvin is explosive.

But the biggest thing about him is that he’s always wanting to get better, learning how to run routes and how to get open.”

Riley, meanwhile, was bigger than Calvin and played to his strengths.

“Riley was our possession receiver,” Hoggins said. “If we needed a catch on third down, and coverage was tight, we could go to Riley.

“Don’t get me wrong: Riley could stretch the field, also, like his brother. But he was our ‘first down’ guy.”

Hoggins said Calvin is more outgoing than Riley. If you were to spend an entire day with Calvin, Hoggins said, you would be laughing 24 hours straight.

But there is at least one thing Calvin is very serious about — and that’s his younger brother.

“Seeing them together, you could always tell who was the older brother,” Hoggins said. “Riley has always looked up to Calvin like a father figure.”

How Bama found Calvin Ridley

With their biological father out of the picture, it was only natural that Calvin served as a father figure for Riley.

But who was Calvin’s male role model?

The answer has been Calvin Davis, who coached the brothers at Monarch.

Davis met Calvin in January of the youngster’s sophomore year. Calvin had just transferred from Chaminade, where he had grown disenchanted with his “touches,” Davis said.

Offering to help, Davis put together a highlight film of some of Calvin’s best plays at Chaminade, and that was enough for the youngster to get his first college scholarship offer, from Louisville.

When Calvin finally got on the field for Davis as a Monarch junior, it only took three games before his tape caught fire with college scouts.

Alabama had heard about Calvin from his cousin, Burgess-Becker. The Crimson Tide coaches checked the tape and quickly became Calvin's second scholarship offer.

After that, it was on.

"Within hours," Davis said, "LSU, Tennessee, Miami and Florida State all came through with offers.

"Calvin remained humble. He was the same funny have-fun kid when he had one offer that he was when he had 50."

Despite the small sample size of production, Alabama coach Nick Saban and his main South Florida recruiter, Mario Cristobal, were correct about Calvin, who went on to earn a five-star ranking and a designation as the No. 1 prep wide receiver in the nation.

Calvin caught 41 passes for 1,131 yards and 12 touchdowns as a junior at Monarch. He also picked off three passes as a defensive back that season.

But because Calvin turned 19 during his senior year, he was ruled ineligible – as per Florida high school rules – for the second half of the season.

Instead of playing, Calvin spent the rest of the season as an unofficial Monarch assistant coach, passing his knowledge on to his brother and the rest of the wide receivers.

Calvin also played in the season-ending Under Armour All-America Game. He went on to set the Alabama freshman record with 1,045 yards. He also caught 89 passes, the second-most ever by a freshman among all FBS schools.

That surprised nobody who saw him at Monarch.

Riley Ridley: Out of the shadows

While Calvin was dominating the SEC, Riley – who previously went by his first name, Cavin – was being heavily recruited on a national basis.

Riley had a breakout junior season, catching 25 passes for 586 yards and six touchdowns.

But Riley was seemingly stuck in his brother's shadow. Where Calvin was a Miami Herald first-team All-Broward County selection as a junior, Riley never got the same recognition. Riley made third-team as a junior and second-team as a senior.

Nationally, it was the same story. Where Calvin had been ranked the No. 1 wide receiver in the nation as a five-star recruit, Riley was a solid four-star player in the eyes of the media. 247Sports.com's composite ranked Riley the No. 234 player in the 2016 class, the No. 46 receiver. He was No. 35 in his own state.

College coaches, though, seemed to hold Riley in higher esteem. He was heavily recruited during his senior year, and his mother wanted him to join Calvin at Alabama.

But that's not what Riley wanted.

"Riley didn't want to follow in his brother's footsteps," Hoggins said. "He wanted to make a name for himself. He didn't want to be known as Calvin's little brother. He wanted to be known as Riley Ridley."

That's why Riley chose South Carolina, at least initially, picking the Gamecocks on Jan. 2, 2016.

But that's when things got crazy.

On Jan. 4, he backed out of his South Carolina commitment.

On Jan. 6, he took a trip to Georgia.

On Jan. 7, he committed to Georgia.

And on Jan. 11, he made it official, taking his first classes as a member of the Georgia Bulldogs.

New Georgia coach Kirby Smart, a former defensive coordinator at

Alabama, told media members that Calvin Ridley persuaded his younger brother to switch to Georgia.

"His brother was very adamant that Riley come here," Smart said this past spring. "I don't know why. He just wanted him here."

Making their mark in the SEC

Daniels said she has had no communication with the Georgia coaching staff.

Alabama, on the other hand, is very familiar with Daniels.

"Coach Saban, he is a blessing from God," Daniels said. "He is a serious man, a wonderful man. He made my son who he is today.

"He makes boys into men. He is like a father to my son, teaching him how to be a respectful young man, teaching him how to pray. Coach Saban is a praying man."

Daniels said Saban, Cristobal and all the Alabama coaches give her hugs before and after every game.

"The Alabama coaches, when they tell you something, their word is their word," Daniels said. "They told me they were going to take care of Calvin, and they have, 100 percent."

Daniels said she makes one road trip per week, flying or driving to one of her son's games on a rotating basis.

This Saturday, she plans to be rooting for Riley in Athens, where Georgia plays host to Auburn.

So far, Riley has been slowed by surgery on a broken right thumb, an injury he suffered on Sept. 10 against Nicholls State, and then a sprained left ankle he suffered two weeks ago against Florida.

Since coming back from the thumb injury, Riley has been solid, catching two catches for 59 yards and one touchdown against Tennessee on Oct. 1, five catches for 67 yards against Vanderbilt on Oct.

15 and one catch for a 14-yard touchdown vs. Florida.

That's it – that's the extent of his freshman numbers, a vast difference between him and his brother's monster 2015 numbers.

Riley's ankle injury is not believed to be serious. And when he's healthy, Riley, a 6-2, 197-pounder, has proven to be a willing blocker, according to Smart.

"That's not normal for a wide receiver," Smart told media members in the spring. "Riley sticks his face in there. He is a South Florida kid. He's not afraid to block. He competes."

Calvin, of course, is highly competitive, too.

He showed it again Oct. 1, when he had a season-high 11 catches for 174 yards and two touchdowns in a 34-6 win over Kentucky.

Despite virtually eternal double coverage, Calvin, a 6-1, 190-pounder, leads Alabama with 45 catches for 527 yards and five touchdowns. He is also dealing with a knee injury that has him listed as questionable for Saturday's game vs. Mississippi State.

Sights set on the NFL

That slight injury is not nearly enough, however, to slow predictions that have Calvin leaving school after his junior season to enter the NFL Draft.

Lance Zierlein, an analyst for NFL.com, wrote recently that Calvin is "Amari Cooper 2.0, except faster."

The reference to the current Oakland Raiders star wide receiver is a comparison many others have drawn. That's because Cooper has made a similar journey to what is being projected for Calvin – from a South Florida high school to Alabama to a first-round draft pick in the NFL.

Zierlein said Calvin is the most talented receiver in the nation, even though he is not draft eligible until 2018.

"With exceptional play speed, elite separation ability and advanced instincts as a receiver," Zierlein wrote, "Ridley simply needs someone to get him the ball."

Davis, who coached the Ridley brothers in high school, said Riley is not as much in Calvin's shadow as one might think.

But that remains to be seen.

For now, there is a significant gap in production between them.

"Riley is more physically imposing and probably stronger than Calvin," Davis said. "Calvin is more of a deep threat. His speed and work ethic are what separate him. He is just so much faster than anybody else. The first time we ever threw him the ball in high school, he went 70 yards with a short slant pattern."

Davis also remembers the last time Monarch threw to Calvin.

With the age limit, everyone knew the game against Piper would be Calvin's last. On the final play, Davis called "65 back-side post," where the quarterback rolled to his left and threw it up to Calvin in the middle of the field.

"It went for a 40-yard touchdown," Davis said. "It was the perfect way to end his high school career."

When and how his college career ends remains to be seen, but there is no question that Calvin's draft prospects are delightful to Daniels, who calls herself a "proud super mom."

She had never been on an airplane until she started going to Calvin's games last year. Now she's a pro at flying, securing that window seat whenever possible.

Daniels foresees an easier life ahead.

"It's been hard raising four boys into young men as a single mom," Daniels said. "I've asked God to help us through life. Calvin said he's going to buy 'Momma' a big house with five bedrooms and five master bathrooms and a three-car garage."

"He and Riley are going to put their money together after they make the NFL," she said. "They are determined."

###

**TWENTY POUNDS
LIGHTER, TITANS DL
JEFFERY SIMMONS
COULD STILL BE SEEN –
AND HEARD – IN HIS
RETURN FOR MINICAMP**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JUNE 10, 2025**

NASHVILLE – Big Jeffery Simmons is back.

The big defensive lineman could be seen – and heard – at Titans minicamp on Tuesday.

After training on his own in recent months, Simmons said he's hungry for more – after losing 20 pounds to prepare for the 2025 season.

"It feels great," Simmons said. "It's great to be back on the field with the guys, getting to work with the guys. It's not always an easy decision, making the decision not to be here (for OTAs) with your teammates, especially with a lot of new guys. ... But I made that decision, it was a personal decision.

"But today was a good day, and I was glad to be back."

With teammates surrounding him, Simmons did some up-downs, a welcome back of sorts, after being away.

Titans defensive coordinator Dennard Wilson started that tradition last year, and Simmons knew he had to keep it going.

"Of course I haven't been here," Simmons said with a smile. "It took me a minute to catch my wind. I was like, I'm in shape, but (expletive), those up-downs, they hurt."

When practice started, Simmons looked good running to the ball.

He also exchanged words with rookie quarterback Cam Ward with what looked like playful banter.

"It was predetermined," Simmons said, smiling bigger. "I've been

hearing how much smack he talks ... and I saw him this past weekend and was like: I'm going to be talking smack to you, too. It's fun. ... We went back and forth talking smack to each other and he was able to get back in the huddle and throw the ball down the field. That was the most impressive thing, not talking smack to me, but being able to get back in the huddle, get the plays to the guys, and still be able to operate the offense."

But make no mistake, Simmons is serious about being even better in 2025.

Simmons weighed in at 301 pounds, and he thinks the lighter weight will help him on the field.

"To get out here and put it to test," Simmons said of his lighter, 6-foot-4 frame. "I feel great, I feel light on my feet, and I still feel very explosive."

###

NFL STAR JEFFERY SIMMONS COMES HOME TO MACON FOR SECOND ANNUAL COMMUNITY FUN DAY

**BY BENJAMIN ROSENBERG
COMMERCIAL DISPATCH
JULY 9, 2024**

MACON — When Jeffery Simmons was growing up in Noxubee County, the youth football infrastructure was not exactly robust, despite a strong pipeline of players making it to the top levels of college football and even the NFL.

Now that Simmons has become arguably the most decorated player to ever come out of Noxubee County High, the Tennessee Titans' star defensive tackle has dedicated much of his time off the field to giving back to his hometown.

He was back home in Macon on Saturday for the second annual Jeffery Simmons Community Fun Day — featuring food, games, live music and fireworks — and he also spent time with the players in the Noxubee Titans youth football program he founded earlier this year. More than 120 boys and girls aged 5-12 are part of the Noxubee Titans, according to Simmons' business manager, Freddie Poindexter.

“At the end of the day, we have to be there for the kids,” Simmons said. “This is about the kids and whatever we can do for the kids, promoting good behavior and whatever it may be to stay in school. When you’ve been through it, you’ve been there before, you don’t want to go back. I don’t want these kids to experience what I went through as a kid.”

Simmons played for the Macon Broncos youth program before becoming a dominant force on the football field in high school, helping the Tigers win three MHSAA state championships. The top prospect in his class in Mississippi, Simmons had offers from Alabama, Ole Miss and plenty of other top programs,

but he chose to remain close to home and play at Mississippi State.

In three years with the Bulldogs, Simmons racked up 32.5 tackles for loss. Even after tearing his ACL while training for the 2019 NFL Draft, Simmons was selected 19th overall by Tennessee, returning to the field midway through his rookie season. He became a true star in 2021, finishing with 8.5 sacks and making his first of back-to-back Pro Bowls.

Following his second Pro Bowl in 2022, Simmons signed a four-year contract extension with the Titans worth \$94 million, and he has spent a good chunk of that money helping kids back in Macon. The practice facility at Noxubee County High has bore Simmons' name since 2020 and was officially dedicated as the Jeffery B. Simmons Field House in 2022 after Simmons presented the program with all new equipment.

“I do it because I care about my community,” Simmons said. “I just want to push something positive to our community. At the end of the day, that’s what it’s about, just giving back. I enjoy doing this and we want everyone to have a good time. You get on social media, you see things you don’t want to see, but hopefully today, we just bring everybody together for one big fun day for the kids and for the community.”

Tyre Phillips, J.T. Gray and Willie Gay, all former MSU players currently in the NFL, were also in attendance Saturday to support Simmons and the Noxubee Titans. The high school team has remained a powerhouse since Simmons graduated, winning another state title in 2017 and appearing in the championship game each of the last two years.

The Tigers are now led by rising senior quarterback KaMario Taylor, a Mississippi State commit and the No. 6 player in the state for his class, according to the 247Sports Composite rankings.

“(Simmons) definitely inspired me,” Taylor said. “When he signed that big contract, it inspired a whole bunch of kids to keep playing football, keep grinding, because he’s been through the same things we’ve been through. It means a lot because we know he doesn’t have to do this. He takes his time to give back to this small town, and we’re thankful for it.”

Simmons also started the Give Em A Reason Foundation to “inspire youth and youth empowerment through sport, by way of self-esteem building and opportunity creation” in 2023. He was rewarded for his philanthropy as the Titans' nominee last year for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award, which recognizes an NFL player for excellence on and off the field.

“The award’s cool and all, (but) I don’t do it for the publicity. I don’t do it for the awards,” Simmons said. “Being a nominee for the Walter Payton Man of the Year, it’s a dream come true, but the real dream come true (would be) winning it. That just shows how much I care about my community. I don’t do it for publicity; I do it because I care.”

###

WHY NEW TENNESSEE TITANS RUNNING BACK TONY POLLARD MADE MEMPHIS MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT A PRIORITY

**BY DAMICHAEL COLE
MEMPHIS COMMERCIAL
APPEAL
MAY 4, 2024**

Tony Pollard was on a tight schedule. The former Dallas Cowboys turned Tennessee Titans running back was making a quick stop in Memphis, and it was important for him to attend a mental health summit.

Pollard stopped by the Bend Dxnt Break Athletes Summit on Saturday afternoon at Hope Church. He was joined by keynote speaker C.L. Shepherd and notable Memphis celebrities, former Grizzlies player Tony Allen and rapper Project Pat.

The group spoke to Memphis-area high school students on Saturday. The two-day event started on Friday. Nearly 500 students across the Memphis area attended the events, coming from high schools such as Whitehaven, KIPP, Manassas, Germantown, ECS, Oakhaven, Houston and Briarcrest.

“Just being able to talk to the youth, I’m just trying to make sure they’re going down the right path and got their heads on right,” Pollard, a former Memphis football and Melrose standout, told The Commercial Appeal.

Shepherd, who goes around the country speaking at engagements similar to two-day summit, wanted to empathize with the students as someone who struggled with mental health as a teenager.

For Project Pat, Saturday was about continuing to show up and let his voice be heard around Memphis where he can leave an impact. Allen has increased his presence at these type of events in Memphis over the past few months.

“I love to target areas in need, because at one point, I was that person,” Allen told The Commercial Appeal. “Growing up, I had a lot of issues that I thought was normal. That’s what I want to do. Change the community norm.”

Tony Pollard talks joining Tennessee Titans

Multiple students at Hope Church attended in Dallas Cowboys No. 20 Pollard jerseys. After Pollard signed with the Tennessee Titans, those jerseys are now throwbacks.

Pollard joined the Titans in March, putting him closer to his Memphis roots. While Pollard said he made a business decision in going from Dallas to Nashville, he called being closer to home “the icing on the cake.” Playing less than three hours from Memphis impacted his decision.

“I’ve been enjoying it. I’ve been able to come home a lot more, see my family, kids get to play with their cousins and things like that,” Pollard said.

Being close to home also means Pollard can keep a closer eye on the Tigers football team.

“Ever since I’ve been there, it’s been a good program,” Pollard said. “Every year, they’re getting guys in the league, so they’re definitely in the right direction.”

###

WHY TENNESSEE TITANS STAR JEFFERY SIMMONS IS SENDING 'SECOND DAD' TO SUPER BOWL | ESTES

**BY GENTRY ESTES
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
FEBRUARY 4, 2024**

High school football coach Tyrone Shorter long believed his first Super Bowl would be to see former pupil and current NFL star defensive lineman Jeffery Simmons.

In a way, Shorter was correct.

While Simmons' Tennessee Titans won't be playing in Sunday's Super Bowl, it's because of Simmons that Shorter and his wife are planning to be in Las Vegas to witness the game.

As the Titans' nominee this season for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award, Simmons had two Super Bowl trips — tickets, flights, hotel accommodations — to give out.

"They were the first people that came to mind," Simmons said, "because he has done so much for me, just mentally or off the field. . . . He's not just my high school coach. I look at him as a second dad."

Simmons surprised Shorter in person, telling him he had a Christmas present for him.

Shorter and his wife are to fly out Friday and back on Monday, enjoying a weekend that'll include time spent with Simmons, his former player at Noxubee County High School in Mississippi.

"It's just the guy he is," said Shorter, now the coach at nearby Louisville High School. "To me, I'm just glad that I had an influence on his life and helped mold him to be the man that he is today. He could have given those tickets to anybody, but he decided to give them to me and my wife. It just makes me feel good. That's the reason why I do what I do, coaching high school football."

The Payton Award is one of the most prestigious in the NFL because it recognizes outstanding service and impact away from the field in addition to strong play on it.

The reasons for Simmons' inclusion, according to the Titans, are his community efforts for families and children both in Nashville and back in Mississippi.

Among the highlights: In November, Simmons handed out more than 500 turkeys to families for Thanksgiving. In July, he held a full week of events in his hometown of Macon, Mississippi, hosting a football camp and community fun day while giving gift cards to local athletes for a shopping spree.

"Some of the things that he's doing now (in giving back)," Shorter said, "we talked about that stuff when he was in high school. . . . It makes me so proud of the man that he's become."

Simmons referred to Shorter as "Coach Dad," an indication of a relationship that's far deeper than most high school coaches and players have. It goes back to when Simmons was a fifth grader, hanging around the football fields. Shorter put him to work as a water boy then.

Louisville head coach Tyrone Shorter signals for a time out at the MHSAA Class 4A State Football Championship on Saturday, December 5, 2020, at Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium in Jackson, Miss.

Years later, when Simmons entered high school, he was determined to play quarterback. That wasn't going to happen. "You're going to be a d-lineman," Shorter told him.

"He looked at me like, 'Huh? I ain't going to play football then if I can't play quarterback,'" Shorter recalled with a laugh.

Shorter wasn't about to let him quit playing football, either, telling him as far back as ninth grade that he had the potential to make it to the NFL.

"I think (the tight relationship) is because he looked up to me as a father," Shorter said. "He called me Coach Dad, because he didn't grow up with his father. He didn't have that male figure in his life. . . . I was there for him, whatever advice, whatever he needed, we made sure that he had it."

At the Super Bowl, Shorter says he'll be rooting for the Kansas City Chiefs, because he coached against defensive lineman Chris Jones and linebacker Willie Gay — both attended Mississippi State, like Simmons — during their high school careers.

For Simmons, too, it'll be a nice moment. He was thrilled to get the chance to treat someone who he says taught him how to be a man and told him: "Use football. Don't let it use you."

"He always held me accountable," Simmons said. "I was grateful to have him in my life, so it's like a small token of appreciation to him and his wife to get to go to the Super Bowl."

###

TITANS DL JEFFERY SIMMONS NAMED WEEK 12 NFLPA COMMUNITY MVP

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
NOVEMBER 24, 2023**

NASHVILLE – Titans defensive lineman Jeffery Simmons has been named the Week 12 NFLPA Community MVP after providing turkeys to more than 500 Nashville families for the Thanksgiving holiday.

"The Bible says in Luke 12:48 that 'To whom much is given, much will be required.' Growing up in Noxubee County, Mississippi, I watched my mother make countless sacrifices for me and my four siblings, especially during the holidays," Simmons said in a release provided by NFLPA. "Knowing that God has put me in a position to be a blessing to others means the world to me, and I realize there is still so much work for me to do in the community. I want to sincerely thank everyone for helping with the Give Em A Reason Foundation Turkey Distribution."

Coach Mike Vrabel gave Simmons permission to leave Tuesday's walkthrough early so he could attend an event for his Give Em A Reason Foundation, and cars lined up outside of Nissan Stadium for the drive-thru turkey delivery.

Simmons partnered with Kroger to help feed families for the holidays.

"Being able to give back to the community means so much to me," Simmons said earlier this week. "This is a time of giving, and being in the position I am today ... I always think about how I am thankful to play the game of football. I'm thankful to be able to give back to the community. I think, around this time, maybe someone didn't have the money, or whatever it might be, to buy a turkey? I think about those things."

Following the event, Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee, FrankTown Open Hearts, and other local nonprofit organizations were able to use and distribute the remaining turkeys to additional recipients who were unable to attend.

"Just the excitement on their faces," Simmons said. "All the 'thank you's', the 'thank you for what you do for the community.' That's what it is all about. I don't look for the publicity on the outside, I do it because that is my heart. I do it for my community. ... It meant a lot to be out there."

In honor of Simmons being named this week's Community MVP, the NFLPA is making a \$10,000 contribution to his foundation or charity of choice. In turn, Simmons will take part in a virtual or in-person visit to a school or children's hospital. Along with the other 2023-24 Community MVPs, he will also become eligible for this year's Alan Page Community Award, which is the highest honor that the NFLPA can bestow upon a player.

Now in its 10th season, the Community MVP campaign is part of the NFLPA's continued efforts to support the year-round, civic outreach and engagement of its player members. Please visit the NFLPA Community MVP website to learn more about the program.

2023-24 NFLPA Community MVP winners:

Week 1: Alexander Mattison, Minnesota Vikings

Week 2: Bijan Robinson, Atlanta Falcons

Week 3: Justin Hardee, New York Jets

Week 4: Frank Ragnow, Detroit Lions

Week 5: Arik Armstead, San Francisco 49ers

Week 6: Emmanuel Ogbah, Miami Dolphins

Week 7: Calais Campbell, Atlanta Falcons

Week 8: Cam Heyward, Pittsburgh Steelers

Week 9: Kayvon Thibodeaux, New York Giants

Week 10: Saquon Barkley, New York Giants

Week 11: Jalen Pitre, Houston Texans

Week 12: Jeffery Simmons, Tennessee Titans

Coach Mike Vrabel gave Simmons permission to leave Tuesday's walkthrough early so he could attend an event for his Give Em A Reason Foundation.

Cars lined up outside of Nissan Stadium for the drive-thru event.

Simmons partnered with Kroger to help feed families for the holidays.

"Being able to give back to the community means so much to me," Simmons said earlier this week. "This is a time of giving, and being in the position I am today ... I always think about how I am thankful to play the game of football. I'm thankful to be able to give back to the community. I think, around this time, maybe someone didn't have the money, or whatever it might be, to buy a turkey? I think about those things."

Following the event, Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee, FrankTown Open Hearts, and other local nonprofit organizations were able to use and distribute the remaining turkeys to additional recipients who were unable to attend.

"Just the excitement on their faces," Simmons said. "All the 'thank you's', the 'thank you for what you do for the community.' That's what it is all about. I don't look for the publicity on the outside, I do it because that is my heart. I do it for my community. ... It meant a lot to be out there."

In honor of Simmons being named this week's Community MVP, the NFLPA is making a \$10,000 contribution to his foundation or charity of choice. In turn, Simmons will take part in a virtual or in-person visit to a school or children's hospital. Along with the other 2023-24 Community MVPs, he will also become eligible for this year's Alan Page Community Award, which is the highest honor that the NFLPA can bestow upon a player.

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HOW TITANS' SIMMONS SAW FOOTBALL AS LIFE-CHANGING OPPORTUNITY

BY TURRON DAVENPORT
ESPN.COM
OCTOBER 18, 2023

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- The bye week couldn't have come at a better time for the Tennessee Titans.

A frustrating 24-16 loss to the Baltimore Ravens pushed the Titans (2-4) to the bottom of the division, causing team captain Jeffery Simmons to suggest his teammates do some soul-searching.

"We need to figure out the guys that want to be out there," the defensive tackle said. "We need to reevaluate our team and figure out who wants to play football for the Titans."

The pain shows on Simmons' face after every loss.

It's from the competitive spirit he developed from going against his older brother, Dylan Bradley, whose NFL aspirations were cut short due to injuries. They competed in everything from tackling drills to video games and more.

"He used to be so competitive," Simmons said. "I used to be mad at him. We used to fight each other every time he beat me."

During position meetings, Titans defensive line coach Terrell Williams pulls up clips of Simmons hustling to the football even when the play isn't near him as an example of how he wants the other players to compete.

"There's nothing better than showing guys that are at [Simmons'] status and still play hard," Williams said. "Not every Pro Bowler is running to the ball the way he is. If Jeff Simmons can run to the ball, the rest of the guys better get going, too."

Simmons and Bradley are only two years apart, so Simmons had to wait

his turn to start playing when he was watching his big brother play at 5. The two used to practice tackling by putting their pads on so they could hit each other and by hitting a tree in their backyard.

"Tough" is how Simmons described it.

Bradley said he knew his little brother was built different when he had tightrope ankle surgery during his senior year in high school. The procedure normally has a four-to-six-week recovery time, but Simmons came back to play two weeks later.

As the oldest of five siblings (three sisters and Simmons), Bradley had to be "the man of the house." He quickly saw football as a way that he could make things better.

"Football gave me the opportunity to change my life and my family's life," Bradley said. "So, I had to put all my energy into football."

Simmons took on the same belief from a young age. Growing up they always talked about being able to make things better for the family.

That's why Simmons was emotional during his press conference after he signed a four-year, \$94 million contract extension, making Simmons the second-highest paid defensive tackle in the NFL -- behind only the Los Angeles Rams' Aaron Donald. Simmons came a long way from when he had to share the bed with his brother.

"Every day I wake up and think about those hard times and how my mother didn't feel like it," Simmons said as he fought through tears. "Sometimes, I'll be like 'I'm hurt' and think about my mom. My family, that's my motivation."

Their uncle, Jason Hatcher, played defensive line for the Dallas

Cowboys. Having played the same position, Simmons and Bradley wanted to follow in their uncle's footsteps.

Simmons remembers going to his uncle's house in Dallas and seeing the things that football provided.

"It was like me being around that made me love the game more because I know my uncle also came from a small town [in Louisiana]," Simmons said. "That motivated me, just knowing that I could do the same thing."

Meeting his uncle's teammate, Hall of Famer Demarcus Ware, was a huge moment for Bradley to push for the NFL.

Simmons was a freshman on the football team at Noxubee County High School in Mississippi when Bradley was starring on the team as a senior.

Ole Miss and Mississippi State recruited Bradley in high school, but he chose to play at Southern Miss from 2013 to 2016.

Bradley signed with the Minnesota Vikings as an undrafted free agent in 2017, but he was waived during the final roster cuts and re-signed to the practice squad. He had a good chance to make the roster in 2018, but an ankle and knee injury ended his dreams.

As for Simmons, he would also become a standout for Noxubee County before suiting up for Mississippi State, where he'd go on to be an All-American from 2016 to 2018.

Although it wasn't career-ending, Simmons had a devastating injury in February 2019 before the scouting combine. He thought he just hyperextended his knee, but Hatcher, who served as a pre-draft mentor, had to break the news he got from Simmons' trainer, Tony Villani of XPE Sports, that the injury was actually a torn ACL, according to Simmons.

Simmons told ESPN he called Bradley in tears and told him he considered going back to Mississippi State. Before the injury, Simmons was projected to be a top-10 pick.

But Bradley promised things would work out.

"You're the best defensive tackle in the draft," Bradley said. "You'll get picked in the first round."

The injury gave the brothers the opportunity to lean on one another as the draft approached and spend some time together.

Simmons almost joined the Vikings like his brother, as Minnesota considered taking him at No. 18. but they took center Garrett Bradbury instead.

The Titans gave Simmons the call of his life when they were on the clock at No. 19. The two brothers, who were wearing matching outfits, embraced as soon as Simmons got off the phone. They were on their way to Nashville.

Bradley worked for a framing company when he first got to the city. He got into training when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, first by helping his sister lose a significant amount of weight through workouts they did in Simmons' garage.

Bradley got the certification to be a trainer soon after that, which led to an offer to work at a sports training facility called D1 that opened in Spring Hill, Tennessee -- where he is now the head strength and conditioning coach.

Simmons approached Bradley last winter about being his trainer after he decided to stay in Nashville to train during the offseason. Bradley was honored to train his younger brother along with former Titans' and current Buffalo Bills defensive lineman DaQuan Jones.

"I could tell training is his passion," Simmons said. "This past offseason, I'm like, 'I'm going to give you a

chance.' He did a hell of a job with that, helped me get stronger as well."

He was coming off a season where he had to push through an ankle injury for most of it. Simmons told ESPN he had to get shots in the ankle over the last eight weeks just to be able to play.

The emotions came spilling out after a loss to the Jacksonville Jaguars in Week 18, which made the Titans miss the playoffs, when Simmons was asked about playing through his injuries.

That loss also marked the first time that Simmons would miss the playoffs.

"As his older brother, I was like, 'Don't let them see you cry,'" Bradley said. "But that's him allowing himself to be vulnerable and showing his passion. If everyone on a given team had that much passion about football that team wouldn't lose."

With Simmons' passion comes belief. In himself and his team, and though the Titans haven't gotten off to the start they would have wanted, Simmons believes things can turn around.

"We have a long season ahead," Simmons said. "We have a bye week, and hopefully guys get healthy, hit that reset button and come back ready to roll."

Their next shot to start to turn the season around comes Week 8 when they host the Atlanta Falcons on Oct. 29 (1 p.m. ET, CBS).

###

**KEY TO CITY PRESENTED
JEFFERY SIMMONS
DURING FUN DAY**

**BY GRANT MCLAUGHLIN
DISPATCH
JULY 5, 2023**

MACON – When Macon resident William Mitchell was looking for something to do with his daughter, Rachel, this weekend, he wasn't sure what would shake out.

After hearing that Tennessee Titan Defensive End and former Noxubee County High School football player Jeffery Simmons was hosting a community fun day, he knew just what to do.

"I watched (Simmons) play all four years of high school football," Mitchell said. "We were just at home and I really wanted to bring her out to this, and because she loves water games."

Mitchell was one of around 3,000 people who signed up to attend the Jeffery Simmons Fun Day event at the Noxubee County Sportsplex, featuring local food vendors, music and games for children, as well as a firework show that evening, Simmons said.

Simmons told The Dispatch he wanted to come home and host an event to pay homage to his hometown of Macon and bring people out for the Fourth of July holiday.

"(Events like this) motivate me," Simmons said. "This is where I started from. I am going to help people from all over, but right here in Noxubee County is what made me. I wanted to bring something back to where I came from."

Mayor of Macon, Buz McGuire, said the city provided fireworks for the event, and also presented Simmons a key to the city for his philanthropic efforts in Noxubee County.

"For me, the most important thing is he's willing to give back to his

community," McGuire said. "I know he's done some work at (Noxubee County High School), and now he's putting on this day. I'm sure there'll be other things in the future too."

In 2021, Simmons provided free meals to Macon Electric workers and 4-County Electric Power Association linemen for their work following a severe winter storm, and funded a \$50,000 renovation project for NCHS to revitalize its field house and weight room in 2022.

Simmons also donated \$75,000 to the Starkville Parks and Recreation Department that same year to build a turf field at the Starkville Sportsplex.

Simmons said he plans to continue making trips back home to work with local high school students and put on more events, but could not comment on the nature of those future endeavors.

"Everything is not set in stone," he said. "I don't want to speak on anything just yet right now. But we want to grow this city. We don't have a lot here. So, I think that's where it starts."

Another attendee, Johnathan Morris, said he brought his whole family out to the event to support Simmons, but also to see the firework show and enjoy the holiday as a family.

"I'm a big fan of Tennessee Titan Jeffery Simmons, and we came out to support (him)," Morris said. "But it's also pretty nice because it has a lot of stuff for the kids."

###

**FOUR YEARS LATER,
TITANS DT JEFFERY
SIMMONS STILL BUOYED
BY CONTROLLING
OWNER AMY ADAMS
STRUNK'S TRUST IN HIM**

**BY JIM WYATT
TITANS ONLINE
APRIL 14, 2023**

NASHVILLE – Four years ago, after being selected by the Titans in the first round of the 2019 NFL Draft, an emotional Jeffery Simmons vowed to reward controlling owner Amy Adams Strunk for having faith in him.

Simmons, sitting two seats down from Strunk at his introductory press conference, tucked his head and shed tears when Strunk spoke about her trust in him while welcoming him into the organization.

Simmons, who was recovering from an ACL injury at the time, had faced questions following an off-field incident he was involved in back in high school. The well-publicized incident resulted in heavy scrutiny over the pick, but Strunk spoke about second chances, and her faith in Simmons.

"Coming from a woman," Simmons, fighting back tears, said of Strunk at the time. "I'll tell her in front of you guys that she can trust me. I won't let her down."

Strunk was involved in the process that led to the Titans selecting Simmons.

"We are getting a great football player, that goes without saying, but we are getting a great man," Strunk said in April of 2019. "We are a nation that gives second chances, and this young man, Jeffery Simmons, he deserved that second chance."

On Wednesday, the Titans officially awarded Simmons with a second contract.

The big defensive lineman signed his long-term contract extension before another emotional press conference when he once again thanked Strunk for believing in him.

Simmons said he exchanged texts with Strunk after the two sides agreed to terms.

"From day one I told Miss Amy that I would never let her down," Simmons said. "I texted Miss Amy after we came to an agreement, and I told her how much I appreciated her trusting in me from day one. What she sent back to me, she told me: 'You promised me that you would never let me down and you haven't.' And that right there, it hit something inside."

"To have a female owner, a lady owner, in the NFL to trust in you so much, from the adversity I went through on my journey to get here, it means so much to me. Miss Amy, I appreciate you so much."

Simmons has held up his end of the bargain since the Titans selected him with the 19th overall pick on the 2019 NFL Draft out of Mississippi State.

Simmons has been named to two Pro Bowls in four years, and since joining the Titans he ranks second on the team with 21 sacks, trailing only outside linebacker Harold Landry III (26.5). His career totals also include 196 tackles, 19 passes defended, two forced fumbles and three fumble recoveries.

After missing the first six games of his rookie season due to a pre-draft injury, Simmons played in 56 of the team's last 60 games (54 starts). He was a team captain in each of the last two campaigns.

Simmons said he's grown on and off the field over the past four years.

"I know for a fact I have grown," Simmons said. "If you don't grow, especially as a player in this league. From year one, I am going into year five now, I don't think I'd be standing at this podium right now."

"As a man, I try to be better than I was. That's been my motto forever: Be better than I was yesterday, on the field and off the field. Of course, I feel like I have grown as a man, and as a player."

###

ON HIS BIG DAY, TITANS DT JEFFERY SIMMONS IS SMILING THROUGH THE TEARS

**BY JIM WYATT
TITANS ONLINE
APRIL 13, 2023**

NASHVILLE – Jeffery Simmons had a lot of things on his mind when he stepped up to the podium on Wednesday.

Among his thoughts: "I'm going to try not to cry today."

Then the big defensive lineman looked at his mother, and the tears started streaming down his cheeks. At one point he paused for 12 seconds before gathering himself.

"My mom, single parent," Simmons said. "Just to see the journey we have been on as a family. It's crazy," Simmons said. "I think, man, from house to house, apartment to apartment. Sharing a bed with my brother. Now, we're good. ... It's generational wealth, as we call it. It's who I do it for. Every day I wake up, I think about those hard times where I know my mom didn't feel like it. Sometimes I am hurting, but I think about my mom, having raised five kids on her own. For me to say, I don't want to do this. That's my motivation, my family."

Titans General Manager Ran Carthon, Coach Mike Vrabel and a big group of family members were on hand at Ascension Saint Thomas Sports Park on Wednesday for a press conference celebrating the long-term contract extension Simmons signed earlier in the day.

At the conclusion of the press conference, Simmons talked more about his mother, Brenda Bradley, and his upbringing.

Simmons said his mission since first stepping on the football field as a five-year-old – when he used to put on his shoulder pads and hit a big pear tree in the backyard – has always been to make his family proud.

###

And give them a better life.

"I didn't want to make too much eye contact with my mom today because I knew she'd be there crying, and then I'd cry, too," Simmons said with a smile. "But to think about that upbringing, and all the adversity we've been through. ... I know she is proud of me."

Simmons said the family moved six or seven times when he was younger, including a move from Louisiana to Mississippi.

At most places, Simmons shared room with brother, and his two sisters also shared room. Simmons said his mom adopted his uncle's daughter, a cousin, who he also calls a sister.

With a household of five kids, Brenda Bradley had to work all kinds of jobs, from working at a convenience store to working at a prison. She did everything she could to make ends meet, Simmons said.

"But she never missed a birthday," Simmons said.

Simmons said he pulled weeds as a kid to make extra money, to keep her from having to pay for his football uniforms.

Not too long after signing his first NFL contract with the Titans in 2019, Simmons bought his mom a house in Spring Hill, Tennessee, so she could be close.

Now, after signing a mammoth deal with the Titans, the two-time Pro Bowler knows his family will be taken care of for years and years and years to come.

He's also now finally ready to reward himself – he plans to buy a new home, perhaps with a pool.

"I never picture myself wearing another color than two-tone blue, other than a gold jacket," Simmons said. "This is a great day. I hope I retire here, and I hope I can make this franchise happy."

**IT'S BIGGER THAN
FOOTBALL': TITANS'
JEFFERY SIMMONS
SPENDS WEEK GIVING
BACK IN MISSISSIPPI**

**BY STEFAN KRAJISNIK
THE TENNESSEAN -
MISSISSIPPI CLARION
LEDGER
JULY 9, 2022**

STARKVILLE – Before he was an All-Pro and All-SEC defensive tackle, Tennessee Titans star Jeffery Simmons was a manager for his high school football team.

Simmons was in middle school but served as a varsity football manager when he walked through the weight room at Noxubee County High School and saw the rusty weights and bent bars.

It's a sight that stuck with him, particularly as he saw opponents such as West Point with better equipment to help build a "winning culture."

So Simmons made a promise. He wasn't a 6-foot-4, 300-pound menace yet, but his potential had always been apparent as a five-star prospect. Once he made it to the NFL, Simmons said, he'd ensure future Noxubee County athletes had access to better equipment.

The former Mississippi State standout fulfilled the promise Thursday as he stood outside newly named and renovated Jeffery B. Simmons Field House. The only thing more eye-popping than the shiny oversized scissors used in the ribbon cutting was his neon yellow shorts suit.

"I cannot really show my appreciation for Noxubee County enough," Simmons said.

Simmons' time in high school wasn't always as successful as his football career. As a senior in 2016, he was found guilty of malicious mischief and pleaded no contest to a simple assault charge. It came after he was helping break up a fight

between his sister and another woman. Simmons was shown on video striking the woman before walking away.

Simmons said the donations and work he does for his high school are not an attempt to cover up for what happened.

"I moved on from all that," Simmons said. "I don't even talk about it anymore. I don't live in the past. My thing is, what I'm doing now is to make sure my name, my brand — the Jeffery Simmons brand — will leave a legacy not just for me but for my kids and their future.

"That's my biggest thing. I have nephews, nieces. What can I do to make sure they're good in their future and make sure they don't have to live off that — live off something that happened 20 years ago, 30 years ago."

NCHS athletics director Karen Dixon — who has known Simmons since he was in her fourth-grade class — says once the school was informed of Simmons' plan with the weight room, it was their idea to name the field house after him.

The unveiling in Macon, Mississippi, was only the start of an eventful week back home for Simmons. He made the short trek Friday to Starkville, where he signed a \$75,000 check for Starkville Parks and Recreation toward a new turf field at the Starkville Sportsplex.

The field was also named in his honor and was used through the weekend for his third annual youth camp.

"It's bigger than football," Simmons said Saturday. "It's not all about just these young kids seeing us play on Thursdays, Monday nights and Sundays. These kids matter. The town of Starkville matters. The town of Macon matters."

Tennessee Titans defensive lineman Jeffery Simmons reacts after a play in the first half against the

Cincinnati Bengals at Nissan Stadium.

Simmons was joined at his camp by NFL players Elgton Jenkins, Tyre Phillips, J.T. Gray and Gerri Green, among others. The group remains tight-knit as their careers have shifted away from Mississippi, and Simmons says there is never hesitation when they ask each other to help with events such as youth camps.

Mississippi State quarterback Will Rogers also received an invitation from Simmons. He remembers the angst of being a kid at a youth camp with successful football players around. Now he notes the commitment that comes with being on the adult side.

"They're pros, for sure," Rogers said. "The way they conduct themselves — not only on the field but also coming back and doing things like this for the community. Helping people that don't have as much ... It's humbling to see and definitely something I'm going to learn from."

###

**TENNESSEE TITANS
DRAFT PICK PETER
SKORONSKI'S
GRANDFATHER PLAYED
FOR VINCE LOMBARDI:
WHAT ELSE TO KNOW**

**BY MIKE ORGAN
THE TENNESSEAN
APRIL 28, 2023**

The Tennessee Titans selected former Northwestern offensive tackle Peter Skoronski with the 11th pick in the first round of the 2023 NFL Draft Thursday.

Skoronski was the third offensive lineman taken in the draft behind Ohio State's Paris Johnson Jr. to Arizona and Tennessee's Darnell Wright to Chicago.

Here are three things to know about Skoronski:

Grandfather played for Vince Lombardi

Skoronski's grandfather Bob Skoronski was an offensive tackle for the Green Bay Packers when Vince Lombardi was building a dynasty. He spent nine seasons with the franchise.

He was a rookie in 1956, spent two years in the U.S. Air Force, and returned to Green Bay from 1959-68.

Bob Skoronski, 84, played in two Super Bowls, was an All-Pro in 1966 and is in the Green Bay Packers Hall of Fame.

Peter Skoronski tweeted earlier Thursday that his grandfather served as his inspiration to make it to the NFL.

Nation's best pass blocker

Skoronski finished the 2022 season with Pro Football Focus' highest pass-blocking grade in the country at 93.0. That also is one of the highest ratings of all time.

The 6-foot-4, 315 pounder allowed only six pressures on 480 pass-blocking snaps.

Skoronski posted a 79.1 run-blocking grade, which was fifth among Power 5 offensive tackles.

Skoronski was Northwestern's first offensive lineman to earn the Rimington-Pace Big Ten Offensive Lineman of the Year. He also became only the third Wildcat offensive lineman to earn two All-Big Ten first team awards under Pat Fitzgerald.

He was a finalist for the 2022 Outland Trophy.

Didn't translate

Even with Skoronski anchoring the line, Northwestern was not among the top offensive teams in the Big 10.

The Wildcats finished 10th in the Big Ten and 94th nationally in passing (210.3 yards) and ninth in the Big Ten and 98th nationally in rushing (125.1 yards).

Northwestern scored only 10 passing touchdowns and 11 rushing.

###

**FOR TENNESSEE TITANS
1ST-ROUNDER PETER
SKORONSKI, CHICAGO
HOMECOMING COMES
WITH BIG CHANGE**

**BY NICK SUSS
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
AUGUST 11, 2023**

Peter Skoronski isn't at the position he's used to, and isn't in the position to complain about it.

Skoronski's been starting at left guard for the Tennessee Titans since the day he arrived in Nashville after the Titans made him the No. 11 pick in the 2023 NFL Draft. The only problem? Skoronski isn't a guard. Never has been. He was an All-America left tackle at Northwestern and a five-star recruit as a left tackle before that.

He's always played the most premium position on the offensive line and he's always done it well. But now, in the days before his preseason debut as an NFL guard, Skoronski isn't caught up in where he's playing so long as he is, in fact, playing.

"My real goal is just to be a great NFL player," Skoronski said. "I'd love to just be on the field if at all. Beggars can't be choosers I guess in that sense."

The Titans' preseason opener against the Chicago Bears on Saturday (noon, News Channel 2) represents a big moment for Skoronski for a few reasons. One, it's his first opportunity to play in the NFL. Two, it's his first opportunity to play guard in the NFL. And three, he's playing in friendly confines. Skoronski grew up and played high school and college football in the Chicago area and says he's been coordinating ticket requests with friends and family for months.

It's hard to call this a grand homecoming for Skoronski. He hasn't been in Nashville long enough to miss a Windy City winter. He's only been with the Titans for about as long as a college freshman

would spend in the dorms before packing a few loads of laundry in the car and heading home for Thanksgiving dinner.

Instead of laundry, Skoronski's bringing a bus-load of offensive linemen home with him. Skoronski says he's in charge of sating their Thanksgiving-sized appetites by picking the restaurant for the linemen dinner Friday night.

Whether it's picking the perfect eatery or sliding inside to guard for the first time in his life, Skoronski has the same mission.

"I'm trying to be a great teammate," Skoronski said.

Why guard matters

Titans offensive line coach Jason Houghtaling says it wasn't hard to project Skoronski's skills at guard.

"You watch that tape from his college days at Northwestern," Houghtaling said. "When he gets his hands on people he can control them. That's the name of the game there. Just his physicality. Any of their in-the-box runs, he looked really comfortable climbing to second-level defenders, redirecting and all those things."

There's a stigma in football circles that guards are less important than tackles. And it's not hard to see why. Defensive ends and outside linebackers have always been the biggest threats to quarterbacks. So tackles, naturally, are most important for protecting passers. This is especially true of left tackles, since most quarterbacks are right handed and left tackles are tasked with preventing rushers from sneaking up on quarterbacks from behind.

From 2000-20, there were 76 tackles picked in the first round versus 35 guards and centers combined. Six guards and centers make at least \$15 million per year compared to 22 tackles. If an offensive lineman wants to be picked higher or paid more, he's better off on the outside.

But times are changing. For nearly a decade, the league's most fearsome pass rusher has been Aaron Donald, a defensive tackle. And as a new generation of interior pass rushers like the Titans' Jeffery Simmons, the New York Jets' Quinnen Williams, the Washington Commanders' Daron Payne and the New York Giants' Dexter Lawrence are approaching their prime and earning big pay days, guards are only going to become more vital.

"Guys like Jeff are some of the best in the league at getting to the quarterback and stopping the pass game," Skoronski said. "That makes your job important. If they're paying the guy across from you, you better be good at it too."

Making the most of the preseason

The Titans' other guard, Daniel Brunskill, knows a thing or two about changing positions. He was a tight end until his senior year of college when he moved to tackle, and he's played center, guard and tackle as a pro. Unlike Skoronski, Brunskill was undrafted. He made his pro debut as an Atlanta Falcon in a preseason game against the Miami Dolphins in 2017, mostly playing as a reserve tackle.

To Brunskill, the challenge of playing your first preseason game is the immediacy of it all.

"They had told us the ones were going to go a certain amount and then all of the sudden the ones went like one drive and it was like 'Hey, go!'" Brunskill remembers. "You've got to go from zero to 100 right now and just kind of go out there and perform."

That type of urgency is what Brunskill is telling Skoronski and the other rookies to be prepared for. Football moves fast. One second you're on the bench. Another there's been a turnover so you're scrambling to find your mouthpiece before running out onto the field. Preseason simulates that at warp speed, with units cycling through

and players trying new positions on nearly every drive.

Not that Skoronski's teammates are concerned about the first-rounder acclimating. Titans tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere, who is suspended the first six games of 2023 for violating the NFL's gambling policy, was in Skoronski's position last year: a former five-star recruit from the Big Ten thrust into starting as a rookie Day 1.

But Petit-Frere doesn't consider his situation and Skoronski's equal.

"Peter's in an even better position than me," Petit-Frere said. "He's coming in and he's really come out running."

#

BEHIND THE SCENES ON TITANS DRAFT NIGHT: HOW PETER SKORONSKI LANDED IN TENNESSEE

**BY DAN POMPEI
THE ATHLETIC
MAY 4, 2023**

CHICAGO — In an alcove of a cozy restaurant, Peter Skoronski, known for being impenetrable, is surrounded by hope.

His phone rings, Skoronski answers, and his eyes get wide.

He could have been at Kansas City's Union Station, hobnobbing with Roger Goodell, Mel Kiper Jr. and Bryce Young. He could have been bowing before 1,500 media members, 300,000 fans and 54 million who watched on ABC, ESPN or NFL Network.

Ever an offensive lineman, Skoronski preferred a dimly lit hideaway with family, friends, coaches and teammates, the people, he says, who helped him get here. So he invited about 75 of them to a private gathering — sorry ABC, ESPN and NFL Network.

Piece Pizza in Wicker Park was where his family celebrated his baptism to Christianity 21 years ago, and the place they celebrate his baptism to the NFL today.

Among the people in that alcove eating New Haven-style pizza are his grandmother Ruth, wife of the late Bob Skoronski, his sister Elizabeth and brother Robbie, a contingent from Connecticut where his family's roots grew, and many Northwestern teammates and classmates.

With the phone to his ear, Peter bounds up a few stairs to the back of the restaurant as if he is hunting linebacker. Just past a board listing the eight beers brewed on-site, he covers one ear and talks on his phone.

Skoronski removes a cap with a question mark on it. He and his

family had the question mark caps made for a Christmas party. He will be wearing another hat soon.

He puts the phone down, turns to the crowd and yells, "Tennessee!"

Cheers, raised fists.

Chants, "Pete! Pete! Pete!"

As it should be, mom Anne gets the first hug, then his father, Bob Jr.

Next is his agent, Tommy Condon. Robbie and Elizabeth give him a group hug.

Kurt Anderson, his offensive line coach at Northwestern, gives his special salutation — the "too sweet high five" inspired by professional wrestlers with only the middle fingers and thumbs pinched together.

Then Anderson gives him an embrace that would break a lesser man's ribs. Northwestern head coach Pat Fitzgerald wraps his arms around Skoronski next. Skoronski makes his way around the room, hug after hug after hug.

His father addresses the group. "He's earned every single thing he's gotten," he says. "He took zero shortcuts. Ever. His teammates know. So do his coaches. No shortcuts. We should all be like that."

Peter's grandfather Bob, a stalwart of the Lombardi dynasty as the left tackle for the Packers for 11 years, loved custard. Peter loves custard, so much, in fact, that his brother and sister call him "Custard." So now, it's time for some celebratory custard, distributed in small plastic containers.

And Peter is ready — more than ready — for that first beer of the evening — a Miller Lite.

"Very relieved, very happy," he says in a private moment between sips. "I couldn't be happier with the destination. I knew when the process started that the Titans were

a great option. I'm ready to be a Titan."

He could have been a Packer like his grandfather — he was always a Packers fan. Or a Bear in his hometown. He could have been an Eagle or a Jet or who knows what.

The hope was only for a place he would belong.

At Maine South High School in Park Ridge, Ill., Skoronski received his first college scholarship offer as a sophomore. Among his many suitors were Michigan, Notre Dame and Stanford. The reality is he would have been given a football scholarship any place he wanted. Well, almost any place.

Intrigued by Vanderbilt's academic reputation and the thought of calling Nashville home, he visited the university his junior year. And he might have chosen Vanderbilt, but Vanderbilt did not offer him a scholarship. Perhaps that explains why the Commodores were everyone's favorite opponent back then.

At Northwestern, he was a day-one starter at left tackle. Over three seasons, his consistency, fastidiousness and brute force made the case that he was the best blocker in the college game. Skoronski was voted Big Ten offensive lineman of the year and a consensus All-American.

To train for the combine after his final college season, he hired offensive line savant Duke Manyweather and trained at Sports Academy at The Star in Frisco, Texas.

Early in the year, Skoronski's arm length — or lack of it — became a talking point. Manyweather recommended Skoronski hang from a pullup bar daily to stretch the muscles and tendons, potentially lengthening his arms by as much as a half-inch. Skoronski tried it, but his arms still measured 32 1/4 at the combine in March. Over the past two decades, that put him in the fourth percentile of NFL tackles.

So began the narrative that Skoronski would have to play guard, which could have diminished his stock for two reasons — it was a new position for him, and guards aren't valued as much as tackles. Other than hanging from a pullup bar, there wasn't anything he could do about it.

At the combine, Skoronski was interviewed by most of the teams in the league, including 14 formally — the Cardinals, Chargers, Commanders, Giants, Falcons, Jaguars, Jets, Lions, Packers, Raiders, Seahawks, Steelers, Texans and Titans.

None of the interviewers brought up his arm length, but most asked him what position he saw himself playing. His answer to them all was, "I think I can play tackle. But I'm more than happy to move inside or play anywhere."

Still, Skoronski was irked by the idea that he couldn't be a tackle because his arms were too short.

"I sort of let them know that I didn't like being reduced to a measurement like that," he says. "And most teams were pretty open to understanding. No one really put me in the box of 'you can't play tackle.' So I was encouraged by that."

A few of the interviews were memorable. He enjoyed time with Steelers coach Mike Tomlin and seemed to connect with Titans coach Mike Vrabel. "I liked his energy," Skoronski says.

The conversation was a little less comfortable with the Falcons — undoubtedly by design. Skoronski had been told that some interviewers are purposely abrasive in an attempt to see how prospects react. He was prepared.

"The head coach was on me the second I got in there," Skoronski says of Arthur Smith. "I was giving them generic answers to their questions, and he said, 'You're really boring me right now. Your answers are so boring.' The whole

meeting, he kept looking at his computer. I was kind of laughing to myself and said, 'Sorry, I don't know what you want me to do. I'm answering you honestly.'"

The combine is known for testing participants' physical skills and mental acumen. It is less known for testing endurance, but that is absolutely a part of the process. Twelve of Skoronski's formal combine interviews came rapid-fire one morning over four hours.

It didn't help that he had a sore throat and congestion that required a box of tissue nearby. His combine numbers still were impressive — his vertical jump of 34 1/2 inches was the best among offensive linemen, and his 30 bench-press reps of 225 pounds were second most among offensive tackles. Skoronski was disappointed with his 40-yard dash time of 5.12 because he had run faster in training.

For Northwestern's pro day two weeks later, Skoronski still was not feeling himself. His conditioning was off, and it showed in positional drills. "I felt pretty gassed," he says. "A few things were sloppy, in my opinion. I wasn't pleased."

At the pro day, Skoronski met individually with offensive line coaches of the Bears, Bills, Jets, Raiders, Steelers and Titans. Each of them did a sample installation for him, then asked him to repeat back to them what he had learned.

About nine more offensive line coaches asked him to talk offense with them in video conferences in the following weeks. Among them were coaches from the Bucs, Cardinals, Chiefs, Cowboys, Packers and Ravens.

Between the combine and the draft, Skoronski moved back to his Evanston apartment and trained with Bears great Olin Kreutz, who has worked with numerous prospects and NFL offensive linemen.

Only the Eagles and Jets invited Skoronski for top-30 visits.

In Philadelphia, he spent significant time with general manager Howie Roseman, head coach Nick Sirianni and offensive line coach Jeff Stoutland. The Eagles made it clear they thought he could play tackle in the NFL. He came away impressed with the organization and how they treat people, thinking it would be an excellent place to play.

After talking with Jets general manager Joe Douglas, offensive coordinator Nathaniel Hackett and offensive line coach Keith Carter, Skoronski thought the Jets were on the right track. He was intrigued by the opportunities there.

The Bears and Packers also invited him to their facilities on their local prospect days. In about two hours at Halas Hall, Skoronski spent most of his time with offensive line coach Chris Morgan and never met with general manager Ryan Poles — perhaps a tipoff about how the team felt about him.

His visit to Lambeau Field also did not encourage him about a future with the team. He underwent medical testing and met with offensive line coach Luke Butkus — that was it.

"If I hadn't been a Packers fan," he says, "I probably would have considered it a waste of time."

A little over three months ago, Ran Carthon was introduced as the Titans' general manager. He came from the 49ers, where, as their player personnel director, he helped the team draft offensive tackle Mike McGlinchey in the first round and trade for offensive tackle Trent Williams.

Carthon played running back for the Colts and Lions. He is the son of Maurice Carthon, who played fullback for Bill Parcells and later coached on his staff. As much as anyone, Ran understands the value of a domineering blocker. And he understands the Titans didn't have enough of them last season when they gave up the fifth most sacks in the league.

In the offseason, two of the pillars of the Titans' offense, tackle Taylor Lewan and center Ben Jones, became casualties of time and were released. Another starter, guard Nate Davis, went to Chicago as a free agent.

They needed replacements, and they needed upgrades. So when Carthon watched the tape of Skoronski, he was desirous.

"I thought he was a complete offensive lineman," Carthon says. "You like the efficiency he plays with. He's one of those guys who just knows how to block his man and does it at a high level. The number one word I think of when I think about the way he plays is efficient."

Nobody respects commanding blockers more than Vrabel, the former Super Bowl champion linebacker who has presided over four rushing offenses that finished in the top five of the league in five seasons as the head coach in Tennessee.

Vrabel did his own research on Skoronski, including making a call to Fitzgerald. He had a thorough understanding of the player and person before he shook his hand and interviewed him at the combine.

"There wasn't a whole lot of concern with him," Vrabel says. "The reason you have to interview some of these players is you have to figure out if they are a fit. It was easy to see he'd be an easy fit. It was an easy conversation."

The comfort level with Vrabel and the organization was such that the Titans didn't think it was necessary to bring Skoronski to Nashville for a top-30 visit.

"He was just clean," Carthon says. "After our meetings with the scouts and meeting with him at the combine, we didn't have any further questions we wanted to dig on. It was easy for us."

The evaluation was made easier, Vrabel says, by watching tape of Skoronski back-to-back with tape of other top tackle prospects. Carthon added that they separated the tackles in part by who fit their scheme best.

Analytics for blocking efficiency broken down by run and pass confirmed what the eyes attested, Carthon says, as did blocking win percentages in man and zone concepts.

And so Carthon chuckled at the arm-length discussion.

"He's played at a high level against some high-round draft picks, NFL players with arm length," he says. "Although it doesn't check a box you typically would want, he knows how to play the game within the confines of what he has."

The Titans are not typecasting Skoronski as a guard. Or tackle. Carthon is impressed that he has the physical capability to play either, as well as the willingness. Vrabel says he will not even rule out center.

"I would not put a restriction on where I felt he could play," he says. "When he starts working here, we will do drills that are conducive to overall offensive line fundamentals. Then when we put him in team reps in training camp, we'll figure out where he can help the team."

Before the draft, the Titans, picking 11th, thought Skoronski was beyond their reach. Carthon suspected the Raiders might take him with the seventh selection. It turned out their reach was long enough.

When the Titans chose him, Carthon's phone buzzed. And buzzed and buzzed. About nine texts came in from his friends around the NFL.

"Loved him."

"He was one of our top guys."

"Had he been there for us, we were taking him."

And then there was one from John Lynch, his former boss with the 49ers.

"Great pick," it said.

The next day, Skoronski and his parents were flown to Nashville on a private G2 jet, courtesy of the Titans.

The Titans could have selected quarterback Will Levis with the 11th pick. Instead, they picked Skoronski and chose Levis in the second round. That's interesting because Levis' grandfather Dave Kelly was the defensive line coach at Yale when Skoronski's father was a defensive lineman for the Bulldogs. Bob Skoronski has known Levis' mother, Beth, since she was a little girl.

Peter is where he should be, in Nashville, after all.

At the indoor practice facility at Saint Thomas Sports Park, the first-round pick smiled easily and held up a jersey with his name and the number 1 on it.

On his right was Carthon. On his left, Vrabel.

He wore a Titans cap, and the team photographer captured the moment, this time for the world to share.

There was Peter Skoronski, once again surrounded by hope.

###

PETER SKORONSKI WAS THE ONLY PLAYER TO DECLINE NFL DRAFT INVITE. HIS LIFE STORY EXPLAINS WHY

**BY PAUL SKRBINA
THE TENNESSEAN
MAY 1, 2023**

Long before the NFL became a reality, little Peter Skoronski dreamed big about being a lot of things — a lifeguard, a crossing guard, an airport worker.

And a musher. Wait, a musher?

The Tennessee Titans' first-round draft pick, an offensive lineman out of Northwestern who stands 6-foot-4 and weighs 313 pounds, wanted to be the guy who controls the dogs from a sled in the Iditarod.

"One year we found someone that had the Huskies and the sleds ... " Skoronski's father, Bob, said Friday after watching his son's introductory press conference at the Titans' practice facility.

"His uncle actually gave him that for his birthday," Skoronski's mother, Anne, added.

"He was standing on the back of one of the sleds and did the mushing," his father continued. "He was a small, little boy but he was really into that."

While those dreams of being pulled across the Alaska wilderness grew smaller as Skoronski grew larger, he still is an avid follower of the famous sled dog race.

Skoronski's parents didn't allow him to play football until he was a 12-year-old sixth-grader playing against seventh- and eighth-graders. They couldn't remember exactly how big their son was then, but he was big enough that he had a stripe on his helmet, signifying he wasn't allowed to carry the ball.

"I had to play O-line," Skoronski said. "So there wasn't really much of

a question about it. I was an O-lineman right off the bat."

What type of offensive lineman Skoronski will be for the Titans — a tackle, which he played in college, or a guard — remains to be seen. But one thing is for sure: the kid who received a tackling dummy as a birthday gift when he was younger, the not-so-little kid who would sit in his backyard and draw up football plays, is in the NFL now, the 11th overall pick of the 2023 NFL Draft.

The pomp and circumstance of the draft wasn't Skoronski's jam, which is part of the reason he respectfully declined the offer to be there. He also wanted to share the moment with those close to him, at a place close to his heart.

With around 100 family, friends and former coaches in attendance, including a "busload" who flew in from Connecticut, Skoronski took the call he's been waiting a long time for Thursday night from new Titans general manager Ran Carthon, owner Amy Adams Strunk and coach Mike Vrabel.

"We knew somebody was going to call at some point," Skoronski's father said. "We kind of mentally eliminated the Titans because everyone said they were going to trade up for a quarterback. Even though this was a destination that we were very much hoping for, I did everything I could to not pay attention to what was going on just because of the nervous aspect of it."

Those nerves settled after Skoronski was picked. By Friday, a smiling Peter Skoronski was plastered on the Titans' Twitter profile.

Though he wasn't in Kansas City for the draft, Skoronski made it a point to go there for another reason. Leading up to the draft, Skoronski and fellow draftee Bijan Robinson took part in a "day in the life" experience at Whiteman Air Force Base. The trip included a flight over the site of the NFL draft in a National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.

Skoronski did it, in part, to honor his grandfather, who missed two seasons after his rookie year in the NFL to serve in the Air Force.

"He's as humble as the day is long," Skoronski's college coach Pat Fitzgerald said.

'Look at the bloodlines for this kid'

Fitzgerald was at Maine South evaluating another player when the school's football coach, Dave Inserra, suggested that Fitzgerald remember the name of an eighth-grader who was coming in the next school year. The name was Peter Skoronski.

"I'm like 'Dave, whatever. Come on, man,'" Fitzgerald said. "He's like, 'You won't forget (his name).'"

Curious, Fitzgerald went home and googled the name. What he found was a surprise. What he found was that Skoronski's grandfather, also named Bob Skoronski, was a Pro Bowl tackle and captain under Vince Lombardi with the Green Bay Packers, whom he helped to five NFL championships and two Super Bowl champions in his 11 seasons with the team. He died in 2018.

Fitzgerald also found that Skoronski's father was a defensive lineman at Yale.

"'Oh, wow. Look at the bloodlines for this kid,'" Fitzgerald thought to himself. "'It will be interesting to see if he ends up being a player.'"

Fitzgerald found out for himself after Skoronski chose Northwestern over Notre Dame and Stanford.

Skoronski had the highest pass-blocking grade in the nation (93.0) and allowed just six pressures on 480 pass-blocking snaps. He was the Big Ten offensive lineman of the year last season, a first in Northwestern history. Twice he was named All-Big Ten first team. He was a unanimous first-team All-American in 2022, another Northwestern first. He also was a finalist for the 2022 Outland Trophy, awarded to the nation's best

interior lineman on both offense and defense.

Inserra's premonition wasn't the first about Skoronski. When he was 4, his father told Inserra he had his next offensive lineman.

"His dad looked at me and said 'I've got a tackle for you,'" Inserra said. "It's a very athletic family. He wasn't saying 'I've got a QB, I've got a receiver, I've got a RB.' He straight up said, 'I've got a tackle for you,' when he was 4 years old."

'That's unheard of'

Skoronski chose not to graduate early from high school, like some college football players do. Instead he wanted to chase down another goal — being his school's valedictorian in a class of 630. Mission accomplished.

Staying for his full senior year of high school also allowed Skoronski to participate in track and field, in which he also was an all-state selection, and spend some more precious time with his friends and family.

Staying also meant Skoronski reported to college on Father's Day, giving the high school All-American and three-time all-state selection just 15 install practices and two weeks to prepare for his first college season. No matter, Skoronski started as a true freshman and went on to start 33 games in his three seasons with the Wildcats.

"That's unheard of," Fitzgerald said.

There will be an NFL learning curve, of course. But if Skoronski's past is indicative of his future, which includes blocking for Derrick Henry, that curve will be short.

"Peter has an ability to move people against their will in an era of football where it's all high school 7-on-7 and throwing the rock all over the place," Fitzgerald said. "Peter's fundamentals and his functional strength, he's got unbelievable strength numbers. ... It's a perfect fit for what the Titans do."

Skoronski showed up in Nashville on Friday wearing a simple blue suit, a simple blue tie, brown dress shoes and a big smile, his parents by his side, the future he's dreamed about right in front of him. He held up a blue Titans jersey with his last name and the number 1 on the back as he stood quietly between Vrabel and Carthan.

"Peter is exactly who he is. He's not going to be the loud guy boasting walking down the hallway," Inserra said. "He's not going to overtake a room. But when it's time for business, heads up, because he's all business."

"The Rams were asking me and they were like, 'It's been easy for him. How's he going to deal with a challenge?' I was like, 'It hasn't been easy for him. Everything behind the scenes, you can't understand how hard he's worked. He's prepared to the utmost for everything.'"

Including the Iditarod, which he follows closely to this day.

###

**DRAFT DIARIES: SAC
STATE GUARD
EMBRACES THE CALM
BEFORE THE STORM OF
NFL DRAFT NIGHT**

**BY JACK FREEMAN
THE STATE HORNET
APRIL 23, 2025**

Editor's Note: This article is part of a larger series, Draft Diaries, which will chronicle Jackson Slater's journey to the NFL Draft.

With the NFL Draft right around the corner, Sacramento State offensive lineman Jackson Slater has had some time to reflect on his pre-draft whirlwind.

Looking back, his trip to the Senior Bowl sticks out as the moment he felt a switch flip. When Slater was at Sac State, he always tried to play with inhuman perfection.

However, in Mobile, Alabama, Slater said his mindset changed completely.

"The growth for me was understanding how imperfect football really is at times," Slater said. "Being able to accept the good and the bad... that's a huge part of my game I haven't been able to perfect."

Slater said that week showed him how football remains the same despite its different levels. He also said the switch in mindset has made it easier to learn, as he's less focused on his shortcomings.

"You don't have this stuff going through your mind anymore like 'Okay, I can't give up a pressure on this play' or 'If I do this, a scout is going to see it and I'm not going to have a shot anymore,'" Slater said. "I got my shot, I've proved I belong along the way."

Since his pro day, Slater went on two top-30 visits to NFL teams' facilities, the Indianapolis Colts and Chicago Bears. He also went on a local day visit with the Seattle Seahawks, on top of Zoom

interviews with around 60% of the teams in the league.

"I didn't have a ton of them, but I'm glad I didn't have a bunch of them," Slater said of his top-30 visits. "The travel and not being able to work out piece would have made me crazy a little bit."

Slater said each team did their visits differently. His meeting with the Colts was more of a personal interview with their offensive line coach, while the Bears had him meet with the main decision-makers of the organization.

In an interview with TheSFNiners podcast, Slater said that his visit with the Seahawks was a full circle moment for him as he played Little League with the son of current Seahawks General Manager John Schneider.

Slater said that during his visits, he heard a range of grades on him. They varied from the third to the fifth round, which he said lined up with his expectations of what teams would think of him.

"Coming from a small school, that impacts it," Slater said. "I wouldn't say I think too much into it, but I feel like the team that's going to draft me is the team that feels the best about what I've been able to show."

Slater has repeatedly said he thinks teams evaluate him differently coming from the FCS, and said he thought about transferring at the end of his junior season. Ultimately, he stayed put, citing the feeling of being wanted at Sac State, especially by o-line coach Kris Richardson.

"I wouldn't say I ever wanted to leave," Slater said. "Leaving a legacy at a place where I could call home means a lot more than a few hundred thousand (dollars) to go play at a Big 10 school."

Slater said he feels confident heading into the draft process, but he hopes wherever he lands has a plan to at least develop him, if not to start him. He said he's also looking

for an o-line coach who's a teacher and veterans he can learn from.

Going into the draft process, Slater made the move from guard, where he played all four years at Sac State, to center. After meeting with teams, Slater said that most teams viewed him as a swing guard and center.

Now, after two weeks of cross-country flights and Zoom interviews, Slater has made it through the pre-draft marathon. All that's left for him to do is wait.

"In my football career, I've gotten really lucky that even if it might not be the best situation starting out, it usually ends up being a good place for me," Slater said. "I'm ready to accept however it shakes out."

The NFL Draft's first round kicks off Thursday at 5 p.m. PST, with the second and third on Saturday and the remaining seven on Sunday.

###

TITANS KICKER JOEY SLYE HONORING LEGACY OF LOST BIG BROTHER, A.J., WITH EACH KICK, AND CONVERSATION

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JULY 28, 2025

NASHVILLE – Joey Slye is living his dream – kicking in the National Football League.

Yet for Slye, there will always be something, or someone, missing.

Slye's childhood dream always included his older brother being with him. Slye lost his brother, A.J., to leukemia, back in 2014.

His mission today is to carry on his legacy with each kick, and conversation.

"Everything I do I try to bring honor and glory back to him and continue his legacy, which I feel like was cut short," Slye said. "We grew up playing sports our entire life, and my brother never got to watch me play in the NFL... I thought it would be incredible for him to witness, and have an opportunity to experience, with me. But I never had that with him. So, I try to do as much as I can to make it feel like he is still here. And I want to spread the word about him.

"He's the reason I do what I do. When people see me, I want them to see my brother, and I want them to know my brother's story."

The Titans signed Slye, who kicked for the Patriots in 2024, back in March to replace veteran Nick Folk. In his first six NFL seasons, while playing with the Panthers, Texans, 49ers, Commanders and Patriots, he's made 147-of-180 (81.7 percent) field goals. He made a 63-yarder, the fourth longest in NFL history, last season in New England.

Slye made his Nissan Stadium debut on Saturday, when he made all seven of his field goals – including

a 66-yarder – during the team's open practice.

Slye, 29, said his mission this season is to put together the most complete season of his career, and he believes his chances are enhanced by being around new special teams coordinator John Fassel, and fellow specialists Johnny Hekker, the team's punter and holder, and long snapper Morgan Cox.

Also, one of his big priorities: Getting involved in the community in Tennessee.

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis is especially close to his heart – it's where A.J. bravely fought acute myeloid leukemia before passing away on Thursday, Feb. 27, 2014.

During his career, Slye has regularly visited hospitals to spend time with patients dealing with cancer. While with the Patriots, Slye went to Boston Children's Hospital, and was connected with One Mission, a Massachusetts-based pediatric cancer foundation for kids fighting cancer. While in Washington D.C., he went to Children's National Hospital.

Slye remembers well what his brother went through during his battle with cancer, when he went through chemotherapy, radiation, surgeries, and a bone marrow transplant.

"He battled for 14 months through one of the most hellish circumstances you could ever imagine, and did it with a smile on his face," Slye said. "The perspective it gave me as a young kid, and the life I wanted to live, is why I do what I do."

A.J. Slye was 2 ½ years older than Joey, and they did everything together.

While they were growing up, Slye's father worked for the United States Army, so the family moved around a lot, living in California, Montana,

New Mexico before settling in Virginia.

It made the brothers even closer.

A.J. was in his first year at Salisbury University in Maryland when he began having some neck and back pain. After undergoing tests, he was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia, a rare form of blood cell cancer.

The battle took a toll on A.J.'s body, but not his spirit.

A.J. Slye was 20 years old when he died, less than two months before Joey turned 18, and about to graduate from high school.

Little brother will never forget any of it.

"I'm not sure there's a day that goes by that Joey doesn't bring up his brother, and his brother growing up," Hekker said. "It's definitely molded him into the man that he is today. Joey is a hard-working dude that is detail-oriented. The relationship he had with his brother growing up definitely made him a tougher person, which you have to be to be an NFL kicker.

"I love that he is using his platform now to raise awareness and funds for leukemia research, and for supporting families going through similar things that he did. I love seeing the heart he has for that community."

Slye has a tattoo on his right shoulder that shows a picture of he and A.J. the last time they played football together in high school at North Stafford. After successful kicks, Slye has raised six fingers skyward to honor his brother, who wore No.6 when they played together in high school.

The Slye family started the SlyeStrong#6 Foundation in honor of A.J., and every year, the foundation hosts a handful of events and charity drive to benefit hospitals and families navigating a cancer diagnoses. The Foundation also gives out six \$2,000 scholarships.

This year A.J. would've turned 31 and in honor of that, Slye is working to raise \$310,000 for the Leukemia Lymphoma Society.

Slye has used the NFL's My Cause My Cleats Initiative to highlight his brother's legacy.

"Any opportunity that I have to put a spotlight on cancer, cancer research, especially childhood cancer is something I want to get behind," Slye said.

Slye never hesitates to bring his brother up in conversations, and he never will.

When Slye and his wife, Brittaney, had a new baby girl in November, they named her Palmer Memphis Slye in tribute to her uncle A.J., and his time at St. Jude in Memphis, Tennessee.

"Whenever a tragedy happens, everyone has an introspective look, like, 'that could have been me'," Slye said. "A car accident happens, and people might think, 'that could have been me.' To me, it's made me think more like: 'What am I doing with the days that I am given? The things I go through, I think: What would my brother be doing in this instance?'"

"What I try to do is have a lot of success throughout my career, and with that success I want it to follow with having the opportunity to have conversations about my brother, and the life that he lived and the fight that he had to endure."

###

NEW TITANS CB L'JARIUS SNEED THANKFUL TO BE VESSEL OF GOD FOR HIS FAMILY

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
APRIL 4, 2024

NASHVILLE – L'Jarius Sneed walked the hallways at Ascension Saint Thomas Sports Park for the first time on Tuesday, and he was beaming with pride.

After agreeing to a whopping new contract with the Titans following the team's trade with the Chiefs, Sneed couldn't help but think of his good fortune.

And, about how far he'd come.

"It is a feeling that I can't explain," said Sneed, his six-year-old son and his mother by his side for the experience. "I've tried not to shed tears, but I was just thinking about how blessed I am. To be able to give my kids this experience, that I wish I had when I was little. I am glad God made me a vessel to show my kids."

Sneed arrives in Tennessee after experiencing big success with the Chiefs.

In Kansas City, he won two Super Bowl rings, and developed into one of the NFL's top young cornerbacks.

It's where he was first able to begin giving back to those around him after going through tough times growing up, when nothing came easy. Sneed managed to fight through it all, a childhood when both his parents were imprisoned, and times were hard as he tried to find his own way, his brothers leading the way then.

After being introduced as the newest Titan on Tuesday, Sneed reflected on his life's experiences, and how much he wanted to change things moving forward.

"I want things different," Sneed said. "I even sat down with my

family, and I have meetings with my family, on how I want to be better at this. 'I want this, I want that. I don't want things done this way.' It is cycle breaking. I want to break the cycle for my family, for generation curses. And I thank God for letting me be that person to change their lives."

Sneed is doing that by the way he lives, with perseverance, and faith.

After playing football at Minden High School (Louisiana), Sneed didn't have offers from big schools as he looked to play at the next level.

"Louisiana Tech, Grambling, Southern, Alabama State, Nichols State," Sneed said, "and that was it."

Sneed picked Louisiana Tech, where he made the transition from receiver to defensive back.

"My first year of college, 2016, I could say it was hell," Sneed said with a chuckle. "We had two-a-days, it was my first time playing defense. It was a whole lot of new stuff. But I found my way."

After playing at Louisiana Tech, Sneed wasn't sure what would come next, but he had the NFL on his mind.

Sneed said he got a "late invite" to the NFL Combine, where he had a chance to put his talents on display.

The Chiefs ended up drafting him in the fourth round of the 2020 NFL Draft, and he earned All-Rookie honors from the Pro Football Writers Association of America his first NFL season.

In 57 games (54 starts) over four seasons (2020-23) with the City Chiefs, Sneed totaled 303 tackles, 19 tackles for loss, 6.5 sacks, 10 interceptions, 40 passes defended, four forced fumbles, three fumble recoveries. He developed a reputation for being one of the league's rising defensive standouts.

When the Chiefs placed the franchise tag on him last month, the

Titans targeted, and eventually traded, for him.

"I am definitely living proof that if you put the work in, it doesn't matter where you are from or what school you went to," Sneed said. "If you stay close to God, things will work out, with His will."

In addition to his accomplishments on the field, Sneed did some pretty cool things off it in Kansas City as well.

After his rookie season, he bought his mother, Jane, a four-bedroom house in Minden, Louisiana.

A year ago, he surprised her with a new car – a black Audi.

Since his second year in the NFL, Sneed has also raised more than \$35,000 for Big Brothers Big Sisters.

"Kids with needs, foster kids," he explained. "If they need prom dresses, other things. I wish I had that when I was little, someone to help me, because my mother and father weren't there when I was young."

"For me, it is such a blessing, being the baby boy of the family, to be able to take care of your family and put them in a better position, and to be able to help others who need it."

On the field, Sneed plans to pay off for the Titans with his aggressive style of play.

The 6-foot-1, 192-pounder is talented, and confident.

"Confidence, resiliency, relentless," Sneed said of what he brings to the Titans. "I am a hell of a player. I love my game. I don't fear anything. I am not afraid to lose, but I am going to win most of my reps."

Off the field, he plans to continue leading the way for his family.

In addition to his son, Kyson, Sneed also has a two-month-old daughter, Kaimira.

Young Kyson gave a thumbs up when asked about his dad's new team as he bounced through the Titans facility this week, after giving his dad some comic relief through the trade process.

"He tells me: Dad, why did (the Chiefs) get rid of you?," Sneed said with a laugh. "To be six years old, he knows what's going on. But he likes the (Titans') logo, the colors. He has a new team now, a new family."

So, too, does dad.

And he's ready to get started on his new chapter, in Tennessee.

"A new team, a new city to raise my kids," Sneed said. "I can't wait to see what Nashville brings me and my family."

###

**FROM SUPER BOWL LIX:
TITANS RB TYJAE SPEARS
CELEBRATED FOR HIS
SUCCESS ON A DAY WHEN
A GIANT MURAL OF HIM
WAS ON DISPLAY IN NEW
ORLEANS**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
FEBRUARY 9, 2025**



NEW ORLEANS – Tyjae Spears is a success story from these parts, a Ponchatoula native who starred at Tulane and then was drafted into the NFL.

Here on Saturday, the running back was celebrated on a day when a massive mural of him in his Titans uniform was put on display.

It was all part of a community event at City Gear in Gentilly, La., and part of a thank you to Spears for all he does to support his home and community.

"I have to shout it out to God for this special opportunity," Spears said. "I've been blessed."

A third-round draft pick of the Titans in the 2023 NFL Draft, Spears just finished his second season with the club. Spears ran 312 yards and four touchdowns in 2024, while also catching 30 passes for 224 yards and another score.

Spears spends a good chunk of his offseasons back home in the New Orleans area, and with Super Bowl LIX in town this weekend, it turned into a celebration.

Spears was part of a panel in front of high schoolers, when he discussed how sports helped him achieve his dreams.

The mural inspired by was created by Jay McKay, a local NOLA artist.

"What an honor," Spears said as he admired the work. "It's amazing."

The organizers of the event said Super Bowl week provided the perfect time to close out what's been a long journey with the On the Rise content for Spears.

"City Gear and Nike are collaborating to tell my story, called On the Rise," Spears said. "They're telling my story, the timeline of my story, from when I started in high school all the way to the NFL."

"They've been showing a lot of love to me."

Jets linebacker Quincy Williams and Giants linebacker Kayvon Thibodeaux were also part of the panel for high schoolers from St. Mary's Academy, St. Augustine High School and Frederick A Douglass High School.

In addition to the panel, the high schoolers participates in skills and drills games, created their own Mardi Gras beads, and played Madden. They also customized their Fanatics Super Bowl LIX shirts, and sampled local food trucks.

Spears mingled with the kids, and had fun himself.

What was his biggest message to them?

"Talk to them and tell them how my life has turned out pretty good," Spears said, "but you have to make good decisions and have a mindset that you want to do something big."

"And, if I can do it, you can do it."

###

**TITANS RB TYJAE
SPEARS: "I HAVE THE
GREATEST GIFT IN THE
WORLD, AND THAT'S MY
DAD"**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JUNE 15, 2024**

NASHVILLE – Margene Spears was cooped up inside his Louisiana home, recovering from a knee scope after a staph infection.

While he recovered, those around him went on with their daily lives.

Spears remembers one day when his older children raced to go outside.

One child stayed behind.

"Two-year-old Tyjae," Margene Spears recalled with a smile. "He didn't want to leave me. As a two-year-old kid, with his older brothers wanting to go outside and play, he was barely able to talk and was like, 'Daddy, can I do anything for you?' He wanted to get me water. He wanted to help me.

"Ever since then I just noticed he was different."

Roughly 20 years later, Titans running back Tyjae Spears smiled when hearing his father had retold that story.

Spears, set to begin his second NFL season, said his father has looked out for him since the day he was born.

And, on Father's Day weekend, he thinks about how lucky he's been.

"In my life, I look at a lot of different things, and sometimes I think I don't have this or that," Tyjae Spears said. "But I have the greatest gift in the world, and that's my dad."

Tyjae Spears was born in 2001 in Hammond, Louisiana. He was raised in Ponchatoula, in a big family with five brothers and three sisters. Tyjae was the baby for a long

time, until one of his sisters was born.

Even at a young age, Margene Spears said there was something special about his son, as a youngster, and as an athlete. After Spears first began playing in Pop Warner, in fact, some used to tell the elder Spears his young son would be playing on Sundays one day.

"They were right," he said with a smile.

Margene Spears said he did his best to steer Tyjae out of trouble, and keep him involved in sports, football in particular.

While other kids in the neighborhood lost their way in the streets, Margene kept Tyjae focused, and he became a star at Ponchatoula High School.

"Football is what kept him calm," Margene Spears said. "When football was going on, he was good. When football season stopped, I had my hands full."

Tyjae Spears ended up playing college football at Tulane University, not too far away.

It allowed Margene Spears to continue going to all his games.

But as young Tyjae emerged as a star, things weren't always easy. After suffering a torn ACL in high school, Spears suffered another torn ACL in college.

A part of him wanted to give up football. Margene Spears wouldn't let him.

Along the way, dad got to repay his son for his good deed as a kid.

"After my (ACL) surgeries, my dad was the one making sure I had pillows under my leg, had ice in my ice machine," Tyjae Spears said. "He was the one helping me out of the bathroom, making sure I wash off. He's always been there."

Their relationship today is as strong as ever. Tyjae Spears said he talks to

his dad every day, sometimes five times a day. Margene Spears went to 18 of 20 Titans games last season, including preseason. He made the drive 8 ½ each way to Nashville for home games.

When talking about his son, Margene Spears beams when thinking about the young man he has become, then about the player he is on the football field. This fall, Tyjae Spears is expected to have a much bigger role alongside running back Tony Pollard on a team looking for production following the departure of Henry. During his rookie season, Spears showed flashes of stardom.

Margene Spears also smiles when thinking about the adversity his son has faced in his life, and that he's been able to overcome it.

"I'm so proud of him," he said.

He laughed when telling a story about teen-aged Tyjae and one of his brothers joining him for work one day. Margene Spears does carpentry work, remodeling houses in Louisiana.

"He went with me, and I tried to get him to hold sheetrock over head," Margene recalled. "He'd be complaining, whining. I told them both of you play football, taking hits. But you can't hold a piece of sheetrock over your head?"

Tyjae Spears remembers that day.

"It was after a heavy squat day," Tyjae recalled. "Do you know how heavy sheetrock is? It's heavy, plus you're holding it over your head."

Margene Spears said he hopes his son knows how proud of him, so tells him daily.

Tyjae Spears said he can tell from the look on his dad's face. He knows his dad changed some things in his own life to be more present in his.

He wants to repay him every day of his life, and as he grows older.

"My relationship with my dad, it makes me see what real love, genuine love is," Tyjae Spears said. "And as days go on, I always wish I could be a better son to him in different ways.

"When I have kids in the future, I'm going to try to be the same, but it's going to be hard with the great example he's set in my life."

#

**HOW TYJAE SPEARS,
REPAIRED KNEE AND
ALL, IS SPRINTING TO
STARDOM WITH
TENNESSEE TITANS |
ESTES**

**BY GENTRY ESTES
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
SEPTEMBER 7, 2023**

When the topic comes up, rookie running back Tyjae Spears extends his right leg instinctively, stretching out across the steps on which he's seated. As he does, a large scar becomes visible.

"Some dark times," he says, thinking back. "... I've been through a lot."

That scar says more than Spears will — or needs to — about his knee.

It's a part of his story that's already well-known. It's why some NFL teams reportedly removed him from their draft boards. It's why Spears felt the need to warn attendees at his event on Day 2 of the draft: "Pump the brakes. I don't want to see long faces at the end of the night if I don't get picked."

The knee is also why Spears once considered giving up football, the sport in which he's so immensely gifted that the Tennessee Titans took him in the third round anyway, turning Spears' draft gathering into a party that the bayou town of Ponchatoula, Louisiana (population just shy of 8,000) won't soon forget.

Now that Spears has made it out, he doesn't plan on going back.

"I guess what people consider their chip (on their shoulder), my chip is where I come from," Spears says. "I just can't go back to it."

He doesn't mean that as a slight on his upbringing or where he's from. He speaks with pride about his family, his eight siblings — five brothers, three sisters — and his parents who worked hard to make ends meet. And also about his hometown. Did you know, for

instance, that Ponchatoula is the Strawberry Capital of the World? "We got the best strawberries in the world, man," Spears says.

It's not just the small town or "humble" beginnings (an adjective that can be a cliché, though Spears agrees with it). His ambition runs a lot deeper than that. Through the parts of his story that aren't as well-known, ones that collectively molded him into someone who understands how special the opportunity he has.

But, yeah, it's the knee, too.

"I didn't come from the worst place," Spears says, "but I didn't come from the best place. There's a lot of things that I went without. I just don't want to have those same feelings recycled again. As I get older in my life, I just don't want to go without anymore, and I don't want my kids to go without. ... I'm depending on myself, and I've got a dad and a mom depending on me, too. Also nephews and little cousins and nieces and all looking up to me.

"So if I stop now, if I quit now, I'm quitting not just on myself. I'm quitting on all of them."

Early steps with Tennessee Titans, Derrick Henry

Two ACL surgeries. Arthritis. After the Titans took Spears, NFL Network's Ian Rapoport told viewers that Spears lacked an ACL, leaving questions about whether he'd last past his first NFL contract. Colleague Daniel Jeremiah echoed, "He was not on every draft board, but nobody disputes how talented he is."

You can imagine, of course, how this struck Titans fans. A running back with a bum knee? In the third round? For the Titans? Who already had Derrick Henry? Who badly needed a wide receiver or tight end? And who, above all, had their roster obliterated by injuries for two seasons in a row?

The Titans did draft Spears out of Tulane as a complement to Henry —

for now. Long-term, it's not reaching to believe that Spears is earmarked as Henry's replacement.

"Oh, he's a three-down runner," Titans general manager Ran Carthon assured during the draft. "He can run between the tackles. He's elusive. He can make guys miss as well as contribute in the passing game."

It's not unprecedented for a running back to excel with knee trouble. In 1991, the great Peter King documented for Sports Illustrated how most teams were scared of drafting Thurman Thomas before the Buffalo Bills took the risk in the second round, their owner Ralph Wilson telling GM Bill Polian, "Life's a gamble. Go ahead."

Thomas ran for 12,074 yards, caught 472 passes and totaled 88 touchdowns in 13 NFL regular seasons, and he did it — he said years later — with a torn ACL, according to NewYorkUpstate.com.

Obviously, it's way too early to compare Spears with a legend like Thomas. But this preseason showed Carthon's initial assessment to be correct, just as it has replaced concern about Spears' knee with anticipation for the explosiveness he'll add to the Titans' offense.

Spears ran for 117 yards on 22 carries (5.32 average) in three preseason games. That included an impressive 33-yard touchdown against the Vikings in which he leaped over a defender near the line of scrimmage and somehow never broke stride, sprinting untouched into the end zone.

"I know I can't do nothing like that," Henry said. "It's great to have a change-up and have a back that can be explosive. I know when he hit the ground, he took off."

After offseason practices this summer, Spears could often be seen catching passes from a machine.

He proved his toughness, too, with his willingness to pick up blocks in pass protection.

“A lot of times these fast, speed backs don’t want to really stick their face up in there on pass protection,” Titans quarterback Ryan Tannehill said, “and he’s proven on multiple occasions that he’s willing and able to step up in there against a linebacker. ... I love Tyjae, man. I’m excited to have him on our team.”

That job at Wal-Mart

The first time Spears hurt his knee was in high school. The second time, it was while scoring a touchdown early in the 2020 season for Tulane. And he realized it instantly. NOLA.com wrote that he crawled and tossed “his helmet off in frustration” before trainers made it to him.

Facing another lengthy ACL recovery, Spears started wondering whether he’d make it back to football.

“It was very difficult for him. It was difficult for all of us,” said Nicole Hart, Spears’ mother.

About that time, during the COVID-19 pandemic, he worked at Wal-Mart to make some extra money. The job entailed unloading delivery trucks. An 18-wheeler would arrive with, say, up to 3,000 items and “we had to take off every single piece,” he remembers. “That humbled me so much. I said, ‘Man, I’m going to do whatever I’ve got to do in football, because I do not want to work a real job.’”

“I think that job may have lasted a week, a week-and-a-half,” said Hart with a laugh.

“We don’t really realize that a lot of things really do happen for a reason,” she added. “In the midst of him going to get a job at Wal-Mart, maybe that was during a time when he was battling with, ‘Do I really

want to play football? I just want to give up. I want to quit.’ Maybe he had to have that moment to see, ‘Man, this is not what I really want to do.’”

Spears made it back and rushed for 863 yards in 2021. Then in 2022, he had 1,581 rushing yards and 19 touchdowns in his final 14 games for the Green Wave, who went 12-2.

A stellar season for Spears was punctuated by an MVP performance in a Cotton Bowl victory over Southern Cal. He ran for 205 yards against the Trojans, making eight consecutive 100-yard performances for a player who’d jumped well on the radar entering the NFL draft.

There was one team in particular that Spears hoped was interested in him.

Back home for Titans-Saints

As fortune has it, Spears’ first regular-season game for the Titans will be Sunday against the New Orleans Saints.

In the Superdome. About 45 minutes from his hometown.

Yes, Spears grew up a Saints fan.

That made for a punch in the gut when, during the draft’s third round, the Saints had the No. 71 pick and used it to take a running back: Kendre Miller from TCU.

Spears had held up well in public all night. But after that, he went off to collect himself, and “in the middle of that is when he actually got the call” 10 picks later from the Titans, said Hart.

“The whole world could have put two and two together and figured out I wanted to go to the Saints,” Spears says. “I’m here in Tennessee, and I love it. I feel like things happen for a reason.”

Plenty of friends and family from Ponchatoula will be on hand for Sunday’s opener, but it still probably won’t be enough. So many want to be there that Spears jokes,

“I’m putting a limit on it. I’m buying 10 tickets. That’s all I’m buying. If I’m feeling good, I might get 15.”

It’s the first real taste of NFL stardom for Spears. There hasn’t been much to this point. Spears says he’s still able to go around Nashville without being bothered or noticed — and he knows enough to appreciate that. He once went to an event with Henry and saw how many people approached the Titans’ star for pictures and autographs. “Man, how do you do it?” Spears asked him. “That’s just what comes with it,” replied Henry.

“People still don’t know who I am,” Spears says. “So I can go and have fun with my family and friends and whoever else I want to take out, because nobody knows me. But is it going to be the same in six, seven months or a year?”

“I don’t think it’s going to be the same.”

###

**ROOKIE RB TYJAE
SPEARS THANKFUL FOR
HIS NFL OPPORTUNITY
WITH THE TITANS**

**BY JIM WYATT
TITANS ONLINE
MAY 22, 2023**

NASHVILLE – The day after the NFL Draft, Tyjae Spears drove through the streets of New Orleans looking for Titans jerseys.

Spears had been selected by the team less than 24 hours earlier, and he wanted to represent his new squad at a party celebrating the development.

This week, Spears had his own team-issued jersey.

The former Tulane running back took part in rookie minicamp last weekend before joining veterans in the offseason program this week.

The Titans are scheduled to begin OTAs next week.

The 5-foot-11, 195-pound Spears looked good in the open rookie minicamp, catching a number of balls out of the backfield, and then showing off his speed – and moves – in space. He also had some nice runs after taking handoffs.

"It felt good," Spears said. "It's just a blessing to be a part of the team. It feels good, coming from where I came from. I am on an NFL team, and I am super-excited.

"All the guys I've encountered, they've been great. Every coach, they demand a lot out of you. It's a great organization, great people."

Spears, selected in the third round of the NFL Draft, ran for 1,581 yards and 19 touchdowns in 2022 for the Green Wave, averaging 6.9 yards per carry. He also caught 22 passes for 256 yards and two touchdowns. Spears had a big game in the Cotton Bowl against USC, when he ran for 202 yards and four touchdowns. He was named the Cotton Bowl MVP after the team's win.

In four college seasons, Spears ran for 2,910 yards and 31 touchdowns while also catching 48 passes for 564 yards and three scores. Spears was the 2022 American Athletic Conference Offensive Player of the Year, when he tied for the FBS lead with 21 scrimmage touchdowns.

Spears, whose locker is located right next to veteran running back Derrick Henry's locker, brushed off a number of questions about his health, specifically one his knees.

He made one thing clear:

"I feel perfectly fine – there ain't nothing wrong with me," Spears said. "I am healthy.

"I guess (my health) is a question that's always going to pop up, but I am here. And (the Titans) had a lot of faith in me to get me where they got me at. So, I am healthy and they know I am healthy."

Spears, who is from Ponchatoula, La., is fully aware he'll get to head back home to Louisiana when the Titans open the season on September 10 against the Saints.

He also knows a lot of work needs to be done between now and then, and he's just getting started.

"That is so far away," Spears said with a smile. "I am just taking it one day at a time."

Spears also knows he's thankful for the opportunity.

"Lately, I have been praying a lot," Spears added. "And the main thing I try to start and finish with is how thankful I am for being here, being a part of an NFL organization. Because I think back, and only two or three people where I am from got that opportunity. So, I am super blessed, and super appreciative."

###

T'VONDRE SWEAT

TITANS DL T'VONDRE SWEAT FEELING "GREAT", READY TO ATTACK YEAR 2 IN NFL

BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JUNE 3, 2025

NASHVILLE — T'Vondre Sweat focused on the little things this offseason, like they're big things.

His plan was to strengthen his shoulders, and improve his mobility by targeting his hips.

The Titans defensive lineman, whose weight was a topic of conversation this time last year, said he's also feeling lighter and quicker, although he wouldn't get into scale specifics.

"Ask coach Callahan," Sweat said with a smile.

As far as Sweat is concerned, this is all anybody needs to know:

"I feel great," Sweat said after Tuesday's OTA.

Heading into the 2025 season, Sweat said his goal is to be better than last year.

"I am very excited going into my second year," he said. "I feel a lot more comfortable playing this game, especially my second year in this league.

"I am ready, and it's going to be good, man."

A second-round draft pick by the Titans in the 2024 NFL Draft, Sweat played in all 17 games during his rookie season in 2024. He finished with 51 tackles, 23 quarterback pressures, and a sack. Sweat also had a memorable fumble recovery, stiff-arm and run late in the season, a year when he also tallied four tackles for a loss.

Callahan didn't divulge Sweat's size — he's listed at 6-foot-4, 366 pounds.

But he did rave about the big man's potential.

"He's a supremely talented person," Callahan said of Sweat. "There's not a lot of people on the planet that can do what he does at his size. And it's more about the consistency of performance. I'd like to see more from the pass rush game. He's got ability to rush for a man his size and that's a point of emphasis for him is affecting the quarterback more. He's a tremendous run defender, that was a strength of his already from last year. Part of it's going to be just improving the detail and then improving the ability to help affect the quarterback. So I think those are the things we're looking for progression wise from him. And he has the ability to be a full three-down player. He's not necessarily your explosive interior pass rushers that are out there. But he's got great ability to push the pocket too. So, looking for more of that from him and I think he had a solid start to his career, and I think there's a whole lot more meat on that bone for him."

Defensive line coach Tracy Rucker said he's pushing Sweat every day.

"What's improved is he walks out here, and he's seen the speed of the game before, it is not new to him," Rucker said of Sweat. "And, he has a better feel for his mates next to him.

"I have no doubts he wants to be good. ... I want him to be the best player in the NFL, that is my goal for him. But he has to take the bull by the horns... He just has to keep working to make his imprint in this league."

Sweat said he's willing to put in the work, just as long as it doesn't include Pilates.

Sweat tried that this offseason, and he's not a fan.

Sweat said he is willing to work to be the best he can be.

"What I learned (last year) is take care of your body," he said. "Your body is everything, and if you don't

feel good, you can't be performing at a high level."

###

TITANS' SWEAT EARNS SPOT ON PFWA ALL- ROOKIE TEAM

***BY JOHN GLENNON
NASHVILLE POST
JANUARY 21, 2025***

T’Vondre Sweat’s strong first NFL season has earned him a spot on the Pro Football Writers of America’s All-Rookie team.

A nose tackle, Sweat was one of four defensive linemen selected for the team, along with Denver’s Jonah Elliss, the L.A. Rams’ Braden Fiske and Indianapolis’ Laiatu Latu.

Sweat was only the third Titans rookie in the last five years to make the PFWA All-Rookie team, joining tight end Chig Okonkwo (2022) and punter Ryan Stonehouse (2022).

The Titans selected Sweat in the second round, the 38th overall pick, of the NFL Draft.

Titans coach Brian Callahan had high praise for Sweat near the end of the team’s season.

“I just think you see his power in the run game and you see his ability to stuff the run,” Callahan said. “He keeps the linebackers clean so [that] they can float, scrape, make tackles. That part’s been really good. It’s probably been his biggest strength. He eats up double teams.

“He’s shown the ability to push the pocket as a rusher. I think he’s got some room to improve as a rusher, too. But for a guy his size to be able to still have some effect on the rush has been positive.”

The 6-4, 366-pound Sweat posted a 76.2 overall defensive grade from Pro Football Focus, which ranked first among all rookie defensive linemen. His 75.0 grade against the run was also first among rookie linemen, and his 64.7 pass-rush grade ranked fourth among rookie linemen.

Sweat played all 17 games for the Titans, finishing with 51 tackles

(seventh on the team), 23 quarterback pressures (fourth on the team), one sack, four tackles for loss, one pass defended, one forced fumble and one fumble recovery.

“His stamina to play has been incredibly impressive,” Callahan said. “I mean he’s played a ton of snaps over the course of the season ... As a person, he’s a phenomenal personality. I mean the team loves him, the room loves him. He’s got a way about him that you just enjoy being around. Those are the kind of guys we want as many of as we can get.”

The Titans’ first-round pick, left tackle JC Latham (No. 7 overall), did not make the all-rookie squad, as the two tackle spots were taken by the Los Angeles Chargers’ Joe Alt and Baltimore’s Roger Rosengarten.

###

**TITANS ROOKIE DL
T'VONDRE SWEAT
SURPRISES HIS MOM
WITH HER "DREAM
HOUSE"**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
AUGUST 2, 2024**

NASHVILLE — Titans rookie defensive lineman T'Vondre Sweat is a self-proclaimed "mama's boy."

And, for good reason.

Sweat said his mom has sacrificed a lot for him over the years, regularly working three jobs to make ends meet so her three sons could be more comfortable. There were times, Sweat said, when she didn't eat, just so her young boys could.

"Without my mom," Sweat said, "I wouldn't be here today. I can't say in words how much I appreciate her."

Sweat offered his mother, Lashunda Ross, more proof on Friday.

He surprised her with her "dream house."

It all unfolded this morning in Houston, when Ross was handed flowers as she walked into the house her youngest son bought for her.

She then watched a video with this message:

"I just want to thank you a lot for all you have done for me," Sweat, wearing a Titans shirt, said from Nashville, where he's in the middle of training camp. "I can't be more thankful for a mom like you. Everyone in the world already knows you're special to me. I just want to say: I love you, I love you, I love you. I want to thank you for everything you've done for me since I was a little kid with my other two brothers."

And...

"Mom, I just want to say: I finally got the house you wanted. Dreams do come true. I can't appreciate you

more. And, I hope you love your new home."

Sweat beamed with pride the day before, when he talked about his mother, and the opportunity he was getting to purchase her a home in Houston, Texas.

Sweat said his mom had been living in an apartment, but they began looking for homes for her in recent months, after he signed his rookie contract.

Growing up, Sweat said the family didn't have things easy. There was a point when his mom, himself, and his two brothers had to move into his aunt's apartment.

"There were six kids in one apartment," Sweat recalled. "And that's hard."

Lashunda Ross worked at a hospital, at a Foot Locker, and at other jobs to make ends meet.

Through it all, she attended all of Sweat's games, from his Pop Warner days to his high school playing days to his years at the University of Texas.

"She's always been my No.1 fan," Sweat said of his mom. "She's always been by my side."

Now, she has a new home, thanks to her youngest son, the baby of the family.

Sweat, selected in the second round of the 2024 NFL Draft, said he's thankful for having the chance to repay his mom for all she's done.

"I have to say, I appreciate the Titans, Miss Amy, Ran Carthon and everyone for believing in me and helping me with this opportunity. Without them believing in me, I wouldn't have the opportunity to help my mom like this," Sweat said.

"My mom, she's special. I love her to death, and I respect her so much. She's a very, very, very strong woman, and she's sacrificed so much. I can't say in words how much I appreciate my mom being in

my life, so I'm happy I can do this for her. And, for all the guys out there: Love your moms, man, because you only get one."

###

NO SWEAT? TITANS NT T'VONDRE SWEAT MAKES NICE FIRST IMPRESSION IN ROOKIE MINICAMP

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
MAY 12, 2024**

NASHVILLE — Titans rookie T'Vondre Sweat looked like a dancing bear as he maneuvered his way through the stand up dummies at rookie minicamp over the weekend.

The 6-foot-4, 366-pound defensive lineman showed off some pretty nifty footwork and agility as he raced around the pads.

On another drill, Sweat exploded out of his stance, pushed past another pad, and then leveled a red dummy at the conclusion of a practice rep in individual drills.

Eyes of nearby spectators lit up, about the same way Sweat did when he heard a question from a trainer during a break in the action: Need some water?

"Hell yeah!," Sweat said before dousing his mouth.

Rookie minicamp is on the books for Sweat and the team's other first-year players.

Two practices down and many more to go as the team's second-round pick does his best to get up to speed as quickly as possible in the NFL.

"I felt great," Sweat said. "Just being here, in Nashville, it's amazing. It was awesome to be out there. ... Anyone, when you haven't played football in a minute, of course you're going to come out with a little rust. But once you're going, you're going."

Sweat said he worked with other Texas Longhorns from the time the NFL Draft took place, and minicamp, to prepare himself.

This week, he'll be incorporated into work with the veterans in the

offseason program, with OTAs and a minicamp, on the horizon.

Titans Coach Brian Callahan said he was impressed with what he saw from Sweat right out of the gate.

"He looked good," Callahan said of Sweat. "I thought he moved well. You never know when guys get here, what they're going to look like. And I thought he did a nice job. Looked like the guy we saw on tape, which was good to see."

Sweat, who said during a conference call after being selected he wanted to play in the 350- to 355-pound range this fall, has already been in communication with team nutritionist Lauren Silvio about his diet.

Sweat said he'll work with Silvio and the team's coaching staff to find "that perfect weight for me," but he's not sure what it will be at this point.

Already, Sweat said he's already gotten a pretty good feel for defensive line coach Tracy Rucker, a coach he plans to bust his rear end for on a daily basis. Rucker worked with Sweat on his technique on the practice field during rookie camp, stressing the importance of keeping his feet going forward in drills.

"As far as skill set, he's a big man and this is a big man's league," Rucker said of Sweat. "And, I think that definitely helps us up front. Hopefully this guy develops into what we all want him to be. It's going to take time ... but he wants to (be great)."

After his first weekend in Nashville, Sweat is even more excited to get going.

"I'm not here to prove anything," he said. "It's a blessing to be here, in this organization. Just getting to come out here, competing with my teammates, being the best for the team. It's pretty exciting."

"I have a lot to work on. I am not a perfect person, no one here is perfect. There's a lot of stuff I have to work on, and I just have to come

out here, get better at my craft, and take it day by day."

###

THE TWO SIDES OF TEXAS SUPERSTAR T'VONDRE SWEAT

BY DAVE WILSON
ESPN.COM
DECEMBER 30, 2023

YOU CAN'T MISS T'Vondre Sweat. It's not just that he's 6-foot-4 and 362 pounds, although it has something to do with that.

But then you add the chain. It has a dinner-plate sized, diamond-encrusted medallion that says "MAKE 'EM SWEAT." He doesn't know how much it weighs, only that it sometimes hurts his neck.

"He's about 380 with that big chain on," said Jay Oliphant, Sweat's high school basketball coach.

Sweat loves the chain, which is inspired by the giant clocks Public Enemy rapper Flavor Flav wears. It's big, it's flashy.

It was also his mom's idea.

That makes sense because if you talk to anybody who knows Sweat, the first thing they'll tell you is that he's a mama's boy.

"You get out there and make 'em sweat," Lashunda Ross, his mom, said of the inspiration for the medallion. "They're nervous when they see you. They always have two people double-teaming you."

The medallion has a second side, though. One that people rarely see. And that was all Sweat's work. The back is covered with photos of his mom, his great uncle, his grandmother and great-grandmother.

This is the duality of T'Vondre Sweat, the wrecking ball who is the physical embodiment of Texas' climb to its first College Football Playoff appearance. The goofy, fun-loving mama's boy is also the Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year and weeks ago claimed Texas' first Outland Trophy, given to the best

interior lineman in the country, since 1977.

He'll play a key role for the Longhorns on Monday when No. 3 Texas faces No. 2 Washington in the College Football Playoff at the Allstate Sugar Bowl (8:45 p.m. ET, ESPN/ESPN App) with the Longhorns looking to free up defenders to slow down the Huskies' dangerous passing attack.

"He is hard to move," Texas defensive coordinator Pete Kwiatkowski said Thursday. "He takes up a lot of space. Takes multiple blockers, and so that frees up the linebackers. Gives us a little bit more luxury to play with lighter boxes."

And Sweat has already served notice to the Huskies that he's ready.

"Let me see how I can say this ... They're a great group of guys, the O-line," Sweat said. "I mean, they won awards. They're just awards to me. You know what I mean? And they've got to face guys like us, so we'll see how it goes down."

He has made 'em sweat all year, following four years of unheralded dirty work on the D-line, with his highest accolade being named honorable mention All-Big 12 last year. He has managed to break out despite arriving as one of the lowest-ranked recruits on Texas' roster, a 3-star on a team that has long underachieved with superstar prospects.

He did it by putting on 100 pounds since leaving high school in Huntsville, a town of about 45,000 in East Texas about 70 miles north of Houston. He did it by smothering defenders -- Texas allowed just 80.9 rushing yards per game, fourth best nationally -- flexing and mean-mugging all over the field.

None of this surprised his coach at Huntsville High, Rodney Southern, who told Sweat when he played for him that he'd eventually be an NFL player. But Southern is surprised at just how giant Sweat has become.

"The last time he came to my office, he walked in the door, stood in the doorway and I mean, he filled up the entire doorway," he said. "What you see now is just a bigger, happier version of what I had."



LIKE THE CHAIN, there are also two sides to T'Vondre Sweat.

"He plays like a bully," Texas nickelback Jahdae Barron said. "A bully, in my eyes, is somebody that wants something and takes things from whoever they want. That's who Sweat is as a player."

"Violent," linebacker Jaylan Ford said. "He makes big people look small. This dude's a beast. He's literally making people move out of his way."

When he's not on the field?

"Goofy," Barron said.

"I know everyone on the team," Ford said. "I'd say [Sweat's] probably the easiest person to talk to, honestly. He just talks to anybody and everybody. It doesn't really matter. He'll probably have a 30-minute conversation with the guy. He's probably the nicest, softest, down-to-earth guy."

He didn't even want to play football to begin with -- "I was a coward, I can't lie," he said of his early years in the sport -- but his mom and his aunt Lisa concocted a plan to help him get excited. Lisa would make cookies, and it was clear to five-year-old T'Vondre that if he scored, he'd get one.

"He'd look over to see if she had the cookies, then he'd take off running and make a touchdown," Ross said. "He was greedy, and he can eat." The reward system worked.

"Maybe that's why I'm so big," Sweat said.

Now, as a fifth-year senior, he's the second-biggest player on Texas' best team since 2009.

Not that he wasn't big at Huntsville. He was 6-4, 280, so athletic that he played at defensive end, once racking up 4.5 sacks in a game. He also starred on the basketball team, where he was named the district's defensive player of the year.

Sweat brags about how nice he was on the court, saying he could play any position from point guard to center.

"I've had a couple of good bigs at Huntsville, but he's the only big that I've had that could actually go out there at 260-plus pounds and he could guard a point guard, he can handle the ball, he can do a little of it all," Oliphant said. "He was telling you the truth on that."

Even while reminiscing and hyperbolizing, Sweat is humble. "I shoulda gone D-III in basketball," he said.

Basketball spotlighted his athleticism, kept him in shape and showed how light he was on his feet, making him more attractive to Texas, where former defensive line coach Oscar Giles took a shine to Sweat. He started racking up offers, about 17 in all. But Texas made the most serious push to get Sweat to sign.

"We wondered why not many people were on him," said Bryan Carrington, the cornerbacks coach at Arizona State, who was one of Sweat's main recruiters at Texas when he was the Longhorns' director of recruiting. "He got offered by Texas A&M, Alabama, TCU, Missouri. But we didn't feel like those schools recruited him hard enough."

Sweat agreed, saying there was only one consistent school in his ear. "I really felt like they didn't want me," Sweat said. "Nobody was recruiting

me hard but Texas and Coach Giles."

It might not have mattered anyway. Texas' location made all the difference for his priorities.

"I'm a mama's boy," Sweat said. "I didn't want to be so far but I didn't want to be so close."

And Sweat joked that growing up as a huge fan of Kevin Durant held a little sway, too.

"Honestly, the reason I came to Texas was because I thought I was going to meet KD," Sweat said.



SWEAT ARRIVED IN Austin and embraced his new home. He says he started connecting with people outside of football, but was getting a chance to get early playing time as well. Then, he went all-in, and fell in love with country music.

"I'd love to be buddies with Luke Combs," he said, saying "Crazy Beautiful" is his favorite song, adding he also is a huge fan of Morgan Wallen and Brett Young.

"Some of my teammates don't even like riding in the car with me," Sweat said. "Ride with me, you leave me alone. You're gonna listen to this."

And then he got to work in the weight room -- and at the dining table. "When you play at the University of Texas, one thing they do is make sure you eat," Sweat said. "You don't have to worry about food."

By 2021, Sweat packed on those 100 pounds and looked the part, but was uncertain of his future when Tom Herman was fired and Steve Sarkisian replaced him. But Sarkisian hired former Longhorns (and Alabama and NFL) defensive

line coach Bo Davis back, and he brought with him a reputation as a molder of NFL talent.

That fall, Texas was blown out at Iowa State, 30-7, and Davis got on the bus after the game and heard laughing. A recording of Davis' reaction was leaked to social media, and it wasn't pretty.

"This s--- ain't a game to me," Davis screamed. "If you think it's a game, get the f--- off this bus. I got my ass kicked and you motherf---ers were laughing."

It became an inflection point in the Longhorns' turnaround, something Sarkisian discussed this season after Texas went back to Ames and won, 26-16.

"I think you could feel the passion in Bo's voice," Sarkisian said. "Bo made it very clear that we're here to win championships and we're here to compete for championships and that's day in and day out ... The fact that people remember that, I think, is a good thing."

Last month, Sweat was on a podcast and said he was the player laughing, joking that he thought maybe the statute of limitations was up on it.

Davis didn't say if he knew, but the two have come a long way since that moment. Sweat says that Davis forged a brotherhood among the defensive linemen that has made all of them better, with Sweat and Byron Murphy becoming perhaps the best pair of tackles in the country.

"It's been fun coaching him because he's got some humor with him and you enjoy that," Davis said. "But he is serious about when it's time to go to work."

Davis' handiwork has been evident in Sweat's breakout season, which came in his fifth year after he decided to bypass the NFL for one last year at Texas.

"He added several zeros to the dollar amount he's gonna get and maybe a couple of commas," Southern said.

But the NFL will have its own assessment of his size.

"Some will question the value of a 360-pound defensive tackle in the first round, but I just really like the player and think he could help an NFL defense in any situation," Mel Kiper Jr. wrote in his most recent Big Board, where he has Sweat ranked as his No. 21 overall prospect.

In 2015, Alabama coach Nick Saban told ESPN that behemoth tackles like 6-5, 349-pound Terrence Cody, a two-time consensus All-American, were going out of style.

"Cody couldn't play for us now," Saban said. "It would be hard to put him in the game, the way it is now, and he was a great player for us. Five or six years ago, nobody could block the guy."

Davis was also Cody's D-line coach. But he said that doesn't hold true for Sweat.

With Sweat in the game, Texas gets pressure on opposing quarterbacks 38% of the time, compared to 31% when he's not, according to ESPN Stats & Info. Opposing quarterbacks complete 58% of their passes to 62% when he's out, and are off-target on passes 16% of the time compared to 7% when he's not on the field.

"A lot of guys are big, but they don't have any hip flexibility," Davis said. "[Sweat] can move like a 290-pound guy. He can turn and get skinny. That's the amazing part you see when you watch him and see the things he does."

Sweat said he's aware of the discussions, saying Davis let him know how to end them.

"If you don't want the weight to be an issue, go be a dawg," Davis told him. "Don't come to me, try to come out two or three plays. Go be you."

Sweat has been himself all year. And he and the Longhorns have reaped the rewards.

"His level of maturity and growth as a teammate has been awesome to watch," Kwiatkowski said. "He's a very influential guy in that locker room."

Sweat has piled up awards, helped lead Texas to the CFP and even got to catch a touchdown pass and strike a premeditated Heisman pose in the Big 12 championship game against Oklahoma State. "Scoring a touchdown in my first Big 12 championship game, and winning it was just amazing," he said. "I mean, it can't be a better feeling than that."

The big man has made 'em sweat all year.

###

TEXAS LONGHORNS: T'VONDRE SWEAT'S PATH TO COLLEGE FOOTBALL STARDOM

BY JOSH CRISWELL
HOUSTON CHORNICLE
DEC 14, 2023

T'Vondre Sweat has evolved into arguably the most-feared defensive lineman in college football over the course of his five years at the University of Texas. He's also a self-described mama's boy, something that shined through as the Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year accepted the Outland Trophy—awarded to the top interior lineman in the sport—late last week.

"I give all the shout out to my mom, man," Sweat said on the ESPN broadcast, donning a chain containing a photo of his mother, Lashunda Ross. "Without that woman, I wouldn't be able to do a lot of things. That woman just stayed on my neck 24/7, and all I can say is I love that woman to death."

Ross admits her son's words almost brought her to tears on national television, as her reaction was displayed on the screen in real time via a video feed.

"Aw man, I wanted to cry," Ross said. "I really wanted to cry when he was saying those words. I got very emotional when he was talking and saying that in front of the whole [country]. Everybody is watching, but it felt really good, and he tells me all the time.

"When he sees me or we're on the phone or before the game, he always tells me, 'Mom, I appreciate you. Thank you so much for everything and thank you for being there.'"

With a laugh, Ross credits herself for the light-hearted, fun-loving nature of Sweat's personality, something UT fans have become well-acquainted with. This was on full display during the Longhorns' Big 12 title game win over Oklahoma State—a victory that helped secure the program's first

College Football Playoff appearance—when Sweat checked in at tight end and caught a touchdown pass, which he celebrated by striking a Heisman pose that almost instantly went viral. "I spilled my whole drink," Ross recalled, failing to contain her laughter.

Hearing from these two paints the picture of a loving mother-son bond, but in terms of Sweat's ascent to college football stardom, the driving force behind his success goes deeper. In a time when high-level youth athletics is littered with helicopter parents constantly questioning coaches, Ross took a different approach—and one that's paid obvious dividends.

In Sweat's early football-playing years, Ross "used to be that mom that was like, 'Don't yell at my baby.'" But as she raised her sons, an understanding was developed that "dealing with boys, you have to be hard on them, you have to keep your foot on their neck." In Huntsville High School football coach Rodney Southern and basketball coach Jay Oliphant, Ross found partners who were more than willing to embrace this type of mentality.

"She's been very valuable in his life," Southern said. "She stayed on him, and she told me way back that she wanted me to stay on him. Obviously, that was easy for me. He's talented, he's a great kid, he's so fun-loving and happy, it wasn't hard to stay on a guy like that."

In Southern's 22 years as a head coach, he's told three players that they have an opportunity to play on Sundays in the NFL. The first two—Miami Dolphins tight end Durham Smythe and former Texas quarterback David Ash—were from his time at Belton High School in Central Texas, with Sweat being the third.

Between Southern and Ross, the pair ensured that Sweat attended as many college camps as possible. He ended up with roughly 17 Division I offers, ultimately choosing the Longhorns over the likes of

Alabama and other powerhouse programs.

"[Southern] came to me and told me that T is a special kid and he sees something in him, and he doesn't want him to go the wrong way," Ross said of a conversation they had nearly a decade ago. "I agreed with him, so if somebody is coming and telling me something about my kid, I'm not going to get mad. I'm going to help them. ... If he's not listening, not doing what he's supposed to do, get on him. I give you this permission, because you don't find that too much.

"That's what's wrong with a lot of parents now. They don't want nobody else to discipline their kids when they're in the wrong. I'm not that type."



University of Texas defensive tackle T'Vondre Sweat poses for a photograph with his mother, Lashunda Ross.
Courtesy of Lashunda Ross

Recently named the top interior lineman in college football, Sweat played on the edge throughout his entire high school career, in addition to lining up at tight end during his freshman season. He arrived at Huntsville around 220 pounds and gradually grew into his body frame, playing his final two seasons at roughly 285 pounds. He's now listed at 6-foot-4, 362 pounds, yet hasn't lost the quickness and agility that—combined with his overpowering strength and size—terrorized high school opponents.

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Sweat was a similarly dominant force on the hardwood, with double-digit rebound, three-plus block performances becoming the norm by his junior year. He contemplated skipping his senior season to focus on lifting weights, before coming to an agreement with Oliphant that both parties would be better off by him returning to the team. Huntsville proceeded to win the District 20-5A title, with Sweat being named the league's Defensive MVP.

"He was extremely quick on his feet," Oliphant said. "He could guard guards, he could guard wings, he was just an extension of talent. What he's doing now doesn't really surprise me at all because he's always been a good, superior athlete. ... Sometimes he would get a rebound and dribble it coast-to-coast. He could do almost anything he wanted to, and it speaks volumes on his talent and athletic ability."

Sweat found himself pondering another decision a couple years later, one that would've had significant ramifications had he followed through.

Ross remembers her son being "scared and nervous" around the time the COVID-19 pandemic hit during his sophomore year of college, and says he contemplated giving up at UT. Her message was direct, reminding Sweat that he didn't come this far to let it all slip away.

"My thing is we don't give up, we don't quit," Ross added. "I said, 'You've got this. We're in this together. Me and you are going to figure it out, and we're going to get through it together.'"

According to Ross, Sweat responded, "Yes ma'am, I'm going to stick it out. I'm not going to give up," to which Ross noted, "That's the attitude I like to hear." Then Sweat added a promise, alluding to his likely future in the NFL.

"He said, 'One day, you're not going to have to work—and I'm going to

make that promise to you,'" Ross said. "He's sticking by what he said to me, and I'm going to hold him to his word."

###

TITANS' CAM WARD REFLECTS ON DAD'S IMPACT FOR FATHER'S DAY

TURRON DAVENPORT
ESPN.COM
JUNE 15, 2025

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- The smile on Cameron Ward's face said it all when asked what he wanted to get his dad, Calvin, for Father's Day.

"Shopping for Father's Day, that's the hardest shopping to do," Ward told ESPN. "I mean what do you get for someone who already has everything? I don't know what I'm going to get him, because he ain't really ask for s---."

Having already paid to have his parents' house built last year when he was in college at Miami, Ward struggled to come up with a physical gift for his dad. He laughed as he recalled gifting his dad an ATV for Christmas years ago, when his mom, Patrice, had gotten him a mini NASCAR race track.

Then the perfect idea came to mind.

"I just really want to spend time with him," Ward said.

Time. That's the best gift he could give.

The Tennessee Titans made Ward the No. 1 pick in April, hoping he could become the answer at quarterback that they had been searching for. He attributes his journey to his parents, with sports being a staple in their household.

"I just always had sports around me," Ward said. "I come from a sports background with my dad and my mom. I just always wanted to play professional sports. I think that was just my calling."

The Ward family, a close-knit group of five, has bonded on many trips -- loading up the SUV and hitting the road to attend various sports camps. They started by going to camps at IMG Academy in Bradenton,

Florida, when Cameron was in fourth grade. He tagged along with his two older sisters, Aaliyah and Chantel, who were basketball players.

Calvin supported his son as he played various sports such as basketball, football, baseball and even golf, but having been a former walk-on college quarterback at Houston, Calvin taught his son the sport he knew best when Cameron was 8 years old -- setting up nets in the backyard to throw into.

"Cameron fell in love with the workouts," Calvin said. "From a young age he was always like, 'I want to be a professional athlete in something.' My philosophy was always to play as many sports as you want. The road would eventually narrow on its own."

THE PROCESS OF getting noticed by colleges wasn't easy, but Cameron leaned on his dad throughout his playing days at West Columbia High School, which is about an hour outside of Houston.

Playing in a run-heavy Wing T offense limited his passing opportunities, as he attempted 267 passes for 2,261 yards in three years. To put that into perspective, Hudson Card -- the No. 1-ranked quarterback in the state for the 2020 class according to the ESPN 300 (No. 40 overall) -- attempted 216 passes in nine games during his senior year, according to Max Preps, and 369 passes in 15 games as a junior.

Calvin emailed college coaches during his son's junior year in hopes of getting the zero-star recruit his first offer. He sought out other parents whose kids went to the NFL for advice on how to get more exposure.

He did not want to be a parent who felt his son was better than everyone else, so he focused on getting feedback to make his son better.

"I trusted the parents that I talked to that might have had kids that been through [this]," Calvin said,

"[telling them], 'I need you to be realistic about my son. He wants to play on a higher level. I don't need you to sugarcoat anything with me.'"

Some of the feedback was to work on his footwork by incorporating jump ropes into his drills. They also worked on agility.

"It wasn't so much about chasing a scholarship per se, it was just chasing improvement," Calvin said.

They also took road trips to football camps in hopes of getting Cameron on the radar of colleges. One of those trips called for a 3 a.m. wake-up to leave by 5 a.m. for a six-hour ride to East Texas Baptist University, only to return home the same day.

"That's impressive dedication to helping his son," Titans coach Brian Callahan said of Calvin chauffeuring his son across Texas just to give him a chance to be noticed.

During those road trips, they talked about more than just life. Even though they didn't like the same music genres, they found common ground by listening to local radio stations. The trips provided opportunities for Cameron to ask about his grandparents and what life was like growing up for his dad, so Calvin shared his insight.

"My parents was like, 'Hey, we don't care about football, basketball or whatever. You better get them grades,'" Calvin said.

"These are things I want to put in your life because these are things I wanted to do as a kid that I didn't get to do."

That's one reason why it was important for Calvin to make sure his son got to attend as many camps as possible.

"I'm going to knock on every door, and you know, eventually one of these doors going to open," Calvin said.

An eye-opening weekend came when they drove just over two hours to College Station for Texas A&M's camp. A&M was Cameron's preferred school, so his dad made sure to get him there.

He got to compete with several high-profile quarterbacks -- including four-star prospect Haynes King from Longview High School in Texas, who was ranked No. 46 in the ESPN 300 for the 2020 class. He would go on to commit to the Aggies.

"Everyone knew that Cameron out-threw all of those guys," Calvin said. "But King won state championship his junior year and then you had Cameron Ward that don't nobody knew of and you got one scholarship. So who do you think a scholarship's going to go to?"

The journey continued the next day when they drove to San Antonio for Incarnate Word's satellite camp. According to Calvin, the camp started at 1 p.m. but the coaching staff "shut it down at 2 p.m." because the school's offensive coordinator, Mack Leftwich, wanted to hide his future quarterback from other schools that had access to the camp.

Cameron Ward, left, poses with his father, Calvin. Courtesy of Calvin Ward

"I'm like, 'What the heck is going on?'" Calvin recalled. "It took us three and a half hours to drive there. They didn't want no other schools to see Cameron because they picked up how his arm talent was different."

The final straw came when Cameron drove a pass from the opposite hash marks to a receiver running a comeback route toward the sideline. Leftwich told the Ward family they ended the camp because they were nervous that he "wouldn't be available" after other schools saw him throw.

"Cameron looked at me and was like, 'What is he talking about?"

We're not hearing from anyone,'" Calvin said with a laugh.

The trip was worth it. Cameron got an offer from Incarnate Word head coach Eric Morris, and he would end up there for the 2020 season to begin his college career.

CAMERON SHOWED PROMISE early at Incarnate Word, where he won the Jerry Rice Award given to the most outstanding freshman in the NCAA Division I Football Championship Subdivision. He followed that up with 4,648 passing yards, 47 touchdowns and 10 interceptions as a sophomore and was named the Southland Conference Offensive Player of the Year.

Now schools that ignored him coming out of high school were showing interest.

"OK, dude, we have options we ain't had before," Calvin told his son. "Let's be patient and check some of these out."

But they remained loyal, and Cameron followed Morris to Washington State for his junior year in 2022 before eventually ending up at Miami for his final season.

It was a big decision given that Incarnate Word was within driving distance from the Ward family's home.

Now, Calvin had to drive a little over an hour to Houston Hobby Airport before even hopping on a plane to see his son play, but Cameron's parents never missed seeing him play.

"All 57 games," Calvin said when asked how many of Cameron's games they attended, which included 25 with Washington State and 13 more with Miami.

Calvin feels one of Cameron's biggest tests came before the 2023 season when Morris left Washington State to take over as the head coach at North Texas.

"That was the year that made him," Calvin said. "Because the whole narrative was that he was a product of Eric Morris' system."

Without Morris, Cameron wanted to prove he was a premier quarterback regardless of what offense he was playing in.

"OK, guess what? Morris is gone now," Calvin said. "Your system is gone now. Now it's Cameron Ward."

The future No. 1 pick completed 66% of his passes for 3,736 yards, 25 touchdowns and 7 interceptions, which set up another big decision: declare for the NFL draft or play another season of college football?

WITNESSING NFL COMMISSIONER Roger Goodell calling his son's name on draft day was easily Calvin's proudest moment.

"Cameron going No. 1, that's still surreal to me, knowing how he got there," Calvin said. "It was like a dream knowing your son is the No. 1 quarterback."

It also sets up what Cameron said is the best advice he has gotten from his dad who told him this is his one opportunity to play in the NFL and "not to f--- it up."

"[My dad] wouldn't let me take no for an answer," Cameron said. "That's what kept me steady throughout the whole process knowing that I'll eventually get an offer, but he just constantly motivated me. He constantly told me the journey is never going to be easy."

When Cameron contemplated going pro after his fourth year in college, he leaned on his dad -- who advised him to not hire an agent so there was no confusion concerning his eligibility.

"My parents really let me make my own decisions," Cameron said. "But they give me different angles to look at it. They see it from their point of view then they also got to see it from

the other person's point of view as well."

Calvin Ward talks with his son, Cameron, during a youth football game. Courtesy of Calvin Ward

He decided to forego the draft to better his stock for 2025 before transferring to Miami.

He made a big statement in his debut with the Hurricanes, throwing for 385 yards and three touchdowns in a 41-17 win over one of their biggest rivals, and Calvin loved every bit of it.

"That Florida game," Calvin said, "all the talk -- 'Oh, he hasn't played in this size of a stadium' -- they didn't know what was [about] to hit them because they didn't know him. He doesn't care about all of that. Cameron just wants to go play football."

Cameron passed for 4,313 yards and 39 touchdowns last season -- both Miami single-season records. He also won the Davey O'Brien Award, given to the nation's top quarterback, and finished fourth in voting for the Heisman Trophy. He set the career combined FCS (71) and FBS (87) record with 158 touchdown passes. The performance helped cement him as the top quarterback in the draft.

"His journey I think is really unique and cool," Callahan said. "A lot of it comes from how he was raised. All the things you see from his parents trying to pour into him and give him all the opportunities to succeed I think is admirable, and I think it paid off for him."

Fast-forward, and the first impression the rookie has made with the Titans is a good one. Whether it's having the rookie pass catchers meet with him for film study at 5 a.m. or pulling a veteran aside after a missed rep, Cameron has already started to have an impact.

If Cameron's career for the Titans is as successful as his college career was, Tennessee's quest to find its

franchise quarterback will be fulfilled.

Armed with a newly signed contract worth \$48.7 million, Cameron can give his dad whatever he wants for Father's Day. But above all else, Cameron just wants to give him thanks.

"Thank you for all the time you put in for me and my siblings," he said when asked about his Father's Day message. "The money that you put in and all the behind-the-scenes stuff from the emailing coaches to put my face out there and get me a chance to be who I am today. Just know that I'm trying to do my part and create a legacy for our last name."

#

CAM WARD WASN'T ALONE ON HIS LONG JOURNEY TO THE NFL, AND THE TITANS, AND HE'LL FOREVER BE THANKFUL FOR SUPPORT FROM PARENTS

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
MAY 2, 2025**

NASHVILLE – Cam Ward played in 57 games in college, at Incarnate Word, Washington State and the University of Miami.

How many games did his parents attend?

"57 of 57," Calvin Ward, Cam's father, said with a smile.

It wasn't easy, especially those two seasons when Ward was quarterback at Washington State, located in Pullman, Washington.

Those years it took Calvin and Patrice Ward, who live in West Columbia, Texas, roughly nine hours to get to one of their son's home games. A typical travel weekend those days looked like this: Driving an hour to Houston Hobby Airport, catching a flight from Houston to Denver (layover) and then flying to Spokane, Wash., getting a rental car, and driving another 1 ½ hours to Pullman.

After the game, and a quick visit with Cam, they'd retrace their steps back to Texas.

"In Cam's two years at Washington State," said Calvin Ward, "the closest games were at USC and UCLA (in Los Angeles)."

But for the Wards, it was all worth it.

They saw their son blossom from a zero-star recruit coming out of high school to one of the nation's top quarterbacks, and the first overall pick of the 2025 NFL Draft, by the Titans.

"It's been a long journey, but it's been worth it," Calvin Ward said. "Every curve we've had to go through, every stop sign we've had to stop at, it led us to this, and it's all been worth it."

Calvin Ward, a fuel buyer for a nuclear power plant, and Patrice Ward, a longtime high school special education teacher and basketball coach who has since retired, both had adjust their work schedules, and life, to it happen.

Seeing their son get drafted, and then following him to Tennessee, has been one of their life's highlights so far.

"We've prayed about this," Patrice Ward said. "Tennessee is the right place for Cameron. I prayed about it, and started manifesting on it. God always leads us in the right direction, and he led us to Tennessee. And we're all so happy about it."

"Cam knows without God none of this is possible, and he has that faith and believes in God."

Calvin Ward said Cam Ward never gave up on his dream, despite dealing with adversity, and doubters.

"I am very proud, because I think the average athlete would have stopped," Calvin Ward said. "In high school, you're told you're not good enough to play college football. Then, in order to get a chance, you have to go to this FCS school (and prove yourself)."

"A lot of kids would have been like, I'm good. But he was like: Let's go."

Surrounded by family at the NFL Draft, and on the trip to Nashville last week after he was selected, Cam Ward said he'll never be able to repay his parents for what they've invested in him.

Ward has always appreciated their support.

"Just what they sacrificed since I was a kid all the way to high school,

to where I am now," he said. "They sacrificed financially for me. Time-wise, there's days my dad would wake up at 5:00 a.m., we'd drive halfway across Texas to get to camps. I'll never be able to repay them. But I just hope me being able to repay them one way is just by putting on for them and the family on the field."

"But financially, time-wise, since I was a kid, they've sacrificed so much. And I just think everything they did for me is starting to pay off for them as well."

The Wards are looking forward to non-stop flights to Nashville, where they already have friends in town.

A former next-door neighbor, in fact, moved to Nashville.

Ward has already rewarded his mother once recently, when he stepped on the stage with the NFL Commissioner.

"My mom wanted a nice picture of me and Mr. Roger Goodell in her living room," Ward said. "My mom told me: Just make sure you and Mr. Goodell are smiling in the picture. So, I gave my mom what she wanted."

###

**OILERS LEGEND WARREN
MOON GIVES NEW
TITANS QB CAM WARD
PERMISSION TO WEAR
HIS PREVIOUSLY
RETIRED NO 1 JERSEY**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
APRIL 25, 2025**

NASHVILLE – A special guest showed up at Cam Ward's introductory press conference on Friday, and presented him with a surprise.

It was Oilers great Warren Moon, who told Ward that he could wear his retired No. 1 jersey with the Titans.

"I have a lot of respect for this young man right here," said Moon, a Hall of Famer who threw for 49,325 yards in 17 NFL seasons (1984-2000) with the Oilers, Vikings, Seahawks and Chiefs after first playing for the Edmonton Eskimos in the CFL. "A lot of our journey is similar as far as all the things he was told throughout the journey about not being good enough, nobody wanted to give him that great opportunity. But he just kept fighting, kept working, kept showing leadership, perseverance, and here he is today, the No. 1 overall pick in the National Football League draft. So that's the reason why I wanted to be here to let him know how proud of him I am.

"As far as the number and everything is concerned. I wore the No. 1 for a lot of different reasons, and I wore it for a long time, starting back to 1976 when I was in college. I think I wore it very honorably for the Houston Oilers organization to the point to where I created a Hall of Fame career for myself. Now, I'm part of the Tennessee Titans family. My Houston Oilers jersey will probably never be worn again, I hope it won't. But the Tennessee Titans jersey is going to be worn by Cam, and Cam will be starting a new freshness in this organization to kind of revitalize it and get it back to where it was a number of years ago,

one of the more successful organizations in the league. So I am excited to see what he is going to do with his legacy wearing this number, and I am proud of the things I did to establish my legacy with the time I wore that number."

Moon told Ward, who wore No.1 at the University of Miami, he'll be available for him with anything he needs.

Ward acknowledged he called Moon to ask him for permission, and was honored it was granted.

"I've got a lot of respect (for Warren)," Ward said. "I am excited that Mr. Moon was able to bless me by giving me this number. ... I didn't know much about him until the draft was really getting started. Before I called him, I made sure I watched his highlights to make sure he was legit. He was, he was legit. I'm trying to get up to his level one day."

###

THE NIGHT HOPE RETURNED TO NASHVILLE: 'CAM WARD IS A GAME CHANGER'

BY BEN ARTHUR
FOXSPORTS.COM
APRIL 25, 2025

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell barely got through the announcement of the No. 1 overall pick. Watching Round 1 of the 2025 NFL Draft unfold from the field at Nissan Stadium, Titans fans heard "Cameron ..." and erupted.

Screams of "let's go!" filled the air. Screeches pierced the sky. Fireworks were set off and Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire" blared through the speakers, just like when the Titans scored a touchdown at home games during the 2024 season. A group of young boys jumped up and down. One of them, wearing a Tony Pollard jersey, spotted a TV camera. He let out a big smile and flexed. He ushered a friend into the shot.

"Cam Ward is a game changer," said Joshua Wilson, 46, who became a Titans fan after moving to Nashville from Boston five years ago.

Despite the current state of their team, several Titans fans who spoke to FOX Sports are choosing hope as Cam Ward arrives as their potential franchise quarterback. They showed up in force Thursday night for Tennessee's draft party, which featured team legends and current players. A massive inflatable obstacle course and tour of the home locker room, plus several stations — a vertical jump test, field-goal kick, cornhole and 40-yard dash — were part of the family-friendly event.

Love for Ward was too, apparently.

Before the draft officially began, Titans public address announcer Matt Rogers received a unanimous vote of approval for the former Miami quarterback when he asked fans to scream who they wanted the Titans to pick. One teenager wore a

Will Levis jersey that had "Levis" and the No. 8 crossed out with tape in favor of "Ward" and No. 1 (Ward's number at Miami and Washington State).

Wilson and his neighbor, 42-year-old Randy Harries, came to the draft party sporting "Luv Ya Cam" shirts, a nod to the "Luv Ya Blue" slogan of the Houston Oilers era of the franchise. The shirts were Wilson's idea. He produced them through his Nashville-based company, Hickory Brand House, which creates print-on-demand merchandise.

"I think we're two years away," Wilson said. "You got an all-star QB on a rookie deal. You've got that three-, four-, five-year window where you've got him on a team-friendly deal that you can really surround him with building blocks before he gets that big, big QB1 money."

Hatcher Morris, 25, said he loves Ward's underdog story. The most exciting parts for him are the QB's leadership skills and the way he carries himself off the field.

A Dallas native, Morris moved to Tennessee in 2004. With his dad being a season ticket holder, he estimates that he's been to "at least" 60 Titans home games in his life.

"I remember Jake Locker and Marcus Mariota. I've seen this kind of play out before in ways I haven't been entirely appreciative. The hype has been the same each time," said Morris. "I feel a little bit more confident with this pick. I basically spent the latter half of my work day watching film [of Ward] in anticipation."

Lawrence Haywood sees a quarterback who can bring the "old-school magic" back to Nashville. A local high school basketball coach, the 51-year-old remembers watching the "Music City Miracle," the Titans' legendary kickoff return touchdown that sent the franchise to the 1993 AFC divisional round.

"He seems like the kid that can handle [the spotlight]," Haywood

said of Ward. "I like to compare it to taking a test in school: If you're not really prepared, you feel like you have to cheat a little bit, look on someone else's paper. But those nights you really studied, you ready to go. I see [Ward] in that light."

RELATED: How Cam Ward's unorthodox rise shaped him: 'I'm not worried about no spotlight'

Despite being hopeful about Ward, fans who spoke to FOX Sports aren't oblivious to the recent dysfunction of the Titans, who are coming off three wins in 2024, their third straight losing season. Owner Amy Adams Strunk has fired two general managers in the past two-and-a-half years.

Caleb Hoffman, 20, admits that he's felt "up and down recently" about the team. He hasn't been totally content with how the organization has been run, including the firing of Mike Vrabel as coach after the 2023 season and how the dismissal of former general manager Ran Carthon was handled in January.

"And now having the pairing of [coach Brian] Callahan and [GM Mike] Borgonzi together, it's an odd set-up," Hoffman said. "I'm hoping for the best out of it. ... I think we have a chance to get on the right path if Cam Ward turns out like we all hope he does."

"I think it's a high-risk move," he added. "I definitely recognize that it's not the safest No. 1 overall pick. We're not getting Joe Burrow tonight or anything like that. But I'm looking on the bright side and I'm trusting in Borgonzi, trusting in Callahan, the work that they've done. They rebuffed trade offers from New York that we've heard about and that kind of stuff. If this is their guy, I trust them and I trust that we'll be moving in the right direction here soon."

Is Cam Ward a franchise-changing QB?

With how bad Tennessee has been in recent years, Harries sees a "silver

lining" with the team getting the top overall selection.

"Everybody is zero-zero. Everybody is tied for first," he said. "It's one of those things where you've seen other franchises get turned around with a single pick. Kansas City Chiefs, for instance. Those are the examples you kind of have to hang on to and hope that's what happens here."

So, what is Ward's arrival the start of?

"I'd say, hopefully, like a cold glass of water on the face," Morris said. "A little refreshment, not only for the fans, but maybe the coaching staff having a little more to work with. I was optimistic of what we could do with Levis, but hopefully some of the character and the athletic traits that Ward has will allow our staff to kind of develop him into something that we couldn't with Levis.

"So overall," he said, "optimistic for that."

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**FROM THE NFL DRAFT:
QB CAM WARD HAPPY
THE TITANS PICKED HIM,
NOW HE'S READY TO GET
TO WORK**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
APRIL 24, 2025**

GREEN BAY – Cam Ward had waited for this moment his entire life.

At the NFL Draft here on Thursday night, Ward heard his name called by NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, along with the news he'd been hoping to hear.

Yes, the Titans picked the former Miami quarterback with the first overall pick.

"It's special," Ward said after holding up a Titans jersey, and putting on a Titans hat. "I am excited for the opportunity the organization has blessed me with, and I'm ready to get to work with my teammates."

"I was hoping (the Titans) would pick me for real, especially when I got to learn more about Coach (Brian) Callahan's offense, the new General Manager Mr. Mike (Borgonzi) and President Mr. Chad (Brinker). Miss Amy (Adams Strunk) is a great owner, and they have a great organization. So, I am excited. It all worked out in the long run, and I am grateful for it."

Ward said he got word the Titans were officially picking him from Borgonzi, who then passed the phone to Strunk, Brinker and Callahan.

"They (told me) they were ready to get to work," Ward said of the Titans contingent. "They are proud of what I did to this point of my career, and they're excited to see where I can take the franchise."

The Titans reportedly turned down trade offers during the process to select Ward.

Borgonzi said earlier in the week the organization had reached a consensus on the pick, and planned to pick at No.1 to get the player the Titans wanted.

###

Ward was asked how much he wants to prove the Titans right.

"It's really proving myself right," Ward said. "They know they made the right choice in getting me. But at the end of the day, I am just trying to be with my teammates, have command of the huddle, and at the end of the day, try and win games, that is our main goal."

A zero star recruit, Ward never gave up on his dream while playing at Incarnate Word, Washington State and eventually Miami.

Ward blossomed as a player, and he turned himself into a top draft pick while ignoring skeptics, and doubters.

"I never let opinions get to me," Ward said. "The only opinion that matters to me is myself. And then also, just believing in God. I had those two things going for me, and it worked out in the long run."

In Tennessee, Ward said he wants to let his new teammates and coaches know when he meets him that he's about business, and winning games.

Ward feels like knows the team relatively well, but he's looking forward to learning more when he arrives in Nashville on Friday, and in the months ahead as preparation begins for the 2025 season.

His message to Titans fans, who cheered his selection at a draft party at Nissan Stadium on Thursday night:

"They are getting a dog, somebody who is willing to do anything to put the team and themselves in situations to win," Ward said. "And the ultimate goal is to win championships, whether that is this year, next year or down the road. That is our dream to accomplish, and I don't plan on stopping until hopefully get one of those things."

HOW CAM WARD'S UNORTHODOX RISE SHAPED HIM: 'I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT NO SPOTLIGHT'

**BY BEN ARTHUR
FOXSPORTS.COM
MARCH 1, 2025**

INDIANAPOLIS — Cam Ward took questions about the myriad of teams he could land with at the top of the draft next month. On the Titans, who have the No. 1 pick, the Miami quarterback said he'd be "plug and play." With the Browns, who have the second selection, he thinks it would "work out [well]." He mentioned he'd be "lucky" to go to the Raiders and play for Pete Carroll, whom he views as a legendary coach. Ward also noted that it would be "elite" to land with the Jets, a team he views as just a couple pieces away from contention.

But when asked about the Giants, who Ward said he had a great meeting with at the NFL Combine, a reporter took it a step further: How would you handle the spotlight that comes with being in New York?

His response spoke to his unconventional journey to get to this point.

"I'm not worried about no spotlight," Ward said Friday. "There was one time in my life where I wasn't in the spotlight. It's crazy to see how everything can change."

Of the top quarterbacks in this year's draft class, Ward is the only one who was not ranked coming out of high school. At Columbia High in West Columbia, Texas, he played in a Wing-T offense, which limited his throwing opportunities. His only scholarship offer was from the University of the Incarnate Word, an FCS school in San Antonio.

He was named the Southland Conference offensive player of the year in his second and final season at UIW, where he was also a finalist for the Walter Payton Award, given

to the most outstanding player in the FCS. Ward then posted 61 total touchdowns in two seasons at Washington State. This past year at Miami, he set single-season program records for passing yards (4,313) and touchdowns (39) en route to winning the 2024 Davey O'Brien Award, given annually to the best quarterback in college football.

Ward broke the Division I record — FBS and FCS — with 158 career touchdown passes. His 18,819 career passing yards rank third in NCAA history.

"Coming from my journey, not a lot of people can do that," Ward said, "so I just think it shows the work that I'm willing to put in whether I go first round or second round. At the end of the day, that draft pick don't mean nothing. It's all about establishing yourself once you get the opportunity.

"I just think me getting to experience different culture changes, different atmospheres, traveling across the country, it's going to end up helping me in the long run," he added. "At the end of the day, you never know where football will take you."

Ward pointed to his private quarterback coach, Darrell Colbert Jr., as being instrumental in his development over the past several years, helping to fine-tune his process in the pocket. Also working with fellow top quarterback prospect Shedeur Sanders, Colbert began training Ward after his freshman season at Incarnate Word.

The quarterback's knack for throwing from various arm slots jumped out from the beginning.

"He's different. He's not the normal guy," Colbert told FOX Sports last month. "I was like, 'S---, that's what makes him him. That's who he is.' So I'm like, 'Hell nah, I'm not changing [anything]. ... We're going to perfect how you throw. We're going to perfect the ways you do everything with all the different arm angles.'

"That's what kind of helped our relationship grow as well," he continued, "me not trying to be a guy who completely changes who he is. We were able to build off that."

Ward has progressed to the point where many in league circles believe he's the top passer in this year's draft.

"At the end of the day, the camera is going to find you if you're the franchise quarterback somewhere," Ward said. "So I just put my head down and I work every day. In the long run, it's going to pay off."

The spotlight is just now catching up.

###

***ONE OF A KIND**

**BY CHRISTY CABRERA
CHIRINOS
MIAMIHURRICANES.COM
NOVEMBER 15, 2024**

That sense of determination, that drive, it's seemingly always been there.

Calvin Ward still remembers the conversation he had with his youngest son, Cameron, when the then-second grader wanted to add football to his ever-growing list of activities.

At the time, the Wards were a basketball family, fully immersed in AAU hoops, with mom, Patrice, even coaching the sport herself. So, Calvin did his best to try and encourage his son to focus on the hardwood, and not the gridiron.

It didn't take long for him to realize his son wasn't about to give up on his football dreams.

"I was like, 'Well, why don't you wait a year?' and I was just trying to push it off, thinking maybe he'll forget about football and just stay focused on basketball," Calvin Ward recalled. "But then he came to me the next year, when he was in third grade, with this form and said, 'I need you to fill this out.' When I asked what it was, he said 'It's for me to play youth football ... remember you told me I had to wait until next year? Well, it's next year.'"

Calvin Ward filled out the form and took his young son to his first football practice.

Not long after, those first practices were followed by extra workouts and training sessions as Cam Ward discovered he had not just a knack for the game, but a love for it, too.

It wasn't uncommon for him to drag his father out of bed on Saturday mornings, after playing the night before, to go get some throwing sessions in. And Sundays were all about faith, family and football,

with father and son often working together – again – after church.

Today, Cam Ward is a record-breaking quarterback who has emerged as a Heisman Trophy candidate while leading the Miami Hurricanes through a memorable, magical season that he and his teammates hope isn't anywhere close to being finished any time soon.

And for much of his football journey, determination and grit have been the story.

As a high schooler at Columbia High School in West Columbia, Texas, Ward played in a Wing-T offense that, sure, helped the Roughnecks win games, but sure didn't showcase Ward's skills as a quarterback who could sling the ball in a way many of his peers couldn't.

"A lot of small-town Texas teams, they live and die by it," Ward shrugged. "But we were 9-2 my senior year, so if you're a head coach, you're thinking 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.'"

Colleges didn't pay attention. Recruiting services didn't think much of Ward either, saddling him with the dreaded "zero star" ranking and putting him in a largely ignored category for prospects who have little to no chance of making an impact at the college level, let alone the NFL.

Ward, though, was determined to make someone, some coach, some program, take note, even as the proverbial chip on his shoulder grew larger and larger.

"It was hard, especially me being 16, 17 and seeing some of my peers who I would play against in 7-on-7 [tournaments], go to camps with and compete against knowing I was better than them," Ward said. "And it was visual, you could see how I was throwing the ball versus them. But at the end of the day, that just wasn't what God had planned for me."

Through the disappointment, Ward continued pushing forward. He continued playing both football and basketball at Columbia High School, even becoming the school's all-time basketball scoring leader.

But he was determined to make a future for himself in football, so the training sessions and the workouts and the extra practices continued.

Finally, in January 2020 – just months before he was set to graduate – an opportunity surfaced.

Incarnate Word, an FCS program located in San Antonio, scheduled an in-home visit with Ward and his family and invited the quarterback to come to campus himself.

Ward did exactly that and that same week, committed to the program.

He was still miffed it had taken so long for even the coaches at Incarnate Word to give him a chance, especially given that he'd been at one of their camps months earlier.

But with a scholarship offer now in hand, Ward set out to prove the doubters wrong.

Still, there was a problem. After years of playing in the run-heavy Wing-T, Ward had to learn how to be a college quarterback.

That proved a challenge he hadn't quite expected.

"When I got there, it was just a different world for me in regard to football and learning the game," Ward said. "I didn't know anything, really, about football. I didn't know how to go through progressions or the right pocket movements, those attributes you have to have as a quarterback. It was a learning curve for me, but the coaching staff that I had there really helped me. The quarterback who was above me at the time helped me. I went in as a third stringer, but I actually got more reps than the ones and twos, so I think that kind of helped me, eventually, get to the starter

position. I just tried to play the hand that I was dealt.”

He played that hand masterfully.

Ward spent as much time as possible studying film, learning from coaches and teammates and as a freshman, became Incarnate Word’s starter during a season that was pushed from the fall to the spring because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He played in six games of that modified season, completed 60 percent of his passes and threw for 2,260 yards and 24 touchdowns, setting a new school record for scoring passes in a single season in the process.

Ward was later named the Southland Conference Spring Freshman of the Year and recognized as the 2021 recipient of the Jerry Rice Award, which is presented annually to the top FCS freshman.

While some of the throws he made raised eyebrows, his quick rise to starter, and eventual award winner, came as no surprise to those who knew him best.

“He’s a student of the game,” said his mother, Patrice Ward. “If they had football degrees, believe me, Cameron would be at the top of his class. He’s always studying. He wants to be good. But he knows that to be good, you have to know what you’re doing. So, he studies. He’s off the charts. He’s always been determined.”

Ward’s success continued that fall when, as a sophomore, he completed 65 percent of his passes and threw for 4,648 yards and 47 touchdowns. He led the Cardinals to the Southland Conference Championship and was named the Southland Conference Offensive Player of the Year.

Outside of Texas, people were starting to notice the quarterback who, for so long, had been unnoticed.

Then came another opportunity.

Eric Morris – the head coach who’d given Ward his chance at Incarnate Word and who, during his time at Texas Tech mentored Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes – left San Antonio to join the staff at Washington State as offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach.

And he wanted Ward with him in Pullman.

Ward, for his part, felt ready to play on a bigger stage, even if that stage came was far from home.

“I was ready to play big-time football. It was something I wanted to do out of high school. I couldn’t do it right away, but I finally got my shot,” Ward said. “I just felt like I was leaving UIW at the right time. I’d won games there. I was the Jerry Rice Award winner. I was just ready for that next step. I really don’t think I had anything left to prove at the FCS level. ...

“But Washington State, I remember when I first went there, me and my parents, it was December, I believe, and we were on this little airplane flying over mountains and hills. You don’t see any roads, everything was just covered in snow, and I was like, ‘Where am I?’ ... It was a culture change, for sure. But I knew what I was getting myself into. ... I knew I was going to get a chance to play football and that’s all I ever wanted. [Head] coach [Jake] Dicker and Coach Morris gave me an opportunity and I ran with it.”

Cam Ward and Family (Photo Courtesy Patrice Ward)

That may be an understatement.

In his two years at Washington State, Ward started 25 games, completed 66 percent of his passes and totaled 6,963 passing yards and 48 touchdowns. He rushed for another 13 scores and established himself as one of the most electrifying players in college football with the ability to extend plays and elude defenders.

And Patrice and Calvin Ward were there for every step of their youngest son’s journey, making the 2,220-mile trek from West Columbia to Pullman every time the Cougars played a game.

For them, there was no other option. They weren’t about to miss watching Ward live his dream.

“I know the growth that he’s made. I’ve seen the sacrifice that he’s made. I saw the times when he was in high school, feeling like he wasn’t getting the chance he wanted,” Patrice Ward said. “There’s the disappointment a mother can feel about that, but seeing him not giving up, you know, that makes me feel so proud.”

As much as his game grew, though, Ward said being at Washington State taught him something else: how to lead a locker room.

It’s a trait he’s carried with him and one he believes has helped make him the quarterback he is today.

“I think those two years shaped me into learning more about my teammates and being more of a team player than just wanting to go out there and throw for a lot of touchdowns,” Ward said. “I went through a lot of adversity out there, record-wise, and personal-wise. But I would say the best thing about being there is that it really allowed me to focus on football. It really made me love the game even more. It made me cherish every opportunity when I was there, because I was 3,000 miles away from Texas. The flights my parents had to go through to get there, they were going on 10-hour days every time they’d see me come play. So, I knew if they could do that for me, I can do the little things that’s just doing my job and playing football.”

After two seasons of learning and growing at Washington State, Ward had another decision to make.

Had he done enough there to put himself in position to make his lifelong dream of playing in the NFL a reality, or was there still more

for him to achieve in the world of college football?

There were heart-to-heart conversations with his parents, particularly with his father, the man who'd been one of his first coaches and who taught him to love the game.

And there were heart-to-heart conversations with himself.

Physically, Ward felt ready to take the next step. The skill set to succeed in the NFL, he believed, was there. The toughness, he believed, was there. The ability, he believed, was there.

So, he decided to enter the NFL Draft.

But hearts and minds change, and Ward's did.

The quarterback realized he hadn't accomplished all he wanted to do in college and an intriguing opportunity presented itself in Miami under head coach Mario Cristobal and offensive coordinator Shannon Dawson.

"I think that was the biggest thing that me and my dad talked about during that time. The NFL isn't going anywhere any time soon. You only get a certain [number] of opportunities to play in college," Ward said. "I bet some guys who went out early probably would've wished they stayed another year ... So, I just based my decision on what I really wanted to do and that was help this team and help myself become a better person and then ultimately win, win a lot of football games at the Power [Four] level, which I haven't done in my past."

Ward arrived in Coral Gables in January and just as he did at Incarnate Word and Washington State, immediately got to work.

One of the first goals on his agenda? Getting to know his new coaches and teammates, particularly the receivers he'd be throwing to on a daily basis and the offensive linemen who'd be protecting him.

His efforts weren't limited to workouts and meetings in the Carol Soffer Indoor Practice Facility – though there were plenty of both.

Ward also invited his new teammates to his house to watch the Super Bowl. He treated Miami's offensive linemen to dinner on multiple occasions. He went fishing with several Hurricanes.

"He's earned the trust of the people around him because of his time invested and the fact that he's an alpha..."

Hurricanes head coach Mario Cristobal

And once spring practice began, he made a quick impression and showed, yet again, why underestimating him was a mistake.

"The first day, I wanted to test him out. He was throwing the ball on the field, and I was by the exit, and I told him to throw me the ball. I was like 60 yards away and he threw it on the dot," defensive lineman Rueben Bain Jr. laughed during the spring. "That's the thing that stuck out to me. ... There have been a couple of times where I've tried to make an inside move and he's made me regret it. He's real swift on his feet."

Added Cristobal, "He earned trust, and he earned trust by the fact that he's up there in the office every waking free moment that he has. He gets there early, and he leaves late. He pulls aside the receivers and the tight ends, and he watches film with them, and he takes the linemen out to eat. He spends time with the running backs, and then he waits after practice and does some more stuff with other guys that maybe were off a little bit. ...

"Trust and confidence [are] earned. It's not just given away. What he has done, he has earned. He's earned the trust of the people around him because of his time invested and the fact that he's an alpha and your quarterback needs to be an alpha."

Seven months later, Ward remains every bit the leader and playmaker he showed himself to be during spring drills on Greentree.

He's emerged as a national leader in both passing yards and touchdowns, throwing for 3,494 yards and 32 touchdowns in Miami's first 10 games.

He has rewritten the school's single-season record book, becoming the first Hurricane to ever put together seven consecutive 300-yard performances.

With Ward under center, Miami opened the 2024 season with nine straight wins, including an epic, 25-point comeback victory against California in Berkeley in October.

On that memorable night, Ward scored on a 24-yard scramble, completed 35 of 53 passes and threw for 437 yards and two touchdowns.

One of those touchdowns was a 5-yard scoring pass to Elijah Arroyo with 26 seconds left that helped Miami clinch an improbable 39-38 win.

"Week in and week out, when [No.] 1 has the ball in his hands, you know the game's never over," wide receiver Xavier Restrepo said that night.

And from the stands at California Memorial Stadium, all Patrice and Calvin Ward could do was smile knowingly.

The rest of America may have been surprised to see their son's cool demeanor when faced with a near-impossible, second-half deficit, but for the two of them it was typical Cameron.

Their son has never given up on himself, never given up on a play, and never given up on a game.

He wasn't about to start then.

"Ever since he's been playing especially football and basketball, we've always taught him the mindset that you play until the clock

goes to zero,” Calvin Ward said. “And when the clock goes to zero, if you want to feel sorry for yourself, you feel sorry for yourself. But the game isn’t over until the clock says zero. So, he’s always had that as his mindset. And at the quarterback position, I always taught him that regardless of what the score is, unless someone is looking at the scoreboard, they should never be able to know what the score is by looking at you. In other words, don’t get too high, don’t get too low, just keep battling until the clock goes to zero. And he’s done that, ever since he was a little kid.”

Said Patrice Ward, “We’re proud of him because he’s confident in himself. ... If you’re not confident in yourself and you don’t believe in yourself, who’s going to believe in you? We’re proud of him because we’ve instilled that in him. ... Some kids could just hang it up and say, ‘Hey, things didn’t go my way.’ But Cameron, he’s a fighter. He’s going to fight until the end like Calvin said, until the clock is at zero.”

Zero. It marks the end of a game, like the one Ward helped the Hurricanes win in California. Or the comeback game he helped Miami win this season against Virginia Tech. And again, against Duke.

It’s also a number that will always hold significance.

Zero stars. A reminder that before he earned that one invaluable scholarship offer, before he won national awards, and before he found himself at the center of the Heisman Trophy conversation during his final year of college football, not many coaches paid him much attention.

Despite the success that’s come in recent years, Ward has never forgotten that disappointment.

It continues to drive him to this day – and may drive him for years to come.

“It’s really on my mind a lot. I really don’t think I’ll ever be able to leave it just because it’s permanent,” Ward

said. “It makes me have a lot of hate in my heart, makes me hate a lot of things. I don’t know if that’s good for me, but I just try to pray about it. I’m not free yet. Maybe later in life I will be.”

As to how he’d like to see the next few weeks play out, Ward says he’s not finished making headlines.

There are still things he wants for himself and goals he’s set.

But more importantly, there are things he wants for the Miami Hurricanes.

“Hopefully, [there’s] a couple trophies. A couple individual trophies ... a lot of team trophies and most importantly, helping every guy on this team have those memories. Cherish them forever. Even Coach Cristobal tells us a lot of people on this team won’t be on a team like this [again]. The talent like this, the camaraderie that we have, you don’t get this chance every season. So, we’re all just trying to take advantage of the moment and hopefully, it ends with us holding up that trophy at the end of the year.”

###

**TITANS LB JAMES
WILLIAMS "STARVING"
FOR MORE AS HE HEADS
INTO YEAR 2, NOW WITH
SR. ON THE BACK OF HIS
JERSEY**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
JUNE 23, 2025**

NASHVILLE – James Williams was at Cam Ward's Pro Day in Miami.

The Titans linebacker, who also played at the U, was there supporting the quarterback the Titans would ultimately pick first overall in April's NFL Draft.

"But the first time I met Cam was here with the Titans," Williams said. "It was great to see us pick him. I could have played with him last year (at Miami but turned pro). And now, going into his rookie year, I am his teammate, and have a chance to play with him. It's a blessing. God put us together, and God is going to let us shine together."

Williams, headed into his second NFL season, has a chance to earn a bigger role at inside linebacker in 2025 after playing primarily on special teams for the Titans in his first year.

He's competing with Cedric Gray, Otis Reese II and several others to earn a starting spot alongside veteran Cody Barton in Tennessee defense.

Williams, by the way, is known as James Williams Sr. now, after becoming a dad to a baby boy at the start of his rookie year. His son will turn one at the end of next month.

"(He) gives me something to play for, the name on my back, and the name on my front," Williams said of his son. "The Sr. stands out, and it makes me want to go harder to take care of him and make sure he is good in life."

Williams has worked hard to make sure he's in a position to compete when camp begins.

After making the transition from a college safety to an NFL linebacker, Williams is more comfortable now, and he feels like he's learned a lot. He's in better shape physically, and hungry. He said he cut weight and added more muscle, which makes him feel "more stout, stronger, and faster."

He believes his flexibility, and mobility, have improved as well.

Williams said he learned a lot about being patient last year as a rookie, when he played in 13 games, with one start, and tallied 19 tackles on defense, in addition to seven more on special teams.

Williams said coaches have told him "a lot of things are coming for me," as it relates to having a chance to move around, and be more effective in the defense.

"When your time comes, it should allow you to be who you want to be when your time gets here," Williams said. "Going into my second year I feel like I am stronger, faster, smarter, and I feel like the game has slowed down for me. I am understanding things at a new position, and I'm ready to compete."

"I feel like I came in here last year and did the little things, and showed them I am capable of being a pro. I am willing to change my position, and understand the things that come with being a pro. Now, I am ready to continue to put work in to be who I want to be. I want to get the job done."

Asked about his hunger level to be good, Williams replied:

"I'm starving. I'm starving right now," he said. "I've got to go eat."

###

**JAMES WILLIAMS
WATCHED EVERY NFL
DRAFT PICK BEFORE
TEARS STARTED WHEN
TENNESSEE TITANS
CALLED AT NO. 242**

**BY GEORGE ROBINSON
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
APRIL 27, 2024**

James Williams never turned away from the television.

Miami's 6-foot-4, 228-pound football star sat through three days of the 2024 NFL Draft waiting with friends and family who didn't say much as names flew off draft boards and landed with the league's 32 teams. And Williams waited patiently.

When the Tennessee Titans called toward the end of the draft, Williams was so emotional, he broke down, realizing his dream wouldn't have to be delayed as the Titans made him the 22nd pick of the seventh round (242nd overall) on Saturday.

"It was very emotional for me," Williams said. "Waiting to see my name called, to be the first one of my family to hear my name called. It was a blessing and I thank God for that, most importantly. It was a amazing phone call and it broke me down."

A hard hitter from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Williams started 12 games last fall as a safety with the Hurricanes and had a career-high 73 tackles. He had four interceptions and 13 pass break-ups in his career. But he'll make the switch to linebacker with the Titans.

"It's a great adjustment, I just have to do some learning but I'm ready for it and embrace it," Williams said.

Despite being chosen 15 spots from the final selection of the draft, Williams wasn't fazed. He talked about his eagerness to arrive in Nashville, a city he's never been to and knows very little about but is also anxious to start the process of transitioning to linebacker.

"It's a whole new position for me," he said. "I've got to learn a whole new thing from square one so I'm embracing it, I'm open, I'm willing to do it. I'm dying to do it. I can't wait to get up there."

Williams had more than 30 offers that included Tennessee, Alabama, LSU, Georgia, Michigan, Vanderbilt and Ohio State. He was a five-star prospect by 247Sports, ranked as the No. 1 safety and No. 13 overall prospect in the 2021 class.

The Hurricanes put him at safety but quickly found out he could shift down into the box as an extra linebacker. The Titans' made Williams the fourth of five defensive players chosen in this draft, including Texas defensive tackle T'Vondre Sweat (second round), North Carolina's Cedric Gray (fourth), Louisville's Jarvis Brownlee (fifth) and Michigan's Jaylen Harrell (seventh).

Williams said Gray was one of the Titans' best picks and Williams is already familiar with Brownlee, a Miami native.

"He's somebody I always competed with and helped me be the best version of James, so I appreciate him for that," Williams said about Brownlee. "And getting to be on the same team (with him) is amazing."

"Tennessee is on to something," Williams added. "They really want something, and they got something. For sure."

###

**TITANS DEFENSE
TRANSFORMED INSIDE
THE MIND OF ‘CUT MAN’
DENNARD WILSON**

**BY PAUL KUHARSKY
PAULKUHARSKY.COM
AUGUST 18, 2024**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – As the older brother by about two years, Rashad Wilson always got the front seat in the blue Jeep Grand Cherokee when he and Dennard rode with their dad, Tyrone.

With one exception.

When the three Wilson men drove home from Dennard’s DeMatha High School football games, Dennard got shotgun.

Dad had wisdom to impart.

The Titans’ first-year defensive coordinator was a strong two-way player at DeMatha, a place where he returned to coach between his two tries at playing in the NFL and discovered what he would do for a living.

Many who have worked with him in the past, or are with him now, identify Wilson as a spectacular motivator and teacher of aggressive football with a high-energy way of identifying with his players and instilling accountability.

A good share of the team’s hopes rest on his ability to turn around a unit infused with new players, many with question marks regarding age and injury history, into an effective group that can move the Titans well up from 28th in expected yards per play.

“My dad never allowed me to say the word ‘can’t,’” Wilson said. “I would get in trouble for saying ‘can’t.’ He would say, ‘You can do anything you set your mind and you work at, so you can’t say the word can’t when you’re talking about yourself.’ He was a former football coach, a former player. He used to show me tough love. He always wanted me to do the little things

correct, never skip steps. You’ve got to go from A to B. If you get it, now you can move to C.

So Wilson grew up staying on the course, determined to conquer the small stuff and win dad’s approval following his methods and then those of DeMatha coach Bill McGregor, who still runs the program.

Tyrone Wilson would watch practice and games from afar, never interfering with McGregor, but always with an eye on those details.

The rides home after the games ranging from 15 to 35 minutes became some of the biggest schoolings of the week. Sometimes agonizing ones.

“This was the only time I could sit in the front seat,” Dennard Wilson said. “From wherever we played until we got home, he was teaching me a lesson. ‘You scored three touchdowns, but you didn’t run to the ball on these couple plays.’ ‘You gave up a play because you weren’t looking at the right things.’

“It was always the little things that he just harped on, over and over and over again. To the point where I couldn’t stand the rides home. But once we got to the house, it was done. He was always teaching me something and creating this drive to do the little things right. He created this thing where if I attack it the right way, I can accomplish it.”

Now when he’s got something he needs to sort out he leans on his dad along with his wife, his brother and an older cousin -- Damon Wilson, head coach at Morgan State – sounding boards with different perspectives.

Wilson played four years at Maryland, appearing in 40 games, starting 32 and earning honorable mention All-ACC as a senior.

The Terrapins won the conference in 2001 and lost the Orange Bowl to Florida. Coach Ralph Friedgen then

interviewed for the head job with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and his college roster was very upset.

The players were doing winter workouts in the gym in February and Friedgen’s future was all the talk.

Guys came into my suite and they said, ‘Do you see this about Ralph leaving?’ Because it’s ‘All about Maryland,’” Wilson recalled. “We just had success and Maryland was a place that wasn’t winning.”

Wilson hatched a plan: The players would show up for their 5 am workout, but once they got to the gym, no one would change into their workout clothes. When Friedgen came in, Wilson would confront him.

“Ralph came in there with his cup of coffee and a couple other coaches and I told the boys, ‘Let’s go,’” Wilson said. “Some of them probably didn’t believe I was going to do it. Then they were nervous. I walked up to him and I asked him, I said ‘Ralph man, you talk about Maryland being all in, us building something, but we saw you interview. I got one question: Are you in or are you out?’

“He looked at me with this look and said ‘I’m in.’”

It came naturally and easily to Wilson. He and his teammates were sold that Maryland was a special place. Was it special to the guy who did the selling?

In an AP report, Friedgen said it was something he had to look into from a monetary standpoint.

“We have a long way to go here,” he said of Maryland. “I know what I have here. Sometimes you don’t know what you’ll have in other places.”

The Bucs wound up trading for Jon Gruden.

Wilson thought he’d be a late-round draft pick, but never heard his name called.

Every undrafted player comes into the league via a patron, a scout or coach who saw something.

Wilson's was Steve Jackson, the defensive back who was a third-round draft pick by Houston out of Purdue in 1991 and played for the franchise through the Super Bowl season as the Titans in 1999. Jackson is now in his second stint as a Titans' coach, overseeing the safeties. He coached in Washington from 2004-11.

"We drafted Sean Taylor, same year, and then Dennard was an undrafted free agent," Jackson said. "Once they got out on the field, you couldn't tell which one was which. You would have thought that it was Dennard who was the fifth pick in the draft versus Sean.

"He took control out there, he got everybody lined up. The same piss and vinegar you see in him now was the same way he was back then as a little chubby undrafted free agent. He ended up getting hurt, but he never missed a day, he wanted to learn. When someone puts that much in, they do it for a reason, because there is something in them, a burning desire to be great. It's just who he is and he hasn't changed."

A few weeks into camp right before Washington's first preseason game against Baltimore, Taylor hit a receiver in practice and Wilson went up for an interception of the tipped ball. He came down and his foot got stuck on the turf. His body went the other way, breaking his fibula.

He caught the ball – Jason Campbell threw it, he thinks -- but he couldn't walk. A pin was inserted in his left leg that had to be taken out later, during seven months of rehabilitation.

"He was really doing a great job competing for a great spot," said Gregg Williams, who was Washington's defensive coordinator and assistant head coach when Wilson arrived.

In 2005, Wilson was out of the league, taking his first turn at DeMatha where he coached DBs including Rodney McCloud, who is about to play his 13th NFL season and Kenny Tate, who played at Maryland.

"That's when I really fell in love with coaching," he said. "...That's where the passion for coaching really came."

The kids responded to him.

"Whatever he said was gospel," said McGregor, the DeMatha coach.

A year later Wilson took one more crack at the NFL, back with Washington, but he tore the MCL in his right knee.

He returned to DeMatha for three seasons, was a grad assistant at Maryland, scouted for the Bears for two seasons and then started his NFL coaching path: Five years with the Rams that came with a reunion with Williams, four years with the Jets that started with another big mentor in Todd Bowles, two with the Eagles, one with the Ravens.

Bowles remembers his interview with Wilson in 2017, after Jeff Fisher's Rams' staff was blown up.

"My first impression was how he knew more than just the secondary upon the first meeting and how detailed he was in all of his position work, not just the secondary," the Buccaneers coach said. "He knew where everybody was supposed to be. I knew he was going to be more than a DB coach.

"It's very uncommon. You get a lot of people who are very good at their position and that's that. But then you get a few guys who can see the entire defense and understand what the offense is trying to do to them and can explain it, and can teach it and can coach it. And he can do all of that."

Titans players quickly took to the new vibe Wilson brought from

Baltimore, where he was defensive backs coach in 2023.

Wilson coached Jamal Adams for the defensive back's first three seasons in the league, which culminated with two Pro Bowls and a First-Team All-Pro appearance.

"He's a unique guy in the way he attacks – and when I say attacks, not in a vicious way – but attacks players to bring out the best in them," Adams said. "He definitely challenges each and every player, he doesn't sugar coat anything, he keeps everything straightforward. He's all about accountability. What makes him very, very special is how smart he is and how much game he gives to a player, younger players, how he develops them through years of being with them.

"You have to be around him to really understand where he's coming from. I feel like if you don't have a tough coach, how are you going to get better? And obviously all the great players want to be coached hard. He's one of those guys that's going to bring it out in you."

Callahan said it's "cool" to watch Wilson work. Because Callahan is a play-calling head coach his defensive coordinator has an extra degree of power. It's the most-coveted sort of coordinator job, basically a "head coach, defense" role.

"He's a great presenter in the meeting room, his energy, his entertainment value I think is exceptional," Callahan said.

Wilson said he likes to build a meeting to the point where he gets guys on the edge of their seats.

He's also helped reshape a roster that's often been thin in the defensive backfield to one that's strong on the back end and has a blitzing mentality formed under Williams and Bowles.

"All players at this high, high level want to be the toughest, most physical, most aggressive that they can be," Williams said. "When

you're the same as a coach, it's an easy buy in both ways. Then on top of that, being that way can hide some deficiencies too."

Coaches talking about players feeling ownership can feel like lip service.

It's still early to tell about some of the Titans' early judgments. The two-year \$15.5 million contract with \$5 million guaranteed for Kenneth Murray was hardly an outrageous deal. The big role as the team's primary inside linebacker was a surprise, however. With the Chargers, Murray didn't appear to be an instinctive player.

But the Titans are asking him to think less, just believe what he sees and go play, and so far it seems to be a philosophy that is freeing him.

"Coach Dennard is a tremendous leader of men, he empowers players," Murray said. "He's definitely done that with me and I'm extremely grateful for that. It means a lot to me and I'm trying to go out there and be the best version of myself for him."

Wilson is hard and demanding on his players, just as his dad was on him. He looks to stress players in practice, then be calm during games, allowing them to play and be free.

"I look at myself as their cut man in the ring," he said.

He's the driver now, his players riding shotgun, getting the wisdom. It may be hard to hear at the time. But it's well-intentioned and the payoff should be worth it.

"When you look back at it, you still remember it," Wilson said. "I think I made my dad the happiest when I went to Maryland. My dad was at every practice. He was nowhere near the field. Even at the game, he'd go sit up the hill by himself. He's not going to interrupt the coaches; he allowed the coaches to coach. He was all about the hustle, the effort stuff.

"When I was at Maryland, I remember having a conversation with my dad. I told him, 'You don't have to come up here no more, I got it.' It was like, 'I know what you were doing, I got the message, I can go up here and I can handle it on my own. I think that made him extremely happy because he knew I learned from what he was doing.'"

###

**NEW TITANS DC
DENNARD WILSON AIMS
TO COACH WITH
"ENTHUSIASM UNKNOWN
TO MANKIND"**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
APRIL 11, 2024**

NASHVILLE – Since Dennard Wilson was hired as defensive coordinator of the Titans, the team has made some key additions to bolster the defense.

Former Bengals cornerback Chidobe Awuzie was acquired in free agency, and then the team traded for former Chiefs cornerback L'Jarius Sneed.

Linebacker Kenneth Murray Jr. (Chargers) and defensive lineman Sebastian Joseph-Day (49ers) are intriguing new pieces, and the coaching staff will work to get the most out of them following the departure of starters Azeez Al-Shaair and Denico Autry.

At the same time, teams across the division have gotten better. The Texans, the defending AFC South champs, for instance, recently acquired former All-Pro wide receiver Stefon Diggs. He'll join what was already a formidable offensive unit.

Wilson, hired by head coach Brian Callahan back in February, said he's focused on the Titans.

"Really, I don't focus on what other teams have," Wilson said. "To me, they're nameless faces. We are going to play a certain style. We are going to play with confidence. So, it doesn't matter who they have on (the other) team. It's 11 versus 11, and in terms of the defense, it's 11 versus 1 – it's 11 versus the ball.

"So, you can get a whole lot of receivers, a whole lot of weapons. But there's only one ball. And it's our job to surround the football and take it away."

Wilson, who has 12 years of NFL coaching experience, arrived in Tennessee with an impressive resume.

He spent one season (2023) in Baltimore as Defensive Backs coach, and prior to joining the Ravens, Wilson spent two seasons with the Eagles, first as Defensive Backs coach (2021) and then as Defensive Passing Game Coordinator/DB's (2022). Before that, Wilson spent four seasons (2017-20) with the Jets as Defensive Backs coach (2017-18) and Passing Game Coordinator/DBs (2019-20).

Wilson entered the NFL as a coach in 2012 with the St. Louis Rams as a Defensive Quality Control coach. In 2015 he was elevated to Defensive Backs coach. Prior to joining the NFL coaching ranks, he spent four years (2008-11) as a pro scout for the Bears.

On Wednesday, during the first week of the team's offseason program, Wilson smiled big when discussing some of the team's new players, and the returning ones.

He knows the defense is a work in progress, on paper, and ultimately, on the field. New players will be added via the draft, and free agency.

Earlier this week, the first slide he showed his new players on power point read: Opportunity is now here.

Wilson said he plans to "coach the hell out of is players."

He's loves the early interaction as the process begins.

"It's been outstanding. It's been great," Wilson said. "The first couple of things, this week, it's about a building block, it's about creating a foundation, it's about establishing culture. It's about setting a precedent about where we are going, what we need to get there, and how we are going to get there. And have been extremely receptive. As a coaching staff, myself included, we come out here and try to have enthusiasm unknown to mankind, to get these guys to come

back and want to be coached, and want to be around us. So it has been very receptive. Guys are buying in, guys are learning every day, and we're just stacking bricks and stacking bricks until we build a wall that is strong."

###

**TITANS DC DENNARD
WILSON TO TAKE PART
IN THE NFL'S COACH
ACCELERATOR
PROGRAM AT THE
LEAGUE MEETINGS NEXT
WEEK IN NASHVILLE**

**BY JIM WYATT
TENNESSEETITANS.COM
MAY 16, 2024**

NASHVILLE – First-year Titans defensive coordinator Dennard Wilson will be among the coaches taking part in the 2024 Coach Accelerator Program at the NFL meetings next week in Music City.

The Springs Meetings are scheduled for May 20-22 in Nashville.

The Accelerator program is part of the league's efforts to strengthen the pipeline of diverse coaching candidates. It serves as a platform for clubs and owners to engage with qualified coaching candidates from diverse backgrounds.

Candidates can build relationships with club owners and executives and further develop and hone their leadership skills. To date, the program has successfully contributed to an increase in diverse candidates being interviewed for open positions, and many past participants have been promoted and hired into more senior coaching positions.

While with the San Francisco 49ers, Ran Carthon took part in the NFL's Front Office Accelerator Program prior to being hired as General Manager by the Titans.

"Developing diverse coaching talent through the Accelerator program is a key priority," said NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell. "In its fifth iteration, this program continues to be an effective avenue for club owners and executives to be exposed to the skillset and unique backgrounds of highly qualified coaching candidates, and for the program's participants to network with one another and engage in professional development sessions."

Wilson, who joined the Titans earlier this this offseason, has 12 years of NFL coaching experience, including nine seasons coaching defensive backs.

Wilson spent one season (2023) with the Baltimore Ravens as Defensive Backs coach. Prior to joining the Ravens, Wilson spent two seasons with the Philadelphia Eagles, first as Defensive Backs coach (2021) and then as Defensive Passing Game Coordinator/DB's (2022).

Wilson spent four seasons (2017-20) with the New York Jets as Defensive Backs coach (2017-18) and Passing Game Coordinator/DB's (2019-20). Wilson entered the NFL as a coach in 2012 with the St. Louis Rams as a Defensive Quality Control coach. In 2015 he was elevated to Defensive Backs coach. Prior to joining the NFL coaching ranks, he spent four years (2008-11) as a pro scout for the Chicago Bears. He originally entered coaching as a Defensive Backs coach for his high school alma mater, DeMatha Catholic (MD) from 2004-06. He also spent two seasons (2007-09) at the University of Maryland as a graduate assistant.

In addition to networking and personal development programming, the league will provide coaches with insight to future initiatives, both on and off the field, to contextualize how the game will continue to develop and where the NFL is evolving.

"Since its inception, the Coaching Accelerator has prepared candidates to succeed in various coaching roles while cultivating relationships with executives and key decision makers," said Mark Wilf, Minnesota Vikings owner and president. "The program proves to be mutually beneficial for participants and clubs as it breaks down barriers to access and educational tools vital for success. I am proud of the progress already made and look forward to seeing the continuous growth of the Accelerator."

###

ONCE FEARFUL TO TACKLE, KJ WINSTON IS NOW A BEDROCK OF THE PENN STATE DEFENSE

BY RICH SCARCELLA
READING EAGLE
AUGUST 25, 2024

Kevin Winston Jr. was 7 years old and in his first season of playing tackle football with one slight problem – he was afraid to tackle.

KJ would let ball carriers run past him and then jump on their backs to try to bring them down. One year later, his father and coach offered him stern advice.

Kevin Sr. told his son to run through somebody and tackle him as hard as he could. His son finally did.

“He said, ‘Dad, it didn’t hurt,’ ” his father recalled. “From that point, he was knocking people’s helmets off and doing very well.”

KJ Winston has gone on to become one of the surest tacklers in the country and one of the bedrocks of the vaunted Penn State defense.

At 6-2 and 205 pounds, Winston is the only Nittany Lion ranked among the top 50 players in the country by Pro Football Focus. He’s been projected as a first- or second-round draft pick next year.

Penn State safety KJ Winston: “That’s just something I’ve been good at since I was a little kid playing for my father.” (AP Photo/Carlos Osorio)

Penn State safety KJ Winston: “That’s just something I’ve been good at since I was a little kid playing for my father.” (AP Photo/Carlos Osorio)

The guy who was fearful as a child is a fierce tackler who led Penn State in that category last year. He’s especially effective against the run.

“That’s just something I’ve been good at since I was a little kid playing for my father,” Winston

said. “He told me, ‘Hit ’em in the mouth and they won’t come back.’ Stuff like that.

“He’s always talked about physicality. Having that at a young age, then through high school and now in college, it’s just how I play football.”

Winston is one of six starters returning from a defense that allowed the fewest rushing yards in the country and the second-fewest total yards. He accounted for 61 tackles, three takeaways and five pass breakups.

Defensive coordinator Tom Allen was on the opposing sideline last year as the Indiana head coach when the Lions rallied to beat the Hoosiers 33-24 and held them to 80 rushing yards on 34 attempts.

“The thing that stuck out to me was his size and his speed, which creates range,” Allen said. “He’s one of those guys who I thought was a really good player on film. Then you watch him warm up and you’re like, ‘Dang, he’s a good looking dude.’

“He’s big. He’s well-proportioned. He’s twitchy for his length. He can flat out burst and close.”

His father describes Winston as “cut from a different cloth.” He knew he wanted to attend DeMatha Catholic High School in Hyattsville, Md., when he was in fifth grade. He knew he wanted to go to Penn State when he was in seventh or eighth grade after playing in an all-star game there.

Rated a consensus four-star prospect, he played in 12 games as a freshman in 2022 before he became a starter last season. He made seven tackles against Ohio State and 12 against Michigan and received All-Big Ten honorable mention.

Winston begins this season as a team captain and a candidate for the All-Big Ten first team and All-American teams.

“He’s a man, he really is,” Penn State coach James Franklin said.

“He’s so mature. He really knows how to practice, how to prepare. He’s totally locked in. He’s totally focused. Football is really important to him.

“I don’t have enough adjectives for him. You look at him physically, he’s beautiful. He has a great relationship with the coaches. He’s kind of an extension to the coaching staff. I could go on and on and on.”

Winston will be on the field often with his two buddies, Jaylen Reed and Zakee Wheatley. Winston and Wheatley likely will be at safety and Reed at the Lion, a hybrid position combining linebacker and defensive back.

“We’re all just natural, smart athletes,” Winston said. “We work off each other in a great way. I’d say our relationships off the field allow us to go out there and be that way.

“We’re so connected that when we go out on the field we’re talking to each other like we’re sitting at dinner communicating plays to each other. It doesn’t feel awkward.”

Winston has emerged as one of the most vocal leaders on the defense, if not the team. He holds his teammates to the same high standard he holds himself.

“He might be the most impressive guy that I’ve seen,” Allen said, “in terms of understanding, taking care of his body, how he approaches every walk-through, how he approaches every jog-through, how he practices every single day.

“He’s a pro. He’s a pro who’s on a mission. He’s a hungry guy. He’s extremely hard on himself. He’s extremely hard on his teammates, which is a great thing.”

According to Pro Football Focus, Winston missed just 2% of his possible tackles, which was second among all safeties last season. He finished as the only safety to earn 85-plus grades as a run defender and in pass coverage. Yet he’s not satisfied.

“There’s so much to improve in my game,” he said. “I really want to be way better in man coverage. I wasn’t bad, but I want to be even better. I want to be able to play dudes like I’m a corner.

“Then I’d just say getting some turnovers out there. Making plays on the ball. That starts in practice.”

Kevin Winston Sr. was an All-American defensive end at James Madison. He underwent back surgery before his senior year, which kept him from playing in the NFL. He’s hoping his only son can play at a level he didn’t.

“It’s amazing,” the elder Winston said. “There’s still a season that has to be played at a high level. If you are that first- or second-round draft pick, the expectations don’t get lower. The competition doesn’t get easier.

“I just know how much he sacrificed and how much he loves the game, how much he studies the game. He’s a way better person than a football player. That’s all I can ask for.”

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PENN STATE'S KEVIN WINSTON JR. 'BLESSED' BY LIFE-ALTERING INJURY, MENTALLY READY FOR NFL SUCCESS

**BY SETH ENGLE
STATECOLLEGE.COM
FEBRUARY 28, 2025**

INDIANAPOLIS — Kevin Winston Jr. was on a path toward superstardom. He was a preseason All-American safety, a projected first-round NFL Draft pick and a Penn State team captain. Winston was named the Big Ten's Defensive Player of the Week in the Nittany Lions' first game of 2024. And then, suddenly, the path ventured sideways into a world of introspection and recovery.

Winston thought it was just a "tweak," something he could play through against Bowling Green on Sept. 7. But a few plays into that game, he sidelined himself. After further testing, it was revealed that Winston had partially torn his ACL. A month later, he had surgery. Winston's junior year, which began with overwhelming anticipation, was over just after it began.

It's been six months since Winston embarked on the most difficult journey of his career. It was understandably challenging at first, purely in accepting the reality of his situation. But Winston quickly pivoted. He began to focus on what he could control, attacking his rehab as hard as he would his game preparation. And if he had it his way, Winston wouldn't change a thing.

"I'm blessed that it happened to me," Winston said at the NFL Scouting Combine on Thursday. "I don't regret anything that happened and I don't wish anything different, because I think throughout this process, I've learned a lot about myself. I appreciate things more than I ever had, and I'm actually blessed that it happened to me."

Winston told fellow safety Ji'Ayir Brown on his first day of workouts that he'd be in his right pocket

throughout every rep and every workout. He handled his craft like a professional and wanted to look after a veteran who did, as well. Brown eventually entered the NFL, where he's now a staple of the San Francisco 49er's defense. Winston has been waiting to follow in his footsteps since they met.

But what exactly makes an NFL player? The dream is alive in the heart of every young football player, but only so few actually achieve it. Even fewer make the dream last over the course of a career. It's not talent alone. It's something else, something Winston has searched for since the day he first held the pigskin. Now, through challenging circumstances, he's found it.

"I had to mentally make sure I was ready for the NFL. If you're not mentally strong and mentally ready for the NFL, you won't last," Winston said. "The guys who are mentally weak, they won't last in the league, and I had to make sure that I was there. I've been preparing my mental and my habits and my routine since I was a freshman in college."

Winston won't participate in on-field drills at the combine, but plans to run the 40-yard dash at Penn State's Pro Day on March 28. He's yet not fully healthy, but projects to be 100% by the start of NFL training camp. Winston is not likely to hear his name called in the first round of April's draft, as many had projected last summer. But that hardly matters to him.

There's no one with more confidence in Winston than himself. He's battled through adversity, and grown from it. At 6-foot-1 and 215 pounds, Winston possesses the physical tangibles to make an immediate impact at the next level. But the skill he's developed within his own mind is the one that may separate him from his peers. His path is leading him back to the light.

"The injury doesn't change a thing. If I was playing this junior season, I would've shown exactly what I was supposed to show and there would

have been no doubt in anybody's mind I was a first-round talent," Winston said. "When I come back, you guys will see everything and more of that. And there's no doubt in my mind, I'll make sure that everybody sees it. The injury is not changing anything."

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**PENN STATE SAFETY
KEVIN WINSTON JR.
COMMITTED TO LEAD
WHILE SIDELINED AFTER
INJURY**

**BY LYLE ALENSTEIN
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN
JANUARY 3, 2025**

Penn State's postgame celebration was filled with joy, as players lit cigars, posed for pictures with each other and shouted in excitement after knocking off Boise State in the Fiesta Bowl.

While the cries of victory echoed as players prepared to hit the showers, safety Kevin Winston Jr. sat next to his position coach Anthony Poindexter. He remained calm, cool and collected with his eyes hidden behind his Louis Vuitton sunglasses, but the victory looked a little bit different from his point of view.

"I would love to go out there and put the work in with the guys," Winston said. "The blood, sweat and tears with them, like I always have since my time here."

The junior suffered what James Franklin called a "long-term" injury, following his exit early in the second quarter in Week 2 against Bowling Green. It was a promising start to the season, as he tallied 12 tackles and a forced fumble in the opener against West Virginia, where he won the Big Ten Defensive Player of the Week.

After entering the 2024 season with a first- or second-round draft grade, expectations were high for Winston. While his season was cut short when Franklin confirmed the safety wouldn't be back this season, Winston couldn't be prouder of his teammates and the postseason run that is currently taking shape.

"I can't help but to be super happy for everybody," Winston said. "I love this team, and seeing them happy, and seeing them win. Everybody all over, the guys making plays just makes me so happy. That's the biggest thing for

me. And being here and being able to have an effect on everybody. I have enjoyed this time with them. I don't take that for granted."

Winston suffered his injury leading up to the game against the Falcons. He tried giving it a go, but following a quarter of play he knew he couldn't carry on.

"When it happened, it didn't feel right," Winston said. "I'm very in-tune with my body, and when I tried to keep going, it wasn't feeling right. In that Bowling Green Game, I tried to play through it, and I was like, I knew something wasn't right. And then we took the procedures, got X-rays and everything."

Winston didn't disclose the nature of his injury, though it was reported by Adam Schefter of ESPN that he had a partially-torn ACL. He was seen wearing a brace over his right leg throughout the season, though he stepped away from the program early in the process to recover and be with family.

Winston also didn't comment on why he opted to go to the NFL Draft instead of returning for the 2025 season, but once his procedure was done it eliminated the chance of returning for the year.

"It was so hard for me," Winston said. "I never expected to play my first game and then the next week in practice I was going to get hurt."

While he knew he wasn't going to suit up again this season, Winston came back to be with his teammates. He was named a captain for a reason and was committed to helping the team from a leadership role.

"The energy is low — I got to be there to lift it up," Winston said. "And that's what I owe to them. I love these guys and they love me back, and I feel that genuine love all the time. And that's what they deserve as well."

His leadership has been on display from the sideline ever since he returned to the program. It started following the loss to Ohio State,

where he immediately grabbed a disappointed and fellow safety Jaylen Reed on the field postgame, putting his arm around him to calm him down as they walked toward the alma mater.

It happened again in the Fiesta Bowl, as he approached quarterback Drew Allar on the sideline, getting him to stay composed.

"Kid's a calming presence. He's just got a great ability to coach guys coming off the field," defensive coordinator Tom Allen said. "He knows what we're doing. He's just so mature and everything, I'm just glad he's still a big part of it."

The impact Winston made on the field hasn't been present in 2024, but his leadership off it has paid dividends and he'll continue to stick by his teammates' sides as Penn State chases a national championship.

"I had to come back," Winston said. "Started this season off, my motivation was to be there for my teammates and be a leader on this team, no matter whether I'm on the field or not. I had to commit to that and make sure I'm here."

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