



NFL OFFSEASON PREVIEW 2020

**Good Players Get
Great Contracts**

**Free Agents 2020 for
All 32 Teams**

**Who's Getting Cut
This Offseason**

**The Falcons
Search for Sacks**

**680 The Fan's Carlos Medina aka "Front Office Los"
breaks down all 32 NFL teams with in-depth
analysis and research covering the
2020 offseason.**

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THE 2020 OFFSEASON

Making The Moves

Champions Are Made In The Offseason

Welcome to the 2020 NFL Offseason. This is the point where every NFL team has the chance to significantly alter their upcoming season with shrewd moves in both free agency and the draft. Just last year several teams made significant moves that proved to be major factors during the 2019 season.

- The Super Bowl Champion Kansas City Chiefs traded three picks including a first and second rounder for Seahawks defensive end Frank Clark. Clark would record eight sacks during the season, and the most important sack of the post season. Clark sacked 49ers quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo to end the final drive threat in the Super Bowl.
- The Baltimore Ravens added running back Mark Ingram to add a physical running presence to their offense. Ingram rushed for over 1,000 yards and averaged five yards per carry for the 14-2 Ravens.
- The Buffalo Bills committed to overhauling their offensive line last offseason. Team general manager Brandon Beane signed six veterans and drafted tackle Cody Ford in the second round. The group became the foundation for quarterback Josh Allen and running back Devin Singletary to make a return to the playoffs.
- The Tennessee Titans took on quarterback Ryan Tannehill in what was a salary dump for the Miami Dolphins. The Titans traded 4th and 7th round picks in exchange for a 6th round pick and a quarterback that helped take them to the AFC Championship Game.
- The Tampa Bay Buccaneers signed former Denver Broncos linebacker Shaquil Barrett to a one-year deal. The plan was to allow Barrett to be an every-down pass rusher. Barrett recorded 19.5 sacks in 2019. Barrett had recorded 14 sacks total in his previous five seasons.
- Everyone who got involved with former Steelers receiver Antonio Brown had a poor experience. Not every move is a great one. Sometimes it truly comes down to the move your organization decides not to make.



PRESSURE PLAYERS

Atlanta Falcons Offseason 2020

The Search for 40

The year was 2004. Usher featuring Lil Jon and Ludacris had the biggest hit in the country with “Yeah!”, Shrek 2 was the box office leader and President Bush beat Senator Kerry in a presidential election. 2004 was the last season the Atlanta Falcons were able to record 40 team sacks in a season. Yes, it’s been that long since this team could regularly put quarterbacks on the ground.

It’s not for a lack of trying. Players such as Patrick Kerney and John Abraham have donned the red and black and have terrorized quarterbacks in the last 15 seasons. While individual players have had great seasons, the team as a group has not been formidable in this important statistical accomplishment.

The 40 sack number is not an irrational goal for NFL defenses. Consider that 17 teams in the NFL recorded at least 40 sacks last season. In a league that features so much passing, getting to the 40 sack plateau is supposed to be easier than it was 15 years ago.

With the Falcons set to part ways with pass rusher Vic Beasley, who led the NFL in sacks in 2016, the Falcons this offseason will once again be in the market for pass rushers. Former first round pick Takk McKinley managed just 3.5 sacks in 2019 as the Falcons will have until May to decide if they want to pick up his 5th year contract option.



Falcons Team Sacks By Year

2019 - 28	2011 - 33
2018 - 37	2010 - 31
2017 - 39	2009 - 28
2016 - 34	2008 - 34
2015 - 19	2007 - 25
2014 - 22	2006 - 37
2013 - 32	2005 - 39
2012 - 29	2004 - 41



NFC SOUTH 2020

TEAM BY TEAM PREVIEWS

**Just as in the past, the NFC South is defined by
quarterback news and career decisions.**

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New Orleans Saints
GM: Mickey Loomis
Coach: Sean Payton
2019 Record: 13-3

Atlanta Falcons
GM: Thomas Dimitroff
Coach: Dan Quinn
2019 Record: 7-9

Tampa Bay Buccaneers
GM: Jason Licht
Coach: Bruce Arians
2019 Record: 7-9

Carolina Panthers
GM: Marty Hurney
Coach: Matt Rhule
2019 Record: 5-11

New Orleans
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 9th
Def. Rank: 11th

2019 Record: 13-3

Projected Cap Space: \$12 million



Three Heartbreakers in Three Years

Key Free Agents

- Drew Brees, QB - Threw 27 touchdowns and just four interceptions in 11 starts. It will be entirely up to him as to whether to play in 2020 or retire.
- Teddy Bridgewater, QB - Posted a 5-0 record subbing in for an injured Drew Brees. Just 27 years old and looks to be fully back from devastating leg injury.
- Andrus Peat, G - The former first round pick found a home at guard starting ten games and posting a solid season.
- Taysom Hill, QB (RFA) - Hill will require a tender offer in order to secure his services and protect him from another team. Future starter for the Saints.
- Eli Apple, CB - Played well as the second corner to Marshon Lattimore. Will be just 25 as he enters his sixth year in the league in 2020.

The past three seasons the New Orleans Saints have been one of the best teams in the NFL. They have accumulated a regular season record of 37-11 during the time period and have been one of the best teams in terms of overall offensive and defensive rankings.

But with a 2-3 record in the playoffs, the Saints previous three seasons have ended in heartbreaking fashion. Two of those three losses have occurred in overtime, as 2019 ended at the hands of the Minnesota Vikings again.

This offseason will be determined in large part by what quarterback Drew Brees decides to do with his career. Brees recently turned 41, and has stated that he's going to be a Saint for life. It's clear that Brees either

intends to play another year in New Orleans or retire to his family.

If Brees does decide to retire, the team will not be without options. Backup quarterback Teddy Bridgewater led the team to a 5-0 record in his starts after Brees injured his thumb. Versatile quarterback Taysom Hill has been discussed as the eventual successor but he is currently a restricted free agent and will require a tender to retain his services. Hill is also an older NFL player after serving a mission while at BYU in comparison to his time in the league.

The Saints may or may not lose their offensive icon. But a team coached by Sean Payton can't be discounted to still be competitive if Brees retires.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Janoris Jenkins, CB: Jenkins will be 32 years old in 2020, and the previous contract he signed with the Giants is still the contract he's playing under. Jenkins is set to count more than \$11M dollars against the cap. Jenkins is due a roster bonus in March that will indicate if the team is keeping or cutting him. Cap savings: \$11.2M

Nick Easton, G: Backup player who was unable to be active consistently on game day. Played in 10 games while starting six in 2019. Easton is set to count more than \$5M against the cap in 2020. Cap savings: \$4M

(-image source cbssports.com)

Atlanta Falcons
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 5th
Def. Rank: 20th

2019 Record: 7-9

Projected Cap Space: \$3 million



7-9 and Repeat

Key Free Agents

- Austin Hooper, TE - The two-time Pro Bowler has caught 146 passes over the past two seasons and 10 touchdowns. The Falcons tight cap situation may leave them with only the franchise tag option if they try to keep him.
- Vic Beasley, DE - The former top 10 pick lead the NFL in sacks in 2016 but has largely been a disappointment since. Recorded eight sacks in 2019.
- De’Vondre Campbell, LB - A full-time starter over the past three seasons, Campbell was good in pass defense but struggled early in the season with the run. Intercepted two passes and forced three fumbles.
- Matt Bosher, P - A groin injury limited Bosher to just three games in 2019 after appearing in 127 games since 2011.

2020 must be the “make or break” season for head coach Dan Quinn and team general manager Thomas Dimitroff. Because being one of the worst teams in the NFL after the first eight games of 2019 was not enough to force a change in leadership.

The Falcons were outscored 250-165 in getting off to a 1-7 start in 2019. The team got off to a similar 1-4 start in 2018 before rallying to a 4-4 record, just to lose five straight to take them out of contention. Long losing streaks have marred the Falcons past two seasons before late season wins have rallied them to 7-9 records.

The 2020 NFL offseason represents a different challenge for this Falcons regime. Typically the Falcons have done an

outstanding job of managing the salary cap and having enough available to easily resign their own and add a piece each offseason. With limited space this offseason, the Falcons will have to move on from selected veterans in order to be able to secure those they wish to keep.

Tight end Austin Hooper is in his prime and has developed into a reliable Pro Bowl target at his position. Keeping him will require \$10-\$12M in salary cap space.

The group that was part of the 2016 Super Bowl season is changing. The icons such as Matt Ryan and Julio Jones remain, but the pieces around these two are going to change over the next two offseasons. It’s “make or break” time around here.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Devonte Freeman, RB: Had a career low in average yards per carry in 2019. Freeman missed two more games in 2019, and has missed 16 games over the past two seasons. He is set to count \$9.5M against the cap in 2020. Cap savings: \$3.5M

Keanu Neal, S: Neal has suffered major injuries in each of the past two seasons. After tearing an ACL in 2018 to open the season, Neal suffered an Achilles tendon during the third game of the 2019 season. A one-year deal for league minimum would be suitable given the situation. Cap savings: \$6.4

Tampa Bay
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 3rd
Def. Rank: 15th

2019 Record: 7-9

Projected Cap Space: \$90 million



To Commit...and For How Long?

Key Free Agents

- Jameis Winston, QB - Wildly talented but also turnover prone. Winston lead the league in passing yards and turnovers in 2019. Looks to be a target for the franchise tag.
- Shaq Barrett, LB - Recorded a franchise record 19.5 sacks last season. Graded out as one of the top pass rushers in the league. Should chase the \$18M+ mark for elite pass rushers.
- Ndamukong Suh, DL - Has played the previous two seasons on one-year contracts. Recorded 41 tackles and 2.5 sacks, 33 years old.
- Jason Pierre-Paul, DL/LB - Returned from a neck fracture to record 6.5 sacks.
- Carl Nassib, LB - NFL Next Gen Stats rated Nassib as the best pass rusher against double teams in 2019. Recorded six sacks. Will turn just 27 years old before training camp.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers are in such a strange place. Consider that in 2019 there were 63 quarterbacks who took at least 20 snaps during the season, and 52 quarterbacks who played at least 100 snaps.

The Buccaneers have on their roster the NFL's leading passing yardage leader in quarterback Jameis Winston who threw 33 touchdown passes while starting all 16 games. This is supposed to be a cornerstone, someone you build upon and depend on. But that's not Jameis Winston.

Winston is the first man to join the "30-30" club by throwing 30 interceptions. His final one ended the Buccaneers 16th game in overtime as it was returned for a touchdown. Winston also lost five fumbles in 2019 to

finish with a final turnover total of 35. Understand that Winston's total turnovers are more than any other team in the NFL. Winston turned the ball over more than the Saints and Patriots combined.

Teams in the NFL can't consistently win giving the ball away to their opponents. But that's just part of Winston's game. So what does the team do about it? All signs point to a franchise tag this offseason and the hope that he does what he's yet to do: improve his decision making with the football.

The team could choose to draft or sign an alternate at quarterback who won't be as talented as a passer as Winston. Again, this is one of the stranger situations for head coach Bruce Arians and the Buccaneers.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Jameis Winston, QB: The franchise tags have not been set, but the quarterback tag is expected to be in the range of \$27M given the current top contracts in the league. The team could choose to give him a smaller extension that would lessen the cap impact of a \$27M franchise tag. Winston just turned 26 years old, and from a health perspective is not a risk given his history.

Carolina
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 19th
Def. Rank: 23rd

2019 Record: 5-11

Projected Cap Space: \$35 million



A Leadership Change

Key Free Agents

- James Bradberry, CB - Will either receive a new contract or the franchise tag from the Panthers. Career high three interceptions in 2019.
- Tre Boston, S - Reliable veteran safety who intercepted three passes in 2019.
- Mario Addison, DL - Led the Panthers with nine sacks but is set to be 33 years old by the start of the season. A short-term deal for quality money would make a lot of sense for a contending team.
- Gerald McCoy, DT - The 10 year veteran recorded five sacks playing on a one year deal. He'll likely be looking to hunt for a ring.
- Bruce Irvin, DE - Veteran pass rusher recorded 8.5 sacks in 2019. Irvin will likely be able to get a deal for more than the \$4M he played for last season.

There was a time in the NFL where the college coach could not be successful. That was the mentality for much of the league despite the Jimmy Johnson accomplishments of the 1990's.

Since then guys with a mix of pro and college experience have had tremendous success. Pete Carroll has his title, as does Tom Coughlin. Hoping to have this type of success, the Carolina Panthers made the move and hired Baylor coach Matt Rhule.

Rhule is recognized for his ability to quickly change a football program and turn it into a winner. He took over a poor Temple team and turned them into a 10 game winner. More impressively, he took over a Baylor team in shambles and in three years they

made it to a Sugar Bowl with an 11-2 record. This kind of turnaround is what the Panthers would love to have happen for them.

The Panthers 5-11 record in 2019 can be associated to their instability at quarterback. Franchise quarterback Cam Newton made just two starts after being plagued by a foot injury. New passing game coordinator Joe Brady, previously of LSU, may or may not be working with Newton. Newton has just one-year remaining on his current contract.

With the retirement of All-Pro linebacker Luke Kuechly, both the offense and defense have a giant hole in the middle. Rhule signed a seven-year deal, and will have the time to establish new leaders on both offense and defense.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Cam Newton, QB: The decision will come down to what direction new coach Matt Rhule wants to go with his program. Newton missed 14 games in 2019 with a foot injury and has dealt with shoulder issues in recent years. If the Panthers choose to release or trade Newton, they will be committing to a full rebuild. Cap savings: \$19.1M

Greg Olsen, TE: The veteran tight end has been working in the broadcast booth in his spare time so a full time move to that profession would be understandable. Olsen has fought thru injuries to get on the field in recent years. Cap savings: \$7.9M

NFC EAST 2020

TEAM BY TEAM PREVIEWS

The Eagles took the division in 2019, as the rest of the division changed their head coaches.

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Philadelphia Eagles
VP Football: Howie
Roseman
Coach: Doug Pederson
2019 Record: 9-7

Dallas Cowboys
GM: Jerry Jones
Coach: Mike McCarthy
2019 Record: 8-8

New York Giants
GM: Dave Gettleman
Coach: Joe Judge
2019 Record: 4-12

Washington Redskins
GM: TBD
Coach: Ron Rivera
2019 Record: 3-13

Philadelphia
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 14th
Def. Rank: 10th

2019 Record: 9-7

Projected Cap Space: \$36 million



The Aging Champions

Key Free Agents

- Ronald Darby, CB – Continues to miss time, missing five games in 2019. Darby has missed 12 games over the past two seasons.
- Jason Peters, LT – Will be 38 by next training camp, it will be entirely up to Peters if he intends to retire or play another season. Has had a tremendous career, HOF discussion worthy.
- Nelson Agholor, WR - The former first rounder caught just 39 passes in 2019. The Eagles will revamp their receiving core and move on from Agholor.
- Jalen Mills, CB - Missed time over the past two seasons but does represent a solid second option at cornerback.
- Timmy Jernigan, DL - Value is limited due to injuries and the amount of snaps he's been able to play in recent years. Jernigan last played more than 26% of the snaps in 2017 when he played 48% of them.

The good news: the Philadelphia Eagles are NFC East champions again. The bad news: The Eagles are old and need to get younger.

Windows in the NFL are largely momentary. Younger teams may get five years to make runs at championships, where as older teams tend to see the bottom fall out faster. The Eagles featured the second oldest roster in the NFL heading into the 2019 season and were stricken by injuries nearly all season. What followed was a quick playoff exit at the hands of the Seattle Seahawks.

Quarterback Carson Wentz had a terrific season given the core of receivers he had to work with. Wentz reached the 4,000 yard passing mark without any receiver catching

more than 500 yards in passes. Receiver Alshon Jeffery missed six games and the playoffs and turns 30 before training camp. The 33 year old DeSean Jackson appeared in just three games in 2019. An overhaul of the receiving core is coming in Philadelphia.

The age is showing up not just at receiver. Safety Malcolm Jenkins has been a stud over his career and is now 32 years old. The ultra-dependable and productive tight end Zach Ertz and brickwall defensive tackle Fletcher Cox are both 29.

The Eagles may have one good run left in them. Their veterans are still good enough to make the playoffs. But the transition to the next group around Wentz will begin soon.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Nigel Bradham, OLB – The veteran linebacker is not playing at a level to justify a nearly \$10M cap hit in 2020. The Eagles hold a club option for the remaining three years of Bradham's deal from 2020 to 2022. While the dead money on the deal would be pricy, the savings for choosing to not pick up the options would also be significant. Cap savings: \$4.4M

(-image source si.com)

Dallas
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 1st
Def. Rank: 9th

2019 Record: 8-8

Projected Cap Space: \$85 million



A Win-Now Situation

Key Free Agents

- Robert Quinn, DE – The Cowboys leading sacker with 11.5 in 2019. Reportedly wants to stay in Dallas and has the support of the front office.
- Amari Cooper, WR – Recorded nearly 1,200 yards and eight touchdowns in 2019.
- Dak Prescott, QB – Set to make a lot of money. Finished second in the NFL in passing yards.
- Byron Jones, CB – A former All-Pro, Jones is the Cowboys best member of their secondary.
- Randall Cobb, WR – Had a healthy season and recorded 828 yards receiving. Dropped eight passes on the season, among the league leaders.
- Maliek Collins, DT – Recorded four sacks and made 20 tackles on the interior of the Cowboys defensive line. Would be a solid addition for any 4-3 team.

The Dallas Cowboys 2018 season came to an end in the divisional round of the playoffs to the LA Rams that season. Head coach Jason Garrett looked as if he had secured another contract extension and a long-term future with the team. But after much internal discussion, Garrett was left to make 2019 a make or break season for his Cowboys career.

The Jason Garrett ended with an 8-8 record. Dallas was one of several teams in the NFL to feature a team that was ranked in the top ten in offense and defense, the rest of them made the playoffs while Dallas did not. The Cowboys would lose all but one of their one-score games they played in 2019.

Next up is former Green Bay Packers head

coach Mike McCarthy, who inherits a team with talent but in need of discipline and attention to detail. The Cowboys job gives McCarthy an opportunity to improve on his 125-77-2 career record while also showing that he can get it done without Brett Favre or Aaron Rodgers playing quarterback.

The “cheap” years of Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott are now over with. While Prescott put together a 40-24 record during his first four seasons, his contract totaled just \$2.7M. He’s now due for the big payday. Prescott threw for nearly 5,000 yards in 2019 with 30 touchdowns and 11 interceptions.

The core is in place for Dallas. It will be on McCarthy to make it all work again.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Tyrone Crawford, DL – Played in just four games in 2019 due to a hip injury. Has been a good player but at 30 years old, his contract offers cap flexibility to sign younger players. Cap savings: \$8M

Cameron Flemming, OL – Has performed as the Cowboys swing tackle over the past two seasons filling in for when Tyron Smith’s back or neck have caused him issues. The Cowboys hold a club option on Flemming. Cutting him only makes sense if the team drafts or acquires another cheaper swing tackle. Cap savings: \$4.4M

(-image source usatoday.com)

New York
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 23rd
Def. Rank: 25th

2019 Record: 4-12

Projected Cap Space: \$68 million



A Team In Transition

Key Free Agents

- Eli Manning, QB – The two-time Super Bowl champion is 39 years old and has retired from the NFL. Former top overall draft pick is a future Hall of Famer.
- Leonard Williams, DL – The former top 10 pick had very little impact during his time with the Giants after an in-season trade. The Giants will have lost two draft picks for nothing if Williams moves on.
- Markus Golden, OLB – Exploded for 10 sacks after two quiet seasons. Looked like the player from 2016 who recorded 12.5 sacks in Arizona.
- David Mayo, ILB – Started 13 games due to injuries to the defense. Offers dependability as a backup and spot starter.
- Deone Bucannon, ILB – The former first rounder played as a situational linebacker during his time in New York. Can be a rotational piece, has to play a very specific role due to his size.

The 2019 New York Giants season started a time of transition for a proud franchise that has tasted Super Bowl victory twice over the past 15 NFL seasons. But times are a changing.

It started during the 2019 NFL Draft with the selection of quarterback Daniel Jones in the opening round. Jones would end up taking over for veteran quarterback Eli Manning before missing two games with injury. Jones would throw 24 touchdown passes against 12 interceptions during his 12 starts, putting together a quality rookie campaign.

Two-time Super Bowl winning quarterback Manning has retired from the team after a big game career. That move removes the

true last link to the championship years of for the Giants. Where the Giants go from here will be dictated by new coach Joe Judge.

The former Patriots special teams coach will be the latest in a line of former Patriots coaches to try and prove they can have success away from Bill Belichick. Judge will not call plays, so he will have to depend on new offensive coordinator Jason Garrett and defensive coordinator Patrick Graham to implement the Joe Judge vision.

The Giants have won 12 games over the past three seasons. Clearly an overhaul is needed, but it remains to be seen if this new direction will be any different than the recent ones.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Alec Ogletree, LB – The style of defense the Giants intend to play will determine Ogletree's fate. He represents the third largest cap hit on the team with a total of \$11.75M. Cap savings: \$8.25M

Rhett Ellison, TE – Was injured for much of 2019 and could not get on the field for the team's final six games of the season due to a concussion. Recorded just 18 catches for the season. Cap savings: \$5M

Washington
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 31st
Def. Rank: 27th

2019 Record: 3-13

Projected Cap Space: \$50 million



Turning It Over Again



Key Free Agents

- Brandon Scherff, G – The Pro Bowl guard has been offered a contract extension during the season but has yet to come to terms. Looking to become the highest paid guard in the NFL.
- Vernon Davis, TE – Missed the final 12 games of the season with a concussion. Has announced his retirement from the NFL.
- Adrian Peterson, RB – Rushed for nearly 900 yards while maintaining a 4.3 avg yards per carry. Scored five touchdowns. Will be 35 years old this spring.
- Ereck Flowers, G – 16 game starter who had more success as a guard than as a tackle in New York.
- Case Keenum, QB – Completed 67% of his passes collecting 11 touchdowns and five interceptions. Still a quality option as a backup quarterback despite a 1-7 record in 2019.

Washington is back in a very familiar place. It's a place that they tend to visit every few years in an effort to put together a consistent winner.

The Redskins are back at square one, that place where they fire a coach and hire a new one and say all the right things about a change in direction and leadership. Inevitably, the Dan Snyder leadership model kicks in and dooms whatever hope the new coach may have brought.

Next up is former Panthers head coach Ron Rivera, who follows the model the Redskins have used when they hired Mike Shanahan and Joe Gibbs. Rivera has shown the ability to get a team to the Super Bowl, but will have to do that for a team that hasn't

finished over .500 since 2015. The Redskins were last in first place in 2018, before quarterback Alex Smith's injury wrecked the plan for former coach Jay Gruden.

The Redskins are not without talent as they have invested heavily in recent years on both lines of scrimmage with premium draft picks. But the biggest factor for improvement will be the development of quarterback Dwayne Haskins.

Last year's first round pick, Haskins earned an opportunity to start and posted a record of 2-5. But his play improved significantly in his final two starts against Philadelphia and New York. If Haskins can make steady improvement, this team will give Ron Rivera a fighting chance before the next turnover.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Josh Norman, CB – Benched during the 2019 season, Norman played in a limited number of snaps over the final six games of the season. The 32 year old cornerback would save significant cap space if he's not on the 2020 roster. Cap savings: \$12.5M

Jordan Reed, TE – Suffered his seventh documented concussion of his career during the 2019 preseason and was unable to play during the regular season. Reed's career is likely over. Cap savings: \$8.5M

(-image source huffingtonpost.com)

NFC NORTH 2020



Green Bay Packers
GM: Brian Gutekunst
Coach: Matt LaFleur
2019 Record: 13-3

Minnesota Vikings
GM: Rick Spielman
Coach: Mike Zimmer
2019 Record: 10-6

Chicago Bears
GM: Ryan Pace
Coach: Matt Nagy
2019 Record: 8-8

Detroit Lions
GM: Bob Quinn
Coach: Matt Patricia
2019 Record: 3-12-1

TEAM BY TEAM PREVIEWS

The Packers are again on top, and the Vikings are facing a ton of cap challenges in 2020

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Green Bay
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 18th
Def. Rank: 18th

Key Free Agents

- Blake Martinez, LB - A tackling machine that has been among the league leaders over the past three seasons. Stuffs the stat sheet and plays with injury as he dealt with a broken hand in 2019. Tends to make a lot of downfield tackles.
- Bryan Bulaga, RT - Started all 16 games and dealt with injury but was one of the best right tackles in pass blocking in the league. Did miss the divisional round of the playoffs. Will be in line for a quality contract but is an injury concern as a player.
- Geronimo Allison, WR - Caught a career high 34 passes for 287 yards and two touchdowns in 2019. Allison played nearly 60% of the offensive snaps but had limited production for that much playing time.
- Mason Crosby, K - Had the best season of his career in terms of kicking accuracy. Crosby hit 22 of his 24 kicks, going over the 90% mark for the first time in his career. Turns 36 years old early in the 2020 season.

2019 Record: 13-3

Projected Cap Space: \$41 million



Back into Contention

The start of the Matt LaFleur era in Green Bay has to be considered a success. The Packers won the NFC North and posted a record of 13-3 before having their season end in the NFC Championship Game.

Things are changing in Green Bay. The Packers uncharacteristically dipped into free agency last offseason and landed pass rushers Preston Smith and Za'Darius Smith who combined for 25.5 sacks in 2019. They were key to balancing out a team that has become increasingly less dependent on the brilliance of quarterback Aaron Rodgers.

Rodgers was good in 2019 again, tossing 26 touchdown passes against just four interceptions. But the offense was just 15th in scoring and 18th in total offense. That

was partly due to the balance the offense displayed between Rodgers and running back Aaron Jones. Jones rushed for 1,084 yards and tied for the NFL lead in total touchdowns, scoring 19 on the season.

With receiver Davante Adams missing four games with a toe injury in 2019, the Packers are very aware of their need to add more depth to their offense. Speed is going to be an emphasis this offseason both offensively and defensively. Watch for additions to be made to both the receiving corp and the backfield.

The Packers will move on from some key veterans this offseason. But the opportunity to chase another championship under Aaron Rodgers has opened up again.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Jimmy Graham, TE: A player who survived last season's cap moves, Graham looks done as a major factor in an NFL offense. Caught 38 passes for 447 yards and three touchdowns in 2019. Cap savings: \$8M

Lane Taylor, G: The former starter lost his job to a younger player and doesn't look to be in the plans as a starter moving forward. Taylor would have to present options as a backup at a multitude of positions in order to stay for his \$6M cap hit. Cap savings: \$4.6M

(-image source usatoday.com)

Minnesota
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 16th
Def. Rank: 14th

2019 Record: 10-6

Projected Cap Space: \$3 million over



A Defense That's Changing

Key Free Agents

- Anthony Harris, S - Tied for the league lead with six interceptions this past season. Will be one of the top rated free agents on the market and has performed well at free and box safety.
- Trae Waynes, CB - Was the better of the Vikings two starting cornerbacks but was no more than just solid in 2019. The former first rounder turns 28 years of age during training camp.
- Dan Bailey, K - Had his best season since 2015 making 27 of 29 kicks. Although Bailey did miss four of his 44 extra point attempts in 2019. Bailey was previously the most accurate kicker in league history before 2017.
- Mackensie Alexander, CB - A knee injury brought Alexander's season to an end after he was having the best season of his career. Alexander has displayed the ability to cover and be a physical player and tackle near the line of scrimmage.

Sunrise, death and taxes. Those are the things that are joked about that are absolutes. In the NFL, you might as well add in the salary cap. Eventually the cap will put you in position where you have to change course and remake your team.

That is where the Minnesota Vikings are after the past three years as being a factor in the NFC. Appearances in the NFC Championship game and in the divisional round of the playoffs, the Vikings are now in a situation where change is coming to the team.

The Vikings are loaded on offense. But it is their defense that is now going to have to adapt with the NFL salary cap ramifications playing the biggest role. For a team that

finished with a limited amount of healthy cornerbacks to end their 2019 season, the Vikings defense in the 2020 offseason will be recognized for the changes they have to make.

Cornerbacks Trae Waynes and Mackensie Alexander are free agents. Former elite corner Xavier Rhodes looked like a player playing on his last legs in 2019. Couple that with playmaking safety Anthony Harris looking at a big contract in free agency, the Vikings will have to rebuild a former team strength.

The Vikings will look to overhaul their defense and get younger. The offense will be good again. But for coach Mike Zimmer, he'll have to figure out the next group on D.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Xavier Rhodes, CB: The Vikings will have to clear cap space and Rhodes' play in 2019 warrants the move. No longer playing at an elite, let alone an acceptable level. Would have to take a major paycut to stay with the team. Cap savings: \$10.5M

Shamar Stephen, DT: Returned to Minnesota after a year in Seattle and was just okay in the Vikings defense. Given their cap situation, the team will have to jettison veterans that aren't playing up to their cap charge. Cap savings: \$2.5M

Chicago
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 29th
Def. Rank: 8th

2019 Record: 8-8

Projected Cap Space: \$14 million



A Big Stepback Offensively

Key Free Agents

- **HaHa Clinton-Dix, S** - Played on a one-year deal in 2019 and earned a larger contract after making 78 tackles and picking off two passes. A 16 game starter last season.
- **Nick Kwiatkoski, LB** - Recorded 68 tackles making eight starts in 2019. An experienced younger player that the Bears will bring back if they have space available.
- **Danny Trevathan, LB** - Missed seven games in 2019 but was productive when on the field and during his four seasons in Chicago. Turns 30 years old in March.
- **Chase Daniel, QB** - Perhaps the best option in the league when it comes to a backup quarterback who provides a “caddy like” influence for a younger starter with the ability to play if needed.
- **Aaron Lynch, OLB** - Has seen his production fall off since he recorded 12.5 sacks over his first two seasons. No team has been able to build on that initial production. Recorded two sacks in 2019 while recording just six tackles.

For a Chicago Bears team that won the NFC North in 2018 with a record of 12-4, the biggest question after this season is this: What the hell happened?

The Bears defense gave up a couple more touchdowns than the 2018 version. The main issue was the offense that fell victim to what happens in the NFL.

Opposing teams scheme during the offseason on how to beat the division winner. Head coach Matt Nagy’s offense was unable to stay ahead of adjustments made by opposing defenses. After scoring 421 points in 2018, that total fell to 280 in 2019.

Most of the blame has fallen on third-year quarterback Mitch Trubisky, who followed

up his 24 touchdown and 12 interception season by falling to 17 touchdowns and 10 interceptions. Trubisky’s numbers fell across the board from completion percentage to quarterback rating.

With the Bears offense being largely inept, the rest of the NFC North caught and past them. It will be up to Nagy to reinvent his schemes. Otherwise there is a very real possibility that the Bears will have to move on to a different quarterback.

The Bears defense continues to be amongst the best in the NFL. For the offense, a number of younger receivers began to emerge in 2019, but it will ultimately be on Trubisky to find the magic that put him in the Pro Bowl as a second year starter in 2018.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Prince Amukamara, CB: Set to count \$10 million dollars against the cap in 2020, Amukamara’s production as far as taking the football away from the offense was lacking in 2019. Amukamara had three interceptions in 2018, but that’s it in his three seasons in Chicago. Set to turn 31 this summer. Cap savings: \$8.9M

Taylor Gabriel, WR: Injuries caused Gabriel to miss seven games in 2019, as his role on the team was assumed by younger players. The soon-to-be 29 year old will offer savings on a tight Bears cap. Cap savings: \$4.5M

(-image wgnplus.com)

Detroit
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 17th
Def. Rank: 31st

2019 Record: 3-12-1

Projected Cap Space: \$42 million



A Team In Search of a Recipe

Key Free Agents

- A'Shawn Robinson, DT - Inconsistency has been the hallmark of the former second round pick's career. A change of scenery and scheme may be helpful.
- Danny Amendola, WR - The 34 year old receiver caught 62 passes in 2019 for 678 yards. The offense suits his abilities. Amendola is looking to re-sign in Detroit.
- Graham Glasgow, G - Has started 58 of his 62 career games during his four seasons in Detroit. Should be able to land a quality contract from the Lions or another team.
- Jeff Driskel, QB - Completed 59% of his passes for four touchdowns and four interceptions in his three starts in 2019. Driskel did go 0-3 as a starting quarterback.
- Logan Thomas, TE - 2019 represents his best season after moving from quarterback. Recorded 16 catches for 173 yards and a touchdown.

Losing your franchise quarterback during the season is typically a recipe for disaster. For the 2019 Lions without quarterback Matthew Stafford, that's exactly how it played out.

Stafford, who's taken the team to the playoffs three times during his Lions career, was only able to make eight starts and led the Lions to a 3-4-1 record over that time. What followed was an 0-8 record between two backup starters.

The Matt Patricia era has looked a lot like former Patriots assistants who take over jobs in the NFL. Patricia is just 9-22-1 over his two years as the head coach. A coach known for defense, Patricia's team finished with a league ranking of 31st in the NFL in 2019.

The Lions have attempted to change their offense for a generation. Under a defensive-minded coach, the Lions have put resources into the offensive line and running game in recent years, but they haven't been a capable running team since the years of Barry Sanders.

What this has resulted in is asking Stafford to make all of the throws all of the time. Until 2019 Stafford has been able to stay on the field and give it his best try. But recent injuries calls that into question moving forward.

With the NFC North having three different division winners over the past three seasons, it's an uphill climb for Patricia. He has one more year to get it done.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Jesse James, TE: The four-year \$22M dollar contract he signed has turned into a huge bust. James managed just 16 catches in 2019. The Lions can already get out of the deal and recover some cap dollars. Cap savings: \$3M

Ricky Wagner, RT: The well-compensated veteran right tackle does not perform at a level to justify bringing him back as a nearly \$12M tackle. Cap savings: \$6.1M

NFC WEST 2020



San Francisco 49ers
GM: John Lynch
Coach: Kyle Shanahan
2019 Record: 13-3

Seattle Seahawks
GM: John Schneider
Coach: Pete Carroll
2019 Record: 11-5

Los Angeles Rams
GM: Les Snead
Coach: Sean McVay
2019 Record: 9-7

Arizona Cardinals
GM: Steve Keim
Coach: Kliff Kingsbury
2019 Record: 5-11

TEAM BY TEAM PREVIEWS

The NFC West featured another NFC Champion, and another Super Bowl loss.

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San Francisco
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 4th
Def. Rank: 2nd

2019 Record: 13-3

Projected Cap Space: \$25 million



Nearly Champions

Key Free Agents

- Arik Armstead, DL - Had a huge 2019, recording 10 sacks and 54 total tackles. Should command a huge contract.
- Jimmie Ward, FS - Versatile defender who had a good year after signing a one-year deal in 2019. Made 65 tackles.
- Emmanuel Sanders, WR - Came to the 49ers in a midseason trade with Denver. Recorded 36 catches for 502 yards and three touchdowns during his 10 games in San Francisco.
- Matt Breida (RFA), RB - Was not healthy in 2019 and didn't find the success that he did in 2018. Will have to sign a "show me" deal this offseason if he is not tendered.
- Sheldon Day, DT - Rotational tackle who played in every game in 2019. Would provide quality depth for a team looking for a young veteran who will not be expensive to land.

As Super Bowl 54 reached the final seven minutes on the clock, the San Francisco 49ers held a 20-10 lead on a Kansas City Chiefs team that looked lost offensively. The knockout blow looked ready to be delivered. The 49ers win probability, if you're into such things, sat near 95%.

21 unanswered points later, the Chiefs were Super Bowl champions by a score of 31-20 and the 49ers were left to head back to the offseason drawing board. Sometimes it happens just that fast.

The 49ers have arrived in the NFC. The team has established themselves as a factor moving forward with a fearsome defense and a balanced physical offense. The 49ers could choose to let their team continue to

mature and watch the improvement. But that clock has been accelerated.

The 49ers have needs on the interior offensive line and would like to add some explosive elements to their offense. While receiver Deebo Samuel is promising and tight end George Kittle is as good as it gets, the need to replace or re-sign free agent receiver Emmanuel Sanders will be key.

The 49ers will have to fill their needs without the help of a full compliment of draft picks. While the 49ers have their own first round pick, they are lacking second, third and fourth round picks due to trades.

The 49ers nearly had it. 2020 is about finishing the deal.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Marquise Goodwin, WR: Set to count nearly \$5M against the cap in 2020 and has not been healthy for a full season since 2017. Played in just nine games in 2019 and caught just 12 passes due to injury. Cap savings: \$3.6M

Joe Staley, LT: The veteran left tackle has two years remaining on his deal with larger base salaries. If Staley plans to continue to play, his contract could provide some cap savings if more dollars are needed to re-sign their own young veterans.

(-image source 49ers.com)

Seattle
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 8th
Def. Rank: 26th

2019 Record: 11-5

Projected Cap Space: \$67 million



Ready to Spend

Key Free Agents

- Jadeveon Clowney, DE
- Expected to chase the \$18-\$20M mark per season as one of the highest paid defensive players in the league.
- Jarran Reed, DT -
Followed up a tremendous 2018 season in which he recorded 50 tackles and 10.5 sacks with a six-game suspension and mediocre play in 2019.
- Germain Ifedi, RT -
Appeared in all 16 games and provides spot duty when needed at both tackle positions. Should not be a regular starter but is better than most lower tier options in free agency.
- Quinton Jefferson, DE -
The versatile defensive lineman played everywhere for the Seahawks. Recorded 26 tackles and 3.5 sacks. Suffered a broken foot to end his season but will be healthy by training camp.

The Seattle Seahawks are a factor in the NFC once again despite the 49ers and Rams each reaching the Super Bowl over the past two seasons. Much of that can be attributed to the elite play of quarterback Russell Wilson.

If Lamar Jackson hadn't turned the NFL in 2019 into his personal playground, Russell Wilson would probably be the league's MVP. Wilson led the Seahawks to the playoffs again, despite being pressured in the pocket on nearly 40% of his pass attempts. The Seahawks don't protect Wilson well, but they continue to win because of Wilson.

While the Seahawks ran out of available running backs in 2019, the focus will be

getting defensive end Jadeveon Clowney back on the roster. But establishing his value will be a challenge. Clowney has never had a double-digit sack season during his NFL career. Clowney recorded just three sacks in 2019. But he's also proven to be a terror on the field who harrasses the offense and can take over the game with his ability to pressure opposing teams.

The Seahawks do have money to spend and some areas they'd like to improve. Right tackle is a spot where the team could choose to sign one of their own or upgrade in free agency. The team would also like to add another player or two to improve a defense that is no longer among the best in the league.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Ed Dickson, TE: Appeared in 10 games and made 12 catches for 143 yards before a pair of IR trips ended his season. Expected to be pushed off the roster by three younger and less expensive options. Cap savings: \$3M

Los Angeles
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 7th
Def. Rank: 13th

2019 Record: 9-7

Projected Cap Space: \$27 million



Went For It...And Now What?

Key Free Agents

- Dante Fowler, DE - The former third overall pick put it all together in 2019 recording 56 tackles and 11.5 sacks. Looking for a big contract.
- Andrew Whitworth, LT - If the 38 year old decides to play he is reportedly only interested in returning to the Rams.
- Michael Brockers, DT - Should command a quality contract in free agency. Solid run player who can get after the quarterback at times. Recorded three sacks in 2019.
- Cory Littleton, LB - Had an outstanding 2019 season and will be one of the top free agents in all of the NFL. Tremendous tackler. Recorded 134 tackles last season.
- Greg Zuerline, K - Accuracy fell off in 2019, posting his worst season since 2015. Made 72.7% of his field goal attempts.

In the game of no-limit Texas hold'em, it would be called going "all-in". It would be like playing your last dollar in the lottery, or approaching the prettiest girl in the bar. The LA Rams took a shot at getting back to the Super Bowl in 2019 and winning it. It didn't work out.

The Rams became one of the few teams to appear in the Super Bowl and miss the playoffs the following season. But it wasn't because of a lack of trying. The Rams made the biggest in-season trade in 2019 moving two first round picks and a fourth round pick for Jaguars cornerback Jalen Ramsey. While the defense was respectable, the offensive changes that occurred last offseason came back to bite the Rams.

In 2018 the Rams started the same five players on their offensive line and they were outstanding. But losing guard Rodger Saffold and center John Sullivan before 2019 created a level of inconsistency that the Rams offense couldn't overcome. After averaging 32.9 points per game in 2018, they fell to 24.6 in 2019.

The Rams are looking to create the roster consistency that created a playoff team in 2017 and 2018. That will be a challenge as their leading tackler in Cory Littleton and pass rusher Dante Fowler are set to become free agents. Their anchor at left tackle, Andrew Whitworth, is also set to be free.

The Rams shot their shot in 2019. They'll look to do it again in 2020.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Eric Weddle, FS: The Rams have younger and cheaper options at the position which makes the 35 year old Weddle expendable. Weddle has stated he is still looking to play in 2020 but expects to be a starter. Cap savings: \$4.2M

Clay Matthews, OLB: While Matthews had eight sacks in 2019, he faded at the end of the season and recorded just one sack over the final two months of the season. Could be the odd man out as the team looks to retain their younger linebacker talent. Cap savings: \$3.7M

Arizona
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 21st
Def. Rank: 32nd

2019 Record: 5-10-1

Projected Cap Space: \$68 million



Developing an Explosive Offense

Key Free Agents

- DJ Humphries, G – Started 16 games in 2019 and graded out well despite committing the 2nd most amount of penalties in the NFL.
- Kenyan Drake, RB – Rushed for a career high 817 yards in Miami and in Arizona after a midseason trade. Showed his impressive skills out of the backfield catching 50 passes in 2019. Determined to test free agency.
- Jordan Mills, RT – Continues to be a solid swing tackle providing depth and the ability to spot start.
- Pharoah Cooper, WR – Caught 25 passes in 2019 and offers return ability. Turns 25 years old in March.
- Zach Kerr, DT – Was a quality physical presence inside for the Cardinals defense.
- Jonathan Bullard, DE – Recorded 1.5 sacks in 2019 but was primarily in charge of playing the run up front. The former third round pick is just 26 years old.

A year after going 3-13 and earning the #1 overall pick in the NFL Draft, the Cardinals decided to make a rather big course correction for 2019. The results are looking pretty interesting.

The Cardinals fired head coach Steve Wilks after the 2018 season and decided to move on from first round quarterback Josh Rosen. In came former Texas Tech football coach Kliff Kingsbury and quarterback Kyler Murray who was drafted first overall.

The 2019 Cardinals posted a 5-10-1 record, and showed that they are developing one of the more fun offenses in the NFL. Murray had a very good rookie season passing for 3,722 yards and 20 touchdowns against just 12 interceptions. Murray's ability to

scramble added another 544 yards to his offensive output as he scored four touchdowns as a runner.

While the passing offense was still below league averages, Murray making a jump in year two has the team very excited about what they can become.

Any moves to help facilitate that jump by Murray will be the offseason goal. The Cardinals have needs on the offensive line and would love to add another playmaker to the offense. Running back Kenyan Drake was dynamic as a runner and receiver but he intends to test free agency.

The Cardinals have undergone a lot of change and they're now more interesting.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Robert Alford, CB – Alford's base salary for 2020 becomes fully guaranteed in March. Missing all of last season with a broken leg, Alford will have to prove he's healthy enough for the team to honor the salary guarantee. Cap savings: \$4.5M

Andy Lee, P – Lee was 2nd in the NFL in average per kick but 17th in net yards. At 38 years old, it will entirely be up to Lee if he wants to punt in the NFL in 2020. The team could go younger and cheaper at the position. Cap savings: \$2M

(-image source centriotimescom)

TOP FREE AGENTS

2020 NFL Offseason

Who Will Make it to Free Agency...

The 2020 NFL Offseason will be marked by the continued growth in the NFL salary cap. For the 2017 season, the salary cap was \$168 million dollars. The current estimate for the 2020 season is around \$199 million dollars. That's \$992 million more dollars available for teams to spend in just four years worth of time.

The result of this continued cap explosion is that it's become increasingly difficult for elite players to reach the free agent market. Many of them end up with a new contract extension or a franchise tag and an eventual big contract. Typically a player who gets to free agency that you have heard of is dealing with an injury. What the end result has been of late is that good players make it to free agency and get paid great player money.



Free Agents

Tom Brady - QB - New England Patriots

Dak Prescott - QB - Dallas Cowboys

Jadeveon Clowney - DE - Seattle Seahawks

Ryan Tannehill - QB - Tennessee Titans

Shaq Barrett - DE - Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Amari Cooper - WR - Dallas Cowboys

Yannick Ngakoue - DE - Jacksonville Jaguars

Arik Armstead - DE - San Francisco 49ers

Chris Jones - DE - Kansas City Chiefs

Brandon Scherff - G - Washington Redskins

AJ Green - WR - Cincinnati Bengals

Austin Hooper - TE - Atlanta Falcons



Franchise Tag Projections:

QB - \$26.8M

DE - \$19.3M

LB - \$16.2M

CB - \$16.4M

WR - \$18.4M

RB - \$12.4M

S - \$12.7M

TE - \$11M

AFC SOUTH 2020

TEAM BY TEAM PREVIEWS

The AFC South features teams who have recently made trips to the AFC Championship game.

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Houston Texans
GM: Bill O'Brien
Coach: Bill O'Brien
2019 Record: 10-6

Tennessee Titans
GM: Jon Robinson
Coach: Mike Vrabel
2019 Record: 9-7

Indianapolis Colts
GM: Chris Ballard
Coach: Frank Reich
2019 Record: 7-9

Jacksonville Jaguars
GM: David Caldwell
Coach: Doug Marrone
2019 Record: 6-10

Houston
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 13th
Def. Rank: 28th

2019 Record: 10-6

Projected Cap Space: \$61 million



An Expensive Offseason

Key Free Agents

- Bradley Roby, CB - Established himself in 2019 as a lead cornerback for a team. The former first round pick will command one of the largest cornerback contracts in the market this offseason.
- Lamar Miller, RB - A preseason knee injury ended his season. Will have to prove his health before securing another multi-year deal.
- Carlos Hyde, RB - Rushed for over 1,000 yards in 2019 but will turn 30 years old in September.
- Johnathan Joseph, CB - Reliable veteran cornerback who wants to play again in 2020. Turns 36 years old in April.
- DJ Reader, DT - Recognized as one of the better interior defensive linemen in the NFL in 2019. Legitimate run stuffer who will be 26 years old this summer.

The Houston Texans continue to be the most talented team in the AFC South. The team features a dynamic franchise quarterback and playmakers at nearly every level of the offense and the defense. With that pointed out, since 2014 they are the only AFC South team to not reach the AFC Title Game.

The Texans reached the divisional round of the playoffs and became the first road team to score 31 points and lose the game. Blowing a 24 point lead was just the start, as the Texans would go on to lose to the eventual Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs by 20 points.

Houston has had the benefit of the affordable DeShaun Watson at quarterback over the last three seasons. Watson is now

eligible for a contract extension this offseason. Given that the Texans need to re-sign key members of their team and secure contract extensions, the NFL salary cap is set to squeeze this team moving forward.

The Texans consolidated power this offseason by naming head coach Bill O'Brien as the team GM. The team is lacking their first round pick after their trade for left tackle Laremy Tunsil from Miami.

Houston is in need of a secondary help and would love to add more pass rushers to their defense in 2020. The team also must figure out who will be their starting running back in 2020.

The Texans are talented but unaccomplished.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Laremy Tunsil, LT: Entering into his fifth-year option in 2020, Tunsil is looking for a contract extension. Considering what the Texans gave up in trade to secure his services, a deal for Tunsil will be coming over the next 12 months as long as the left tackle stays healthy.

Deshaun Watson, QB: After completing his third season in the NFL, Watson is now eligible for a contract extension. With the Texans cap space available this offseason, securing Watson with a new deal will be more affordable than waiting until next offseason.

(-image source espn.com)

Tennessee
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 13th
Def. Rank: 28th

2019 Record: 9-7

Projected Cap Space: \$50 million



Building on a Run

Key Free Agents

- Derrick Henry, RB - One of the stars of the season and postseason in 2019. Henry rushed for over 1,500 yards, leading the NFL in the category.
- Ryan Tannehill, QB - Played the best football of his career and was the hottest quarterback in the league over the final 13 games of the season going 9-4.
- Jack Conklin, RT - Has been one of the better right tackles in the NFL despite just an okay 2019. Gave up four sacks this past season.
- Kamalei Correa, LB - Sacked the quarterback a career high five times in 2019.
- Marcus Mariota, QB - Will look to start for another team in 2020. 29-32 career record as a starter.
- Logan Ryan, CB - Allowed 80 catches on 114 targets. Physical run defender.

The 2019 Tennessee Titans went on one of the most impressive runs of the NFL season. The Titans got off to a 2-4 start before moving to quarterback Ryan Tannehill to save the season. Tannehill delivered a 7-3 record and helped the team find their way into the AFC Championship game.

While Tannehill was the hottest quarterback over the final weeks of the season, the offense was paced by NFL leading rusher Derrick Henry. The former second round pick ran for over 1,500 yards and helped establish the physical play for the Titans.

Henry is now set to enter free agency this offseason. The former Heisman Trophy winner is looking to land a massive running back contract. The franchise tag is an option

but the successful play of Tannehill complicates the matter.

While Henry had pedigree Tannehill did not. The former top 10 pick had enjoyed relative success in the league but had not led a winning team in the playoffs. Tannehill played a key role in the playoffs along with Henry in beating the Patriots and Ravens on the road. Establishing his value moving forward presents a tricky situation after playing on a one-year deal for just two million dollars.

The Titans have cap space and momentum going this offseason. They have a shot at establishing a playoff contender. What they choose to do with their new signal caller and franchise runner will define this offseason.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Delanie Walker, TE: The soon-to-be 36 year old tight end missed nine games and the playoffs in 2019 with an ankle injury. Recorded just 21 catches. Cap savings \$6.4M

Malcolm Butler, CB: Missed seven game in 2019 and has been inconsistent during his time in Nashville. Butler is set to count more than \$13M dollars against the cap in 2020, a season in which he turns 30 years old. Butler is a prime candidate for a negotiated salary cut. Cap savings: \$7.3M

Indianapolis
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 25th
Def. Rank: 16th

2019 Record: 7-9

Projected Cap Space: \$95 million



The Unexpected Overhaul

Key Free Agents

- Anthony Castonzo, LT - Played very well in 2019 allowing just three sacks and drawing two penalties. Turns 32 during training camp this year.
- Eric Ebron, TE - A season after catching 70 passing and becoming a Pro Bowler for the first time, Ebron caught just 31 passes and missed five games due to an ankle injury.
- Jabaal Sheard, OLB - Veteran racked up 4.5 sacks over 13 games this past season. Has been solid but not spectacular over the past four seasons. Considered a "pro's pro" by the Colts front office.
- Devin Funchess, WR - A broken collarbone virtually wiped out all of Funchess' season. Caught three passes in just one game in 2019. Has been a viable second or third option previously in his career.

On the eve of the 2019 NFL season, Colts franchise quarterback Andrew Luck announced his retirement from the league. A culmination of injuries left Luck in pain and unable to compete at the level he felt was needed to be successful for the franchise.

After a 10-6 season in 2018 the Colts were left to scramble to adjust to a new reality of lacking a difference maker at quarterback.

Quarterback Jacoby Brissett was servicable in his 15 starts going 7-8 while throwing 18 touchdowns and six interceptions. But for a franchise defined by Johnny Unitas, Peyton Manning and Luck, servicable is not enough.

No one has more cap space than the Colts

this offseason. And they'll need it as they change the direction of the franchise and look to set themselves up for the future. Finding a new franchise quarterback is an obvious goal.

The Colts hold the 13th pick in the upcoming NFL Draft. They are just outside of the range of the elite prospects. They are left to decide whether to strengthen the team around Brissett or attempt to land an elite quarterback prospect and move forward from there.

The Colts are a good football team who can compete as presently constructed. But the Colts are about chasing championships. How they choose to go about that will be fascinating this offseason.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Ryan Kelly, C: The 2019 Pro Bowler is a prime candidate for a contract extension this offseason. Kelly is set to play 2020 on his fifth year option which will cost the Colts \$10.3M. The Colts could lower this figure with their immense amount of cap space by giving Kelly a contract extension.

TY Hilton, WR: Set to be 31 years old and did miss six games in 2020. The Colts could choose to offer Hilton a small extension or move on from the player entirely. But with their cap space it's entirely up to them. They can more than afford Hilton's cap charge of \$14.5M for 2020.

(-image source harriers.com)

Jacksonville
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 20th
Def. Rank: 24th

2019 Record: 6-10

Projected Cap Space: \$2 million



Looking to Bounce Back

Key Free Agents

- Yannick Ngakoue, DE - Sacked the quarterback eight times last season. His 37.5 sacks during his four seasons makes him a good compliment to DE Josh Allen. Will likely command a contract in the \$14-\$15 million dollar per year range.
- Keelan Cole (RFA), WR - Caught 24 passes for 361 yards and three touchdowns in 2019. A reliable player who is always available and provides a solid option in the passing game.
- Akeem Spence, DT - 28 year old veteran provides depth on running downs. Recorded 14 tackles in 2019. Has appeared in 103 games during his NFL career.
- Najee Goode, LB - The eight-year veteran is a stop-gap player who can provide a team with experienced depth. Missed six games in 2019.

The 2017 season featured the Jacksonville Jaguars in the AFC Championship game. After a stepback season in 2018, the Jaguars went for it in 2019. Unfortunately the attempt failed to produce a winner.

The Jaguars added former Super Bowl MVP Nick Foles last offseason in an effort to reach the upper-echelon of the AFC contenders once again. But an injury to Foles caused him to miss 10 weeks of the NFL season. Foles would end up losing all four of his starts in 2019.

The Jaguars are now 11-21 over the past two seasons. The franchise is now left to figure out what to do with what was one of the most talented young rosters in the NFL two years ago. A midseason trade of cornerback

Jalen Ramsey added first round picks in both 2020 and 2021. Giving the Jaguars draft capital to add new talent, but their holes are numerous.

The Jaguars will have to figure out who to start at quarterback as rookie Gardner Minshew was intriguing after completing nearly 70% of his passes for 21 touchdowns and six interceptions.

The offense requires more playmakers at receiver after the flameouts of players such as Marqise Lee. Adding some depth at tight end and linebacker would also be helpful.

The Jaguars went for it with the best players available on the market in recent years. It's now time to change direction.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Marqise Lee, WR: The Jaguars gave Lee a \$34M dollar contract two years ago and that's when his injuries began. Lee has only been available for six games over the past two seasons. Cap savings: \$5.25M

Calais Campbell, DT: Campbell is still a quality player despite his numbers taking a dip in 2019. The Jaguars cap situation will be the reason he is released if they need to make more money available. Cap savings \$15M

Marcell Dareus, DT: Simply not enough production to justify keeping him. Cap savings: \$20M

AFC EAST 2020

TEAM BY TEAM PREVIEWS

The Patriots continued their reign but a massive change could be coming.

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New England Patriots
Coach: Bill Belichick
2019 Record: 12-4

Buffalo Bills
GM: Brandon Beane
Coach: Sean McDermott
2019 Record: 10-6

New York Jets
GM: Joe Douglas
Coach: Adam Gase
2019 Record: 7-9

Miami Dolphins
GM: Chris Grier
Coach: Brian Flores
2019 Record: 7-9

New England
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 15th
Def. Rank: 1st

2019 Record: 12-4

Projected Cap Space: \$52 million



Dynasty Over?



Key Free Agents

- Tom Brady, QB - This offseason represents the first time Brady has ever been an unrestricted free agent. Brady reportedly looking for a +30M dollar deal on average.
- Joe Thuney, G - One of the best guards in football, he is always available and does not come off the field. Allowed just one sack while playing 99% of the plays in 2019.
- Jamie Collins, OLB - Finished the season with seven sacks and three interceptions while also recording 81 tackles.
- Kyle Van Noy, LB - Recorded 6.5 sacks and forced three fumbles in a career best season.
- Danny Shelton, DT - Had his best season as a pro player recording 62 tackles and three sacks.
- Ted Karras, C - Filled in at center and played over 1,000 snaps for the team.

After a two decade run in the NFL, can we all finally ask the question that has been assumed but never realized...is it over?

The New England Patriots run would eventually end. That was always a certainty. But after a nine-year Super Bowl drought, the Patriots have won titles in three of the past six seasons.

This most recent run left us to wonder just when this era of greatness would ever conclude? Maybe it's this offseason, maybe it's not. But the chances seem better than zero.

Quarterback Tom Brady is a free agent and is reportedly looking for a contract that puts him in line with the other top paid

quarterbacks in the league. For many years fans and players alike would joke that Brady didn't need the money because of the success of his wife. At this point in his career, it appears Tom Brady is looking to dispel this notion.

Brady spent the season reportedly asking the team to add weapons for what he felt was an offense that lacked explosion. He was certainly justified as the team exited the playoffs in the opening round.

Perhaps Tom Brady is looking for a team that will give him offensive ammunition.

Or maybe this is all just about drama for the dynasty to keep us all on our toes.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Mohammed Sanu, WR: The Patriots don't typically make this kind of mistake. The team gave up a second round pick for Sanu during the season. Sanu's final seven games resulted in just 15 catches. The Patriots could choose to use the cap space elsewhere or hope he improves in the offense with an offseason of study. Cap savings: \$6.5M

Stephen Gostkowski, K: Had not missed any time in the league since 2010. A left hip injury limited Gostkowski to just four games in 2019. The 36 year old will have to prove he's healthy to have a spot in 2020. Cap savings: \$3.6M

(-image source rollingstone.com)

Buffalo
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 24th
Def. Rank: 3rd

2019 Record: 10-6

Projected Cap Space: \$89 million



Help Wanted



The Buffalo Bills were a playoff team again for the second time in three seasons. But this time it was completely different.

The Bills decision in 2018 to change course and attempt to raise the ceiling of their team has seemingly worked. Led by quarterback Tyrod Taylor in 2017, that Bills team maxed out at 9-7.

The 2019 version of the Bills featured the intriguing Josh Allen at quarterback who posted a 10-6 record while throwing 20 touchdowns against nine interceptions. Allen's completion percentage jumped from 52% to 58% in year two. If Allen takes another step forward as a passer, it will take the Bills to another level.

The Bills are loaded this offseason and can move in any direction they see fit. The team holds \$90M dollars in cap space and nine draft picks to add to this playoff roster. Their free agents can be easily retained with the offseason ammunition they hold.

The Bills want to get bigger and faster at the receiver position. Leading pass catchers John Brown and Cole Beasley are 5'11 and 5'8 respectively. Getting Josh Allen more size and speed to throw to can help improve the overall offensive ranking.

The Bills have a shot at completing a goal that only one team has done in the better part of 20 years, taking the division away from the Patriots. The Bills are built to do it. The additions they make can make it happen.

Key Free Agents

- Shaq Lawson, DE - Found a comfort zone in the Bills defense as an effective run stopper and contributed 6.5 sacks as well. Looking for a quality mid-level contract.
- Jordan Phillips, DT - A Run stuffer who was a terror against quarterbacks as an inside pass rusher. Recorded a career high 9.5 sacks in 2019.
- Frank Gore, RB - Continues to be productive in a backup role in the NFL. Recorded nearly 600 yards but averaged just 3.6 yards per carry.
- Kevin Johnson, CB - While he has a concussion history, Johnson played in all 16 games in 2019.
- Isaiah McKenzie, WR - Made 27 catches for 254 yards and scored a touchdown. Offers return ability if needed as a punt and kickoff returner.

Targets for Release/Restructure

TJ Yeldon, RB: While only a near \$2M cap hit in 2020, Yeldon spent 2019 as the third running back on the roster. If the Bills add a runner or choose to draft one, Yeldon could become expendable. Cap savings: \$1.6M

Lee Smith, TE: Caught just four passes in the Bills offense as the veteran tight end and run blocker in the offense. Already 32 years old, a cheaper option would push Smith off of the roster. Cap savings: \$2.2M

(-image source usatoday.com)

New York
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 32nd
Def. Rank: 7th

2019 Record: 7-9

Projected Cap Space: \$61 million



A Second Half of Hope

Key Free Agents

- Robby Anderson, WR - Reportedly looking for a contract averaging between \$13M-\$15M per season. Caught 52 passes for 779 yards and five touchdowns in 2019. A quality number two option with the ability to make the big plays downfield.
- Jordan Jenkins, OLB - Has produced as pass rusher over the past two seasons for the Jets. Recorded eight sacks in 2019 after recording seven sacks in 2018.
- Brian Poole, CB - Has been solid in the NFL when playing a very specific role as a nickel cornerback in the slot. Intercepted one pass and made 58 tackles in 2019.
- James Burgess, LB - Was a factor playing on the defense from November until the end of the season. Has been with six other teams before having some success in the league.

The 2019 New York Jets started the season with hopes for an improved team and proof that the program was headed in the right direction.

The 0-3 start to the season seemed compounded by quarterback Sam Darnold contracting mononucleosis. Later in October, Darnold would be caught on mic saying he was, “seeing ghosts” against the Patriots unending pass rush. The season was not going well.

The back end of their season featured some very winnable football games. Given how they played over the first eight games, no one expected much. But the Jets finished the season with a 6-2 record down the

stretch. A 7-9 record overall gives the coaching staff a shot to show that their program does have a chance to win in the NFL.

The Jets will hopefully stay healthy on defense in 2020. One of their big additions in 2019, linebacker CJ Mosley, was only on the field for two games. Despite their injuries, the Jets had a top 10 defensive ranking.

Improving the Jets is not a mystery. The team needs to vastly improve their offensive line as quickly as possible. It can be done, as the rival Bills changed four spots on their line last offseason.

The Jets may be headed in the right direction finally. Maybe, hopefully.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Trumaine Johnson, CB: Has been a mediocre player since signing his massive deal two offseasons ago. The Jets are now in position given the guaranteed money left on the deal to move on and create cap space. The Jets will still create \$12M dollars in dead cap space. Cap savings: \$3M

Brian Winters, G: Finished the season on injured reserve after missing seven games. The Jets are looking to be aggressive in improving their guard play this offseason. Cap savings: \$7.3M

Miami
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 27th
Def. Rank: 30th

2019 Record: 5-11

Projected Cap Space: \$101 million



The Teardown Movie



The 2019 Miami Dolphins were like the football version of the 1989 baseball movie Major League.

This Dolphins team wasn't designed to get the team to move, but they were designed to lose games while shedding bad contracts. For the players that didn't want to be there, trades were made to send quality players out of town in exchange for future draft picks. "Tanking" was assigned to their status around the league.

But a very movie-like thing happened on the way to the bottom of the NFL...the Dolphins got better. One could make the argument that head coach Brian Flores deserved a vote for NFL Coach of the year.

After starting the season 0-7, the Dolphins started winning football games that they were never supposed to. The Dolphins finished the season going 5-4 over their last nine games. And like any Hollywood production, the upstart Dolphins beat the mighty New England Patriots on the final weekend of the season. Of course in the final minutes of the game. Roll credits!

The Dolphins are still a few years away. The team is looking to draft their quarterback of the future in the 2020 draft. The team is holding a ridiculous amount of picks. Miami has their own first rounder, along with the Steelers and Texans first rounders. They also hold the Saints second round pick.

"We're contenders now." (well not yet)

Targets for Release/Restructure

Reshad Jones, SS: The Dolphins have been aggressive in ending some of their long-term contracts that are of no use to them during this rebuild. Jones' deal would not have offered any cap savings before the 2020 offseason. It does now. Cap savings: \$5.4M

Albert Wilson, WR: Wilson caught the third most amount of passes on the Dolphins team in 2019. 2020 represents the final year of his deal. The team could choose to give him a contract extension or trade him in a cap savings move to a team looking for a quality veteran. Cap savings: \$9.5M

Key Free Agents

- Evan Boehm, G - Played 55% of the snaps in 2019 at both guard and center. Provides versatility and ability to start.
- Aqib Talib, CB - Essentially was traded from LA to Miami so the Dolphins could acquire a fifth round draft choice for eating Talib's salary. Turns 34 years old for the 2020 season.
- J'Marcus Webb, RT - A late in camp signing who ended up playing 542 snaps in 2019.
- Vince Biegel, LB (RFA) - Made 10 starts in 2019 and recorded 57 tackles and 2.5 sacks. Showed enough promise to make a qualifying offer.
- Clive Walford, TE - A rotational tight end who has never put together all of his size and athleticism. Solid depth piece for a franchise as a second or third tight end.

AFC NORTH 2020

TEAM BY TEAM PREVIEWS

The Ravens now feature the league MVP, as the rest of the division is experiencing a lot of change.

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Baltimore Ravens
GM: Eric DeCosta
Coach: John Harbaugh
2019 Record: 14-2

Pittsburgh Steelers
GM: Kevin Colbert
Coach: Mike Tomlin
2019 Record: 8-8

Cleveland Browns
GM: Andrew Berry
Coach: Kevin Stefanski
2019 Record: 6-10

Cincinnati Bengals
GM: Mike Brown
Coach: Zac Taylor
2019 Record: 2-14

Baltimore
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 2nd
Def. Rank: 4th

2019 Record: 14-2

Projected Cap Space: \$54 million



An MVP Performance

Key Free Agents

- Jimmy Smith, CB - Returned from injury in 2019 just to miss more time with a knee injury. Should be looking around the league for a veteran minimum deal.
- Michael Pierce, DT - Run stuffer who's job is to take up blockers and allow the linebackers to flow to the football.
- Patrick Onwuasor, LB - An important player for the Ravens defense early in 2019, an ankle injury limited his snaps over the remainder of 2019. Recorded 64 tackles and three sacks.
- Seth Roberts, WR - Had the worst season of his career catching just 21 passes for 271 yards and two touchdowns.
- Pernell McPhee, OLB - Injuries have taken away McPhee's versatility and availability. Missed the final nine games of the season with a triceps injury.

Last year in this very publication the discussion point for the future of the Baltimore Ravens centered on quarterback Lamar Jackson taking the next step in his development. In 2019, he did just that and so much more.

Lamar Jackson was an offensive force of nature this past season. A hurricane of yards and points. Yes, the highlight runs were still there as Jackson rushed for 1,206 yards and seven touchdowns. But his work under center showed what the best athlete can do on the field when attacking the defense with his arm. Jackson threw for 3,167 yards and 36 touchdowns. His league MVP award was well deserved.

Now it's about what Lamar Jackson does for

an encore. The Baltimore Ravens will enter 2020 as a Super Bowl favorite.

The Ravens will use this offseason to add to their pass rush and provide another receiver to add to their dangerous offense. Also securing offensive line help will be another key as guard Marshal Yanda has openly discussed retirement this offseason.

For all of their fireworks offensively, the Ravens are a physical run-based team. The playoff injury to running back Mark Ingram demonstrated what happens when the Ravens lose their physical run presence.

The Ravens are set to make a run at the champion Chiefs and the rest of the NFL. That run will be led by the league MVP.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Brandon Carr, CB: Gave up five touchdowns in coverage in 2019. The veteran secondary player also spent time at safety but is no longer a \$7M dollar a year player. Carr could return with a smaller deal. Cap savings: \$6M

Brandon Williams, DT: The decision here is whether a two down defensive player should cost \$14M against the salary cap. Williams is a good player, but typically only plays 45-53% of the defensive snaps in the Ravens defense. Cap savings: \$4.3M

(-image source cbsbaltimore.com)

Pittsburgh
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 30th
Def. Rank: 5th

2019 Record: 8-8

Projected Cap Space: \$6 million



What's Next in 2020?

Key Free Agents

- Bud Dupree, OLB - Has developed into a quality edge rusher during his five years in Pittsburgh. Recorded a career high 11.5 sacks in 2019
- Javon Hargrave, DL - Has the dynamic ability to play inside and outside while still controlling the run game and creating pressure in the passing game. Combined to get 10.5 sacks over the past two seasons.
- Artie Burns, CB - The relationship between Burns and the Steelers is not good. Has not lived up to his first round selection or his early career production.
- Nick Vannett, TE - Made 13 catches for 128 yards after his acquisition from the Seattle Seahawks.
- BJ Finney, G - Made four starts and was the primary backup on the interior line over the 16 games of 2019.

The Pittsburgh Steelers 2019 season is a testament to the leadership of head coach Mike Tomlin. While an 8-8 season leaves much to desire, what the Steelers endured was the type of player losses that sink teams to 3-13 records.

It started last offseason with the losses of receiver Antonio Brown and running back Le'veon Bell. It continued when quarterback Ben Roethlisberger was lost week two to an elbow injury. What followed was a merry-go-round of players being asked to fill the roles of these pivotal players.

The Steelers rebounded from an 0-3 start to post winning streaks of four and three games. The team would start Mason Rudolph for eight games and Devlin Hodges

for another six games. These are hardly household names. And yet, the Steelers entered late December with an 8-5 record and a shot to make the playoffs. A credit to Mike Tomlin indeed.

The 2020 offseason is about what is next for this proud franchise. The team expects to get back a healthy Roethlisberger but the clock is ticking as he will turn 38 years old in March. With his draft counterparts in Eli Manning and Philip Rivers at the end, Big Ben can't be far behind.

The Steelers lack a first round pick, so the quarterback of the future will likely not be part of this draft. But the Steelers need to prepare for the future that is coming. Their head coach is up for that challenge.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Mark Barron, LB: Was not a quality player in the Steelers defense in 2019. Does not seem to fit well and know where to be regularly in the Steelers schemes. A change of scenery is likely. Cap savings: \$5.2M

Anthony Chickillo, LB: Played just 13% of the snaps on defense in 2019 and was primarily a special teams player. But is paid like a solid NFL starter. Cap savings: \$5M

Cleveland
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 22nd
Def. Rank: 22nd

2019 Record: 6-10

Projected Cap Space: \$53 million



Another Change at The Top

Key Free Agents

- Greg Robinson, LT - Was one of the most penalized tackles in the NFL, but also played well enough to earn another contract. Played 2019 on one-year deal.
- Joe Schobert, LB - Led the Browns in tackles recording 113. Played nearly every snap defensively. Schober looks to test free agency.
- Juston Burris, S/CB - Versatile player who moved around the Browns secondary and played well. Intercepted two passes playing both safety and slot corner.
- Kareem Hunt (RFA), RB - Rushed for 4.2 yards per carry in 2019 and also caught 37 passes returning from league suspension. The Browns will have to make a qualifying offer to Hunt in order to secure draft pick compensation for his rights.

The Cleveland Browns are changing once again. This pretty much can be written on a yearly basis.

Last year the Browns search firm suggested that Minnesota Vikings assistant coach Kevin Stefanski was their man to lead them into the future. The team passed on him at the time. A year later, he is now the new coach of the Cleveland Browns.

Since 2013 the Browns have had five different head coaches as they search for the secret sauce. While continuity has proven to be a hallmark of good teams in the NFL the Browns have constantly changed.

The Browns have talent this time around. But one has to wonder if the amount of

change once again sets them up for failure?

Successful NFL teams change their rosters but maintain an identity. The Browns are once again in a situation with a coach and front office who will look to alter the roster to fit what they want. It's a recipe for losing.

The Browns seemed to have the right quarterback in Baker Mayfield, who rejects the idea that the Browns are perennial losers. But his reaction to outside criticism causes one to question his maturity.

Couple that with the volatility of receivers Odell Beckham Jr and Jarvis Landry, can Stefanski really get this group on the same page?

It's a time of change in Cleveland again.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Christian Kirksey, LB: Has been unable to stay healthy over the past two seasons after signing his big contract. Kirksey played in just two games in 2019 and missed nine games in 2018. Cap savings: \$7.5M

Terrance Mitchell, CB: Was just okay playing in the Browns secondary. Gave up a large amount of completed passes in 2019. Cap savings: \$3M

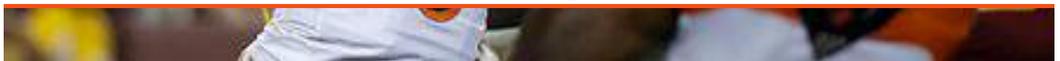
Cincinnati Bengals
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 26th
Def. Rank: 29th

2019 Record: 2-14

Projected Cap Space: \$64 million



Drafting #1



From 2011 to 2015, the Cincinnati Bengals went 52-27-1 delivering playoff seasons over the time period. But a 19-28-1 record from 2016 to 2018 ended the era of head coach Marvin Lewis.

Enter new coach Zac Taylor who fit the trend of hiring young offensive minds around the league. The Bengals planned to run an offense that would put pressure on defenses and points on the board. After a preseason injury to receiver AJ Green, the offense sputtered. A 2-14 season followed in 2019.

The Bengals now hold the number one overall pick in the NFL Draft. LSU Heisman Trophy winning quarterback and Ohio native Joe Burrow is expected to be the

pick as the Bengals begin a new era in their team history. What Burrow finds when he arrives is what this offseason is about.

The Bengals featured one of the worst defenses in the league last season and that started with their inability to stop the run. The team gave up 4.7 yards per carry. Fixing the defensive line, namely the defensive interior will be a key this offseason. The Bengals offensive line will also need reinforcements as they graded out as one of the worst in the NFL. Certainly not ideal for a young quarterback to play behind.

The Bengals in 2020 will have a college star playing under center. But if they are to get back to their playoff era, they need to make sure he's setup for success.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Andy Dalton, QB: The Bengals will be drafting a quarterback highly, ending the Dalton era. Dalton lost his job during the season before getting it back for the final five games. The 32 year old has a record of 70-61-2 during his career. Cap savings \$17.7M

Giovani Bernard, RB: Set to count over \$4M against the 2020 cap. Bernard rushed for just 170 yards in 2019 while catching a career low 30 passes. Cap savings \$2.8M

Key Free Agents

- Aj Green, WR - Missed all of 2019 with torn ligaments in his ankle. The seven-time Pro Bowler should still be able to land a quality contract or get hit with the franchise tag.
- Darqueze Dennard, CB - Had a solid season for a bad football team. Recorded five passes defended in 2019, and 17 over the past three seasons.
- Tyler Eifert, TE - Was finally healthy and able to play in 16 games for the first time during his seven-year career. Recorded 43 catches and three touchdowns in 2019.
- Andrew Billings, DT - Played well recording 35 tackles as an interior run defender.
- Nick Vigil, LB - Recorded 111 tackles in 2019. The former third round pick had his best season and is looking at a solid contract.

AFC WEST 2020

TEAM BY TEAM PREVIEWS

The Chiefs are the champions for the first time in 50 years.

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Kansas City Chiefs
GM: Brett Veach
Coach: Andy Reid
2019 Record: 12-4

Denver Broncos
VP of Ops: John Elway
Coach: Vic Fangio
2019 Record: 7-9

Las Vegas Raiders
GM: Mike Mayok
Coach: Jon Gruden
2019 Record: 7-9

Los Angeles Chargers
GM: Tom Telesco
Coach: Anthony Lynn
2019 Record: 5-11

Kansas City
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 6th
Def. Rank: 17th

2019 Record: 12-4

Projected Cap Space: \$23 million



A Once in a Lifetime Player



Key Free Agents

- Chris Jones, DL - The team's biggest priority this offseason. Has recorded 24.5 sacks over the past two seasons. Will make a run at \$20M per season.
- Emmanuel Ogbah, DE - Put together a good season in KC recording 5.5 sacks and 32 tackles. Suffered a torn pec that ended his season. Was the Chiefs leading sacker at time of injury and will have a market.
- Kendall Fuller, CB - Gave the Chiefs playoff snaps at safety after late season injuries.
- Bashaud Breeland, CB - Plays a lot, but the veteran cornerback struggled in coverage in 2019.
- Demarcus Robinson, WR - The beneficiary of the Chiefs prolific offense. Caught a career high 32 passes for 449 yards and four touchdowns in 2019.

For the first time in 50 NFL seasons, the Kansas City Chiefs are Super Bowl Champions.

January 11th, 1970 was the previous time that this organization won the league championship. Since then the Chiefs have had other great football teams that have had legitimate shots to win a championship. But none could get it done until this 2019 version.

The numbers for quarterback Patrick Mahomes and this Chiefs offense were astounding. With his MVP performance in the Super Bowl, Mahomes became the youngest quarterback to win the award. Mahomes is now a league MVP and a Super Bowl MVP at the age of 24.

Consider that Mahomes and the Chiefs were 5-0 in 2019 when trailing by double-digits. Their three double-digit comeback wins in the NFL Playoffs were also a league record. This group accomplished what we had never seen before.

The Chiefs will face the challenge of keeping their championship group together. Every Super Bowl winner deals with teams coming in to pick them over. Defensive lineman Chris Jones is going to get a massive payday or the franchise tag.

Rosters change for NFL teams constantly. As long as the Chiefs have a healthy Patrick Mahomes they're going to have a shot every season to win the Super Bowl. The 50 year wait is over.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Sammy Watkins, WR: Has never become the elite receiver that his draft status indicated. Has recorded just a single thousand yard receiving season when he played in Buffalo in 2015. Recorded 52 catches in 2019 for 673 yards and three touchdowns. A move to release would give the Chiefs more space for several deals this offseason. Cap savings: \$14M

(-image source dallasnews.com)

Denver
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 28th
Def. Rank: 12th

2019 Record: 7-9

Projected Cap Space: \$67 million



An Offseason with Resources

Key Free Agents

- Justin Simmons, FS - Had a breakout season just in time for free agency. Recorded 93 tackles and intercepted four passes, named second team All-Pro.
- Chris Harris, CB - Reportedly wants to return but plans to test the market to see what his value is relative to other teams. Turns 31 years old this summer.
- Derek Wolfe, DE - The pass rusher and run defender had a quality 2019. Recorded a career high seven sacks.
- Connor McGovern, C - Allowed just one sack in 2019 and committed zero penalties. A solid player at the position who will get a quality contract.
- Will Parks, S/CB - Played as a nickel cornerback but can also play as a safety. Made 35 tackles last season and intercepted a pass.

Denver Broncos team general manager John Elway may have found something. That something has been elusive in recent years.

In the years since the retirement of Peyton Manning, the Broncos have looked under every rock and tried nearly every option to find their next quarterback. The team has gone with Trevor Siemian, Paxton Lynch, Brock Osweiler, Joe Flacco and Brandon Allen under center trying to get it done.

Enter Drew Lock, the rookie quarterback from Missouri who was selected with the 42nd pick in the 2019 draft. Lock took over in week 13 and led the Broncos to a 4-1 record. Lock would complete 64% of his passes while tossing seven touchdowns and three interceptions.

If Elway and the Broncos have the quarterback situation under control, they have a ton of flexibility to setup their roster this offseason. The Broncos have the most cap space they have had under Elway's leadership. They also hold 12 picks, including three third rounders and two fourth round picks. The Broncos also feature the third youngest roster in the NFL.

Denver will need to secure additional talent at offensive tackle and cornerback. Head coach Vic Fangio had the defense playing well again in 2019 but would love to add some pieces to aid the pass rush. Adding a weapon or two for Drew Lock wouldn't hurt either.

As long Lock truly is the ever elusive QB.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Joe Flacco, QB: With Drew Lock now under center, Flacco's contract can be moved off the roster. While it creates \$13M in dead cap space, it also gives John Elway more money to work with this offseason. Cap savings: \$10M

Ron Leary, G: The injury concerns that dropped him in the draft and made him available as a free agent for the Broncos showed up during his time in Denver. Leary has yet to play 16 games in a season for the Broncos and has missed 19 games. Cap savings: \$8.5M

Las Vegas
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 11th
Def. Rank: 19th

2019 Record: 7-9

Projected Cap Space: \$77 million



On To Las Vegas



Key Free Agents

- Daryl Worley, CB - A 15 game starter in 2019 put together a solid season. Former third round pick. A solid contract is coming.
- Dion Jordan, DL - The former top five pick came back to add some pressure to the Raiders pass rush.
- ****Denzelle Good, G -** Stepped in due to injury and provided solid guard play. Quality veteran depth. (**signed to 1 year deal Jan 9th 2020)
- Karl Joseph, SS - Despite missing seven games, still posted a quality season that will make him a coveted free agent.
- DeAndre Washington, HB - Caught 36 passes for 292 yards. Rushed for 387 yards.
- Jalen Richard, HB - Receiving and change of pace back caught 36 passes for 323 yards and rushed for 145 yards.

In the storied history of the Raiders, moving from one community to the next is nothing new. But this time around the Raiders have found a way to create one of the most anticipated fan experiences in league history.

The Raiders are now the Las Vegas Raiders. After a couple of lame duck seasons in Oakland, the NFL fans in Las Vegas could not be more excited about Jon Gruden and his team coming to the city. The Raiders plan for this offseason couldn't be more Vegas, as they plan to pursue and land free agent quarterback Tom Brady.

With nearly \$80M dollars in cap space, the Raiders have more than enough to meet any financial desires Brady might have. But they

can also offer Brady a far more luxurious experience than several other NFL cities. With Los Angeles just a short trip away, the Raiders can offer a flexible roster with the ability to spend that a team like the Chargers can't do.

Considering head coach Jon Gruden's affinity for veteran quarterbacks, it would all make sense.

The Raiders were a 6-4 football team after the first 10 games of 2019. They're not that far off from being ready to compete for their first playoff season since 2016.

The Raiders have a new home and are looking to make a huge splash. They're in no better city to do so.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Gabe Jackson, G: Missed eight games over the past two seasons. If the Raiders truly want to overhaul their line and lineup for Las Vegas, Jackson would provide additional cap space. Cap savings: \$9.6M

Tyrell Williams, WR: Williams was signed to be a complimentary player and turned in his typical 40 catch season, his third consecutive season to do so. But his cap number for 2020 indicates he's very good second receiver. That hasn't been the case. Cap savings: \$11.1M

Los Angeles
2020 Offseason
Off. Rank: 10th
Def. Rank: 6th

2019 Record: 5-11

Projected Cap Space: \$61 million



Massive Changes Coming

Key Free Agents

- Philip Rivers, QB - The 38 year old quarterback will not be back with the LA Chargers. Whether he decides to play in 2020 will depend on the situation for Rivers and his family.
- Melvin Gordon, RB - The big pay day didn't materialize in 2019 with the Chargers. Rushed for 612 yards after a prolonged holdout.
- Travis Benjamin, TE - Made just six catches and played in five games last season.
- Hunter Henry, TE - The talented tight end is a constant injury risk. Has played in just 41 games over four seasons. Made 55 catches in 2019 with five touchdowns.
- Michael Schofield, G - In a season with offensive line instability, Schofield played every snap for the Chargers offense in 2019. Has started every game for the Chargers the past two seasons.

The Los Angeles Chargers are set to move into their new stadium along with the Los Angeles Rams. The team that will be on the field will look wildly different than they have in recent memory.

Quarterback Philip Rivers will not return to the team after 16 seasons, 14 as the starting quarterback. Rivers has decided to move his family to Florida and will decide if he wants to play again in 2020. Running back Melvin Gordon is set to be a free agent after holding out from the team early in the season with a contract dispute.

Critics of the Chargers will point out their relocation fee as the reason the team has been thrifty with their recent transactions. This offseason will either fuel that fire or

put it to rest. With more than \$60M dollars in cap space this offseason, the Chargers have more than enough money available to pivot away from the Rivers era and set themselves up as a playoff contender again.

The Chargers do hold the 6th overall pick in the NFL Draft and could look to select their quarterback of the future. Selecting a quarterback in the first round would be the first time the team has done so since 2004. While bringing in a veteran would make the Chargers competitive faster, moving into a new building with a new franchise quarterback does have it's own appeal.

No matter what the Chargers choose to do one thing is certain. They will have a completely new look.

Targets for Release/Restructure

Denzel Perryman, LB: Returned from a knee injury and did not play well enough to be considered an \$8M dollar player. Made 10 starts and played in 14 games. The team could give him another season, but it seems this program is moving on from injured veterans this offseason. Cap savings: \$6.5M

Mike Pouncey, C: The neck injury that ended Pouncey's season may have ended his career. If healthy, Pouncey is more than worth his contract. The health issue is the only reason he would not be part of the 2020 Chargers. Cap savings: \$4.7M

About the Author

Carlos Medina has worked in the sports talk radio industry since 2001 as a Producer, Host and News Reporter. A graduate of Texas Wesleyan University and The University of Alabama, he has covered NFL assignments in both the Dallas and Atlanta markets. Carlos is a dedicated fan of the game and a student of NFL organizational success. He has also served as a media consultant for Atlanta-based NFL Combine training facilities teaching future NFL draftees about the business and media aspects of the NFL. His work can be heard weekdays on Sports Radio 680 The Fan in Atlanta, GA. He lives in Cumming, GA with his wife and two daughters.



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