

One Step Forward, Two Steps Backwards

By Jesse Almeida 1/19/23

It was not a secret that the New England Patriots were going to be a team under the .500 mark. In terms of their record, the Patriots exceeded our expectations at 8-9 vs 6-11, and 5-12. Does that mean their season was a success? No, as a matter of fact it was another big failure. The 2022 season was not only a failure, but it was a huge concern for their future going forward.

For starters Mac Jones really regressed this season. Although it was not entirely his fault, it is still hard to ignore if you are a Patriots fan. Mac had his first injury in his NFL career during week 3 against the Baltimore Ravens and he did not look the same ever since then. In 14 games this season, Mac Jones threw the ball much less and completed 288 out of 442 passes which gives a completion average of 65.2%. In his rookie season he completed 352 out of 521 passes which was a 67.6% completion. He threw for 2997 yards which is 804 less yards than his rookie season. Jones threw 14 touchdowns and threw 11 interceptions. He threw 3 less interceptions, but threw 8 less touchdowns. Mac Jones had a QB Rating of 84.8 which was 27th in the NFL, and an adjusted QB Rating of 35.8 that was 28th in the NFL. In his rookie season, Jones had a QB rating of 92.5 which was 14th in the NFL, and had an adjusted QB rating of 56.9 that was 16th in the NFL. Mac Jones went from being an average but solid quarterback to being one of the worst quarterbacks in the NFL. Jones obviously has partial blame but it is very little as he was really set up for failure from the beginning.

Mac Jones' play on the field revolves around how the offense was constructed and one thing on the offense that was constructed very poorly was the offensive line. Fans could go back and watch an opposing defense push right past Isaiah Wynn, and Trent Brown. Cole Strange is debatable because he had a slow start to the season, but ended better. Due to the lack of protection that Mac Jones had because of the offensive line, that caused Jones to get injured, and the lack of protection was the story of how his season went. Jones was forced to make quick decisions because of the fact that the defense would get to him quicker than anticipated.

You could already predict what the final issue and the biggest problem was with the New England Patriots, and that was the coaching staff. To be completely honest, not only was the offensive coaching atrocious, but Bill Belichick has a lot of the blame also. Why is that? It's simple, Bill brought in his buddies Joe Judge and Matt Patricia to come in and coach the offensive side of the football. First off, none of them are offensive first coaches. Second off, when Patricia coached the Lions, and Judge coached the Giants, their offenses were ranked the

worst offenses in the NFL. So when Patricia and Judge did have a part on an offense, they were terrible with the play call. How was that supposed to work here? How Patricia and Judge coached this year is a reflection on Belichick as a coach also, and he deserves just as much criticism for the season as Matt Patricia is getting from the fans. Having said all of that, Matt Patricia will go down as the worst offensive coordinator in Patriots history. All season long, Patricia had the offense play conservative. You could pinpoint times where the Patriots should have passed the ball over a run, not going for a first down when they are inches away, kicking a field goal vs getting 6 points when you are a yard or 2 away from the goal line. You could go on and on about what should or should not have happened in games, definitely not lateral the ball when you are tied in the 4th with no time left. The job that the coaching did not allow Mac Jones to take a leap in his development as a quarterback and it pissed him off as it should. Hopefully Mac is over this because if not, the Patriots are going to have to look at alternative options at the QB position via free agency, trade, or internally.

What can the Patriots do to fix this? They need a couple improvements on the offensive line, this was not mentioned but they still need that number 1 wide receiver that can be a gamechanger, if he is still committed to the Patriots Mac Jones has to be better next year, and the coaching needs a huge shake up. Personally, Bill Belichick is on the hot seat seeing that this is the second time post Brady that he has missed the postseason, but if he wants to save his reputation, he has to have a big offseason this year. Overall for the year the Patriots grade for this season is a D because they met our expectations here, however they failed expectations with many other people and the fans.