



DC DEFENDERS



XFL CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP



DC DEFENDERS vs ST. LOUIS BATTLEHAWKS
SUNDAY • JUNE 8, 2025 • 6 PM ET
THE STADIUM AT AMERICA'S DOME • ST. LOUIS, MO.

INTERIM HEAD COACH..... Shannon Harris HEAD COACH..... Anthony Becht
UFL Record6-4 (.667) UFL Record22-8 (.733)

COORDINATORS LOCATIONS: Offensive Coordinator Fred Kaiss will be located in the booth; Defensive Coordinator Blake Williams will be located on the field.

SERIES NOTES: The Defenders will play the Battlehawks in the XFL Conference Championship game Sunday evening. St. Louis currently owns a 3-1 series lead over DC in the UFL era and earned a 13-8 win at Audi Field last week. This will be DC's first playoff appearance in the UFL era and it will be St. Louis' second after losing to San Antonio, 25-15, in the Conference Championship last year.

POST-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE ZOOM INFO

The UFL will host postgame press conferences via Zoom after the conclusion of each game this season. Media members are invited to join the meeting to ask questions to players and coaches using the "raise hand" function:

<https://xfl.zoom.us/j/89485486083?pwd=ERoPGhRKGHNAaWteFpmD6UOUPghTG6.1>

NEW RULE CHANGES

New Kickoff Formation

- Kickoffs will now start from the 30-yard line after being at the 20-yard line last season
- The 10 remaining players on the kickoff team will line up at the receiving team's 40-yard line. All kicking team players were at the 20-yard line, including the kicker, last season.
- The receiving team's set up zone will stretch from its 35-yard line to the 30-yard line and must have at least nine players in that zone. Last season, the receiving team had to have a minimum of eight players, but no more than nine players, in their set up zone, which was the kicking team's 30- to the 40-yard lines (10-yard zone).
- The landing zone will be from the receiving team's 20-yard line to the goal line.
- The ball must reach the landing zone or it will be spotted at the 40-yard line.
- There will be two touchback spots: the 35-yard-line for balls kicked into the end zone and the 20-yard line for balls that hit in the landing zone and then enter the endzone. All touchbacks were placed at the 25-yard line last season.

Head Coach's Challenge

- The Head Coach's Challenge will be expanded in 2025. This extension will feature:

DC DEFENDERS COMMUNICATIONS

Drew McDonald
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2025 SCHEDULE

1		BIRMINGHAM STALLIONS AT AUDI FIELD W, Defenders 18, Stallions 11	ESPN
2		MEMPHIS SHOWBOATS AT AUDI FIELD W, Defenders 17, Showboats 12	abc
3		ST. LOUIS BATTLEHAWKS AT THE DOME AT AMERICA'S CENTER W, Defenders 27, Battlehawks 15	ESPN
4		SAN ANTONIO BRAHMAS AT AUDI FIELD L, Brahmas 24, Defenders 18	FOX
5		ARLINGTON RENEGADES AT CHOCTAW STADIUM W, Defenders 37, Renegades 33	FOX
6		MICHIGAN PANTHERS AT FORD FIELD L, Panthers 38, Defenders 14	ESPN
7		SAN ANTONIO BRAHMAS AT ALAMODOME W, Defenders 32, Brahmas 24	ESPN
8		ARLINGTON RENEGADES AT AUDI FIELD Sunday, May 18, 2025 W, Defenders 33, Renegades 30	abc
9		HOUSTON ROUGHNECKS AT TDECU STADIUM Sunday, May 25, 2025 L, Roughnecks 24, Defenders 21	FOX
10		ST. LOUIS BATTLEHAWKS AT AUDI FIELD Friday, May 30, 2025 L, Battlehawks 13, Defenders 8	FOX



BROADCAST BOX

Curt Menefee- Play-by-Play
Joel Klatt - Analyst
Devin Gardner - Sideline
Mike Pereira - Rules



- Each head coach will earn a second challenge if the first challenge is successful.

- The head coach can challenge any officiating decision as long as the team has a timeout remaining.

Onside Kicks

- The league has eliminated this option. The kickoff team will be able to retain possession of the ball with a fourth down and 12-yard scrimmage play from its own 28-yard line.

Noteworthy Rules Returning

- Teams will have three scrimmage play options (run or pass) to elect to go for one, two, or three points after a touchdown:

2-yard line = 1 point for a successful try
 5-yard line = 2 points for a successful try
 10-yard line = 3 points for a successful try

- Overtime will consist of alternating attempts to score from the opponent's five-yard-line with no kicks allowed. It will remain a best-of-three format until a winner has been determined.

- A double forward pass on one play from behind the line of scrimmage is legal. In these situations, the ball cannot cross the line of scrimmage at any time prior to the second forward pass being thrown.

KEY NOTES

GAME PREVIEW

The DC Defenders (6-4, 4-2 XFL) will clash with the St. Louis Battlehawks (8-2, 4-2 XFL) for the XFL Conference Championship on Sunday, June 8 at 6:00 p.m. on FOX. Both teams are looking to win their first playoff game in the UFL era.

Last week, the Defenders fell short to the Battlehawks in a rain-soaked 13-8 loss at Audi Field. Defenders quarterback Mike DiLiello accounted for 202 yards of total offense including 60 yards on the ground and added a touchdown pass.

HEY NOW, YOU'RE AN ALL STAR

The Defenders collected seven All-UFL team selections which was tied for the most with St. Louis. On the offensive side of the ball, wide receiver Chris Rowland and tackle Yasir Durant were named to the All-UFL Offensive Team. Defensive tackle Joe Wallace, defensive end Derick Roberson, linebacker Anthony Hines and cornerback Deandre Baker were all named to the All-UFL defensive team. Rowland also earned an All-UFL Special Teams selection.

MEET THE NEW BOSS

Shannon Harris is in his first season as Interim Head Coach of the DC Defenders. Harris spent the previous two seasons on the staff as the Quarterbacks coach.

NEW FACES FOR 2025

Key Additions

WR: Javon Antonio, Jaydon Mickens

TE: Mason Fairchild

OL: Johari Branch, Gunner Britton, Mason Brooks, Tykeem Doss

DT: Devonsha Maxwell

LB: Brian Abraham, Shayne Simon

S: Tayler Hawkins, Sam Kidd

CB: Willie Drew Jr., Kelvin Joseph, Bryce Thompson

Key Departures

WR: Brandon Smith, Kelvin Harmon

OL: John Yarbrough

During the offseason, the Defenders brought in some key additions to this year's roster. Wide receiver Jaydon Mickens joins DC 's squad this season after a five-year NFL career and was a member of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 2019 Super Bowl Championship team. Cornerback Kelvin Joseph begins his first season with the Defenders after playing four seasons in the NFL. Joseph was selected in the second round of the 2021 NFL Draft by the Dallas Cowboys and played in 26 games over his first two seasons.

DC-ST. LOUIS CONNECTIONS

QB Jordan Ta'amu was the first ever Battlehawk to be selected in 2020. Defenders defensive coordinator Blake Williams served the same role for the St. Louis Rams in 2012. CB Kelvin Joseph and Battlehawks DT Phil Hoskins were teammates at Kentucky.

AIR JORDAN

Ta'amu leads the UFL in passing yards (2,155), touchdowns (17) and total yards (2,333). The Ole Miss Rebel has now totaled two or more passing touchdowns in four of his last five games. His success this season has been a major factor for why the Defenders lead the league in total offensive yards (3,454).

ROLLIN' CHRIS ROWLAND

Rowland has been a model of consistency this season and ranks second in the UFL in receiving yards (522) and third in receptions (42). The Tennessee State alum has also recorded his second consecutive season with 1,000+ all-purpose yards (1,070).

BOOM BOOM POWELL

Wide receiver Cornell Powell has added an impact to DC's receiving corps in his first season with the squad. His seven receiving touchdowns lead the league and he ranks ninth with 418 receiving yards in nine games played. The Clemson Tiger recorded a season-high eight receptions for 104 yards and two touchdowns in week eight's matchup against Houston. Powell has found the endzone four times over his last two games.

SEEING RED

DC's defensive unit leads the UFL in tackles for loss (59) and ranks second in forced fumbles (9) and takeaways (16). The Defenders are also third in sacks (22) and interceptions (7).

DRIVING OPPONENTS BACKWARDS

DE's Derick Roberson (T3rd, 5.5), Andre Mintze (T3rd, 5.5) and DT Joe Wallace (6th, 4.5) all rank in the league's top 10 for sacks. Wallace (2nd, 10) and Roberson (3rd, 9) also rank in the top three in tackles for loss. Mintze tallied his first career multi-sack game with two against St. Louis in week three and added two forced fumbles and one fumble recovery. Roberson collected a pair of sacks in the season opener against Birmingham and is tied for second in the UFL with seven tackles for loss. Wallace added two of his own on May 9 at San Antonio.



NOTABLE PLAYER HIGHS

QB Jordan Ta'amu

- Passing Yards, Season: 308 (4/27 at ARL), Career: 333 (5/21/22 with TB of USFL)
- Passing TD, Season: 3 2x, (last: 4/27 at ARL), Career: 4 (4/9/23)
- Rushing Yards, Season: 74 (4/20 vs. SA), Career: 89 (3/12/23 vs LV)

RB Deon Jackson

- Rushing Yards, Career: 89 (5/18 vs. ARL)
- Rushing TD, Career: 1, 4x (last: 5/25 at HOU)

RB Abram Smith

- Rushing Yards, Season: 55 (4/5 vs. MEM), Career: 218 (3/18/23 at STL)
- Rushing TD, Season: 1 (5/18 vs. ARL), Career: 3 (3/18/23 at STL)
- Receiving yards, Season: 15 (4/5 vs MEM), Career: 29 (4/16/23 vs ARL)

WR Chris Rowland

- Receiving yards, Season and Career: 144 (5/4 at MICH)
- Receptions, Season and Career: 9 (5/4 at MICH)

WR Cornell Powell

- Receiving yards, Career: 104 (5/25 at HOU)
- Receptions, Career: 8, (5/25 at HOU)
- Touchdowns, Career: 2, 2x last: (5/25 vs. HOU)

TE Briley Moore

- Receiving yards, Season: 71, (5/9 at SA), Career: 80 (4/30/23 vs. SEA)
- Receptions, Career: 5, 2x (last: 5/9 at SA)

DE Andre Mintze

- Total tackles, Season: 3 2x, (last: 4/27 at ARL), Career: 6 (4/22/2023 at SA)
- Solo tackles, Season and career: 3 (3/30/25 vs. BIR)
- Sacks, Season and Career: 2.0 (4/13/2025 at STL)

DE Derrick Roberson

- Total tackles, Season and Career: 7 ,2x (last: 5/4 at MICH)
- Solo tackles, Season and Career: 5 (5/4 at MICH)
- Sacks, Season and Career: 2.0, (3/30 vs. BIR)

DE Malik Fisher

- Total tackles, Season: 3, 2x (last: 4/20 vs. SA), Career: 7 (3/31/2024 at SA)
- Solo tackles, Season: 2, 3x, (last: 5/9 at SA), Career: 4 (3/31/2024 at SA)
- Sacks, Season: 1 (5/18 vs. ARL), Career: 3.0 (4/28/24 vs. STL)

LB Anthony Hines III

- Total tackles, Season and Career: 11, 2x (last: 4/27 at ARL)
- Solo tackles, Season: 7, (5/18 vs. ARL), Career: 10 (4/20/2024 at BIR)
- Sacks, Season and Career: 2.0 (3/30/2025 vs. BIR)

LB Momo Sanogo

- Total tackles, Season and Career: 7 (4/5/2025 vs. MEM)
- Solo tackles, Season: 5, (3/30 vs. BIR), Career: 4 (5/12/2024 vs. MICH)
- Sacks: —

CB Deandre Baker

- Total tackles, Season and Career: 6, 2x (last: 4/5 vs. MEM)
- Solo tackles, Season and Career: 6, 2x (last: 4/5 vs. MEM)

- Interceptions, Season and Career: 1, 2x, (last: 5/18 vs. ARL)

DB Kelvin Joseph

- Total tackles, Career: 10 (4/27 at ARL)
- Solo tackles, Career: 9 (4/27 at ARL)
- Interceptions, ---

DB Deontay Anderson

- Total tackles, Career: 7, 2x, (last: 5/18 vs. ARL)
- Solo tackles, Career: 4, 5x (last: 5/18 vs. ARL)
- Interceptions, ---

DB Kiondre Thomas

- Total tackles, Career: 7, (5/25 at. HOU)
- Solo tackles, Career: 6, (5/9 at SA)
- Interceptions, 1, (4/5 vs MEM)

K Matt McCrane

- Most FGs, Season and Career: 4, 3x (last: 3/30 vs. BIR)
- Most 50-yarders, Season: 1, 2x (last: 4/13 at STL), Career: 2, 2x (last: 5/5/24 vs SA)
- Longest FG, Season: 53 (last: 3/30 vs. BIR), Career: 58 2x (last 5/5/24 vs SA)



DC DEFENDERS NUMERICAL ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE	HOMETOWN
1	Bryce Thompson	CB	5-11	182	25	Tennessee	Columbia, SC
2	Deandre Baker	CB	5-11	190	27	Georgia	Miami, FL
3	Jaydon Mickens	WR	5-10	174	30	Washington	Los Angeles, CA
4	Abram Smith	RB	6-0	213	26	Baylor	Abilene, TX
5	Michael Ojemudia	CB	6-1	200	27	Iowa	Farmington Hills, MI
7	Isaiah Johnson	FS	6-2	208	29	Houston	Bryan, TX
9	Deontay Anderson	S	6-1	218	27	Houston	Houston, TX
10	Jordan Ta'amu	QB	6-3	221	27	Ole Miss	Pearl City, HI
11	Momo Sanogo	LB	6-1	231	26	Louisville	Plano, TX
12	Chris Rowland	WR	5-8	179	27	Tennessee State	Nolensville, TN
13	Javon Antonio	WR	6-3	217	26	Colorado	LaPlace, LA
14	Cornell Powell	WR	6-0	205	27	Clemson	Greenville, NC
16	Matt McCrane	K	5-10	167	30	Kansas State	Brownwood, TX
17	Mike DiLiello	QB	6-1	211	24	Austin Peay	Pembroke Pines, FL
18	Spencer Sanders	QB	6-1	209	25	Ole Miss	Denton, TX
19	Ty Scott	WR	6-1	199	26	Missouri State	Savannah, GA
23	Willie Drew Jr.	CB	6-0	191	24	Virginia State	Smithfield, VA
24	Kiondre Thomas	CB	6-0	186	27	Kansas State	Fort Smith, AR
25	Deon Jackson	RB	5-11	218	26	Duke	Atlanta, GA
26	Sam Kidd	S	6-1	206	25	James Madison	Vienna, VA
27	Kelvin Joseph	CB	5-11	197	25	Kentucky	Baton Rouge, LA
28	Darius Hagens	RB	6-0	207	25	Virginia State	Chesapeake, VA
33	Shayne Simon	LB	6-3	229	25	Pittsburgh	West Orange, NJ
44	Montae Nicholson	LB	6-0	224	25	LSU	Shreveport, LA
45	Brian Abraham	LB	6-4	229	24	Albany	Brockton, MA
47	Paxton Brooks	P	6-5	199	25	Tennessee	Lexington, SC
48	Andre Mintze	DE	6-3	253	26	Vanderbilt	Philadelphia, PA
50	Derick Roberson	DE	6-3	247	29	Sam Houston State	San Antonio, TX
51	Mike Maietti	C	6-1	290	27	Mizzou	West Orange, NJ
56	Johari Branch	T	6-3	330	26	Maryland	Chicago, IL
57	Anthony Hines III	LB	6-3	226	26	Texas A&M	Plano, TX
62	Jarrid Williams	T	6-6	323	27	Miami (FL)	Cedar Hill, TX
70	Yasir Durant	T	6-7	330	26	Mizzou	Philadelphia, PA
74	Gunner Britton	G	6-6	304	25	Auburn	Conway, SC
75	Mason Brooks	OL	6-5	302	25	Ole Miss	Cedar Park, TX
77	Liam Fornadel	G	6-4	320	25	James Madison	Wuyckoff, NJ
79	Tykeem Doss	G	6-5	378	25	Southern Mississippi	Decatur, MS
80	Trae Barry	LS	6-6	250	26	Boston College	Summerdale, AL
83	Braylon Sanders	WR	6-0	196	26	Ole Miss	Hogansville, GA
84	Mason Fairchild	TE	6-5	261	23	Kansas	Andale, KS
85	Seth Williams	WR	6-2	211	25	Auburn	Cottondale, AL
87	Ben Bresnahan	TE	6-3	243	24	Vanderbilt	Cummings, GA
88	Briley Moore	TE	6-4	250	27	Kansas State	Blue Springs, MO
90	Niles Scott	DT	6-2	320	29	Frostburg State	Elkton, MD
91	Dennis Johnson	NT	6-2	292	26	Grand Valley State	Columbus, OH
92	Malik Fisher	DE	6-3	262	26	Villanova	New York, NY
95	Devonsha Maxwell	DT	6-2	290	25	Tennessee-Chattanooga	Valdosta, GA
98	Kyle Phillips	DT	6-3	277	27	Fresno State	Nashville, TN
99	Joe Wallace	DT	5-11	290	26	Sam Houston State	Dallas, TX

ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS
45	Abraham, Brian	LB
9	Anderson, Deontay	S
13	Antonio, Javon	WR
2	Baker, Deandre	CB
80	Barry, Trae	LS
44	Baskerville, Micah	LB
56	Branch, Johari	T
87	Bresnahan, Ben	TE
74	Britton, Gunner	G
75	Brooks, Mason	OL
47	Brooks, Paxton	P
17	DiLiello, Mike	QB
79	Doss, Tykeem	G
23	Drew Jr., Willie	CB
70	Durant, Yasir	T
84	Fairchild, Mason	TE
92	Fisher, Malik	DE
77	Fornadel, Liam	G
28	Hagens, Darius	RB
57	Hines III, Anthony	LB
25	Jackson, Deon	RB
91	Johnson, Dennis	NT
7	Johnson, Isiah	FS
27	Joseph, Kelvin	CB
26	Kidd, Sam	S
51	Maietti, Mike	C
95	Maxwell, Devonsha	DT
16	McCrane, Matt	K
3	Mickens, Jaydon	WR
48	Mintze, Andre	DE
88	Moore, Briley	TE
5	Ojemudia, Michael	CB
98	Phillips, Kyle	T
14	Powell, Cornell	WR
50	Roberson, Derick	DE
12	Rowland, Chris	WR
83	Sanders, Braylon	WR
18	Sanders, Spencer	QB
11	Sanogo, Momo	LB
90	Scott, Niles	DT
19	Scott, Ty	WR
33	Simon, Shayne	LB
4	Smith, Abram	RB
10	Ta'amu, Jordan	QB
24	Thomas, Kiondre	CB
1	Thompson, Bryce	CB
99	Wallace, Joe	DT
62	Williams, Jarrid	T
85	Williams, Seth	WR



INTERIM HEAD COACH SHANNON HARRIS

Shannon Harris is in his first season as the Defenders Interim Head Coach and third on the coaching staff. Harris served as the quarterbacks coach for the previous two seasons before being promoted to head coach for the 2025 season.

In his second season as the quarterbacks coach, Harris oversaw the development of Jordan Ta'amu, who ranked second in the UFL in total yards (1,845), passing touchdowns (15) and third in completions (161).

Harris had continued success with Ta'amu in 2023 as the Ole Miss product won XFL's Offensive Player of the Year, passing for 1,878 yards, 14 touchdowns and three rushing touchdowns.

Prior to the DC Defenders, he was the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach at Virginia State University beginning in 2021. During the 2022 season, he oversaw an offense that averaged 30.5 points and 212.4 rushing yards per game throughout their 6-4 season.

Before coaching for the Trojans, he served as offensive coordinator for the 2019 season at Tennessee State University after spending a year as offensive analyst for the Tigers in 2018. Previously, Harris coached for 16 years in Division 1, including a three-year stint as wide receiver coach and passing game coordinator at Alcorn State University from 2015-17.

In 2017, Alcorn led the SWAC in both total offense with 461.3 yards per game and first downs with 241. Harris developed wide receiver Norlando Veals who ranked first in the SWAC in both receiving yards with 901 and receiving yards per game with 81.9. For his efforts, Veals finished as an All-Conference First-Team selection and was named HBCU All-America Honorable Mention.

He also spent time with the Tennessee Titans in 2014 during summer camp and for their first two pre-season games as an intern and was responsible for breaking down film. Harris returned to the Titans in 2015 to serve as an intern for the Titans summer mini-camp, working with the wide receivers.

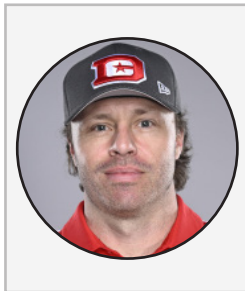
Harris earned his Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Tennessee State University in May of 2004. As a student-athlete, Harris started at quarterback for the Tigers, earning the role of team captain and Team Most Valuable Player. As a senior, he was a member of the Walter Payton Award Ballot in 2001.



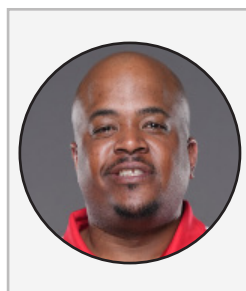
DC DEFENDERS COACHING STAFF



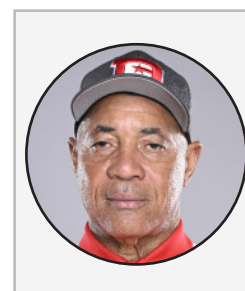
FRED KAISS
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR



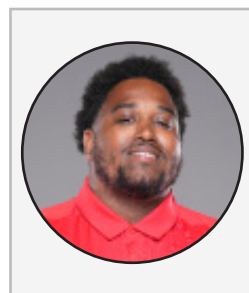
BLAKE WILLIAMS
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR



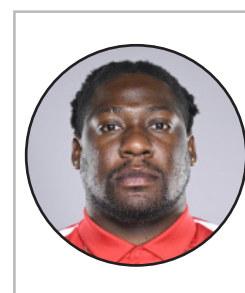
BRIAN BRASWELL
Offensive Line



VERNON DEAN
DEFENSIVE BACKS



DEION HARRIS
LINEBACKERS



ANDRE SIMMONS
WIDE RECEIVERS



VON HUTCHINS
GENERAL MANAGER



2025 DC DEFENDERS PLAYERS

#45 Brian Abraham

LB - 24 - 6-4 - 229

Brockton, MA - Albany

- Appeared in 13 games and recorded 36 tackles and 4.5 sacks for UAlbany in 2023 after transferring from Yale, helping the Great Danes advance to the semi-finals of the FCS Playoffs.
- At Yale, was a contributor on special teams and defense, and was a part of Ivy League championship teams in 2019 and 2022.
- Started out his football career as a defensive back switched to linebacker in his last couple of years at Yale.
- Invited to Chicago Bears rookie minicamp in 2024.

#9 Deontay Anderson

S - 27 - 6-1 - 218

Houston, TX - Houston

- Appeared in nine games for the Defenders in 2024, totaling 17 tackles (5 assists), one TFL, one pass breakup and a sack.
- Selected by DC during the Dispersal Draft process.
- In 2023 played with the Houston Roughnecks, where he was an All-XFL player, posting 52 tackles and received an 87.3 defensive grade against the run by Pro Football Focus.

#15 Javon Antonio

WR -26 - 6-3 - 217

LaPlace, LA - Colorado

- Spent his last season of college eligibility playing for Deion Sanders and the University of Colorado, starting in eight of 10 games, recording 209 receiving yards and two touchdowns.
- Began his college career at Hinds CC, posting 621 receiving yards and four touchdowns across two seasons there. In 2020, he transferred to Northwestern State, and burst onto the scene with 521 yards in just five games of action

#25 Deandre Baker

CB - 25 - 5-11 - 190

Miami, FL - Georgia

- A 2025 All-UFL Team selection.
- Originally signed by the Defenders in 2024.
- Appeared in nine games, allowing a 70.5 QB rating when targeted (sixth-best in UFL).
- Earned an NFL workout with the Dallas Cowboys after the season.
- Former first-round pick in the 2019 NFL Draft (pick 30).
- Spent one season in New York and two the Kansas City Chiefs, where he played for the 2020 and 2021 seasons.
- Collected 82 total tackles, 1.0 sacks, and ten pass deflections during his NFL tenure.

#80 Trae Barry

LS - 26 - 6-6 - 250

Summerdale, AL - Boston College

- Originally signed with the Defenders in 2023.
- Spent four seasons at Jacksonville State prior to Boston College.
- Earned AP FCS All-America second team honors in 2020 as a tight end.

#44 Micah Baskerville

LB - 25 - 6-0 - 224

Shreveport, LA - LSU

- First season with the Defenders.
- Signed as an undrafted rookie by the Chicago Bears in 2023 and spent two seasons on the practice squad.
- Recorded a 53-yard pick-six against the Bills in a preseason game on August 10, 2024.
- Finished his five-year collegiate career at LSU with 260 tackles, 22.5 tackles for loss and 4.0 sacks.
- Was a member of LSU's 2019 National Championship team.

#56 Johari Branch

T - 26 - 6-3 - 330

Chicago, IL - Maryland

- In 2024, played for the IFL's Massachusetts Pirates, and was one of the top linemen in the indoor scene.
- Was on the All-Rookie team
- Play three seasons at University of Maryland, where he was a starter the entire time, playing most center.

#87 Ben Bresnahan

TE -24 - 6-3 - 243

Cumming, GA - Vanderbilt

- Originally signed by the Defenders in 2024 but was cut during training camp.

- Re-signed mid-season following an injury to starting TE Briley Moore.
- Did not see the action following his signing.
- Has worked out for the Kansas City Chiefs and the Atlanta Falcons.
- Has experience at half back and full back.

#74 Gunner Britton

G -24 - 6-6- 304

Conway, SC - Auburn

- Spent the 2024 preseason with the Buffalo Bills, allowing just two QB pressures on 66 blocking snaps.
- Spent his final year of college eligibility with Auburn, starting in every game and once again moving around between positions.
- Earned All-SEC Second Team honors (AP) in 2023
- Played the majority of his college football at Western Kentucky, making 17 starts at WKU from 2019-2022.

#75 Mason Brooks

OL -25 - 6-5- 302

Cedar Park, TX - Ole Miss

- First season with the Defenders.
- Was on the Washington Commanders practice squad in 2023.
- Also had a short stint with the the Indianapolis Colts practice squad.
- Played his college football at Western Kentucky before transferring to Ole Miss for his final year of eligibility.

#47 Paxton Brooks

P -24 - 6-5-199

Lexington, SC - Tennessee

- In addition to punting, was primary kickoffs specialist, kicking off 45 times for a total of 3,037 yards - averaging 67.5 yards per kick.
- Played college at the University of Tennessee from 2018-23, serving as a punter and kickoff specialist under head coaches Jeremy Pruitt and Josh Heupe.
- A four-year starter the Vols, he played 61 games and averaged 42.23 yards per punt, which ranks eighth all-time in the SEC.

#11 Mike DiLiello

QB - 24 - 6-1- 211

Pembroke Pines, FL - Austin Peay

- Originally a late-season signing by the Defenders in 2024 following a rash of injuries at quarterback.
- Went undrafted in 2024 but received an invitation to the Tennessee Titans rookie minicamp.
- Spent his final two college seasons at Austin Peay. throwing for 5,611 yards and 49 touchdowns, with 21 interceptions and totaling over 600 rushing yards during that span.
- He also earned 2023 First Team All-UAC honors during his senior season at Austin Peay.
- Spent his first few years at Florida Tech and Middle Tennessee State.

#79 Tykeem Doss

G - 25 - 6-5- 378

Decatur, MS - Southern Mississippi

- Spent the 2024 NFL preseason with the Pittsburgh Steelers after being claimed off waivers.
- Appeared in two preseason games with the Steelers and Ravens and scored a 55.6 Pass Blocking/47.2 Run Blocking Grades according to PFF.
- Went undrafted out of Southern Mississippi in 2023 and spent the season on the Baltimore Raven practice squad after signing as an UDFA.

#23 Willie Drew Jr.

CB - 24 - 6-0- 191

Smithfield, VA - Virginia State

- Signed with the Carolina Panthers as an UDFA following the 2024 NFL Draft, but was released as part of final cuts.
- Played three seasons at Virginia State after transferring from James Madison.
- Accumulated 99 total tackles, 5.5 tackles for loss, 11 interceptions, 39 passes defended, a forced fumble, and a fumble recovery at Virginia State.
- In 2023, was named the CIAA Defensive Player of the Year.

#70 Yasir Durant



T – 26 – 6-7- 330

Philadelphia, PA – Mizzou

- Originally signed with the Defenders in 2024.
- Started at 10 games last season while playing every position but center on the offensive line.
- Scored a 63.8 Offensive Grade, which includes a 86.7 Pass Blocking Grade via PFF.
- Signed with the Kansas City Chiefs and later playing for the New England Patriots in 2021 and New Orleans Saints in 2022.
- Has appeared in 18 NFL games, starting in two of them.

#84 Mason Fairchild

TE – 23 – 6-5- 261

Anadale, KS – Kansas

- Originally signed with the Defenders in 2024.
- Signed with the Saints as an UDFA after going undrafted out of Kansas in 2024.
- Played five seasons for the Jayhawks, where he appeared in 56 games, 18 starts and accrued 82 catches for 1,111 yards and 10 touchdowns.
- Was named a semifinalist for the William V. Campbell Trophy in 2023, an award that recognizes an athlete for combined academic success, football performance and exemplary leadership.
- Spent time as an assistant coach at his high school alma mater Anadale HS before signing with the Defenders.

#92 Malik Fisher

DE – 26 – 6-3- 262

New York, NY – Villanova

- Returning for his third season with the Defenders.
- Had a breakout season in 2024, emerging as one of the league's top defense ends, finishing the season with 30 tackles, six TFL, 6.0 sacks, three PBUs, and a forced fumble.
- Spent part of the 2024 NFL season on the Houston Texans practice squad.

#77 Liam Fornadel

G - 25 - 6-4 - 320

Wyckoff, NJ - James Madison

- Was the UFL's top graded starting offensive lineman last season (79.1 offensive grade).
- After the 2024 UFL season, spent the rest of the year on the New England Patriots practice squad.
- Named to 2023 All-XFL Team.
- Spent the 2023 season with D.C. and re-signed in 2024.
- Part of an offensive line that helped James Madison rank third nationally in both completion percentage and pass efficiency rating.
- Father (Paul) and uncle (Mike) both football played at JMU

#28 Darius Hagans

RB – 30 – 6-0- 207

Chesapeake, VA – Virginia State

- Appeared in seven games (2 starts) for the Defenders in 2024 and rushed for 173 yards and one touchdown.
- In 2023, signed as an undrafted free agent out of Virginia State with the Pittsburgh Steelers.
- Played in all three of the Steelers' preseason games and finished the preseason with 12 carries for 30 yards.
- As a senior at Virginia State, appeared in 10 games racking up a career-high 189 carries for 1,012 yards and six rushing touchdowns.

#57 Anthony Hines III

LB – 26 – 6-3- 226

Plano, TX – Texas A&M

- Enters his second season with the Defenders.
- Racked up 32 tackles and a sack in 2023 and 65 tackles, including five tackles for loss in 2024.
- Spent part of the 2024 NFL season on the practice squad of the New York Jets.
- Signed as an undrafted free agent with the Cowboys in 2021, but spent time on the practice squads of the Washington Commanders and Los Angeles Rams in 2021 and 2022.
- Played three seasons at Texas A&M from 2017-2019 before opting out of the 2020 season.
- In his last season with Aggies, played in 13 games and registered 73 tackles and 10.5 tackles for loss.

#25 Deon Jackson

RB – 25– 5-11- 218

Atlanta, GA – Duke

- Went undrafted in 2023 and signed with the San Francisco 49ers as an UDFA.

- NFL experience includes time with the Jets (2024) Giants (2023), Browns (2023), and the Colts (2021-23)
- He has appeared in 28 games, rushing 95 times for 283 yards and 2 touchdowns and catching 35 passes for 223 yards and one touchdown over his NFL career.
- He played for the Duke Blue Devils from 2017-20 and amassed 2,267 rushing yards and 18 touchdowns.

#91 Dennis Johnson

NT – 26 – 6-2- 292

Columbus, OH – Grand Valley State

- Entering his second season with the Defenders.
- In 2024, appeared in nine games (no starts) and totaled 14 tackles.
- Invited to New York Giants minicamp in 2022.

#7 Isaiah Johnson

FS – 29 – 6-2- 208

Bryan, TX – Houston

- Returning for the third-straight season.
- In 2024, played in six games, posting 27 tackles, a sack, and two PBUs.
- Scored a PFF 80.3 Defensive Grade, allowing just 6.4 yards per reception.
- Selected by the Oakland Raiders with the No. 129 pick in the 2019 NFL draft..

#27 Kelvin Joseph

CB – 29– 5-11-197

Baton Rouge, LA – Kentucky

- A former second round draft pick of the Dallas Cowboys.
- Saw quite a bit of action in his rookie year with 16 tackles and two PBUs.
- He continued to be a rotational piece for Dallas' secondary the next season, with 20 tackles and two pass breakups.

#51 Mike Maietti

C – 27– 6-1- 290

West Orange, NJ – Mizzou

Pronunciation: my-EH-tee

- Returning for his third Defenders season.
- Widely regarded as one of the best centers in the UFL.
- Despite playing in only five games in 2023, bounced back in 2024 and started all 10 games.
- In 2024, posted a strong 70.0 Pass Blocking grade, alongside a 62.3 Run Blocking grade per PFF.

#3 Jaydon Mickens

WR/KR – 31– 5-9- 174

Los Angeles, CA – Washington

- Five year NFL veteran who has played with the Jacksonville Jaguars and Tampa Bay Buccaneers.
- Exploded onto the scene with the Jacksonville Jaguars in 2017 as an UDFA, when he when he recorded a 63 yard punt return touchdown in the fourth quarter to clinch a Week 9 win against the Bengals.
- Earned AFC Special Teams Player of the Week twice during the 2017 NFL season.
- Was a Super Bowl LV champion in Tampa, serving as the main punt returner in the Buccaneers' 31-9 victory over the Kansas City Chiefs.

#5 Michael Ojemudia

CB – 27– 6-1- 200

Farmington Hills, MI – Iowa

Pronunciation: oh-jeh-MOO-dee-uh

- Last played in the NFL in 2022 with the Chicago Bears, appearing in one game.
- Was a third-round pick (77th overall) of the Denver Broncos in 2020, where he spent the first three years of his career, playing in 21 games with 12 starts.
- Also spent time with the Los Angeles Rams and Arizona Cardinals practice squads.
- At the University of Iowa totaled 123 tackles and six interceptions in this college career.

#98 Kyle Phillips

DE – 27– 6-3- 277

Nashville, TN – Fresno State

- Signed last season with Birmingham Stallions.

#50 Derick Roberson

DE – 29– 6-3- 247

San Antonio, TX – Sam Houston State

- In 2024 with the Defenders, recorded 31 tackles, four TFLs, 4.5 sacks, two



forced fumbles, and 16 quarterback hurries.

- Spent the 2019-21 NFL seasons with the Tennessee Titans, where he made 16 appearances and recorded 26 tackles and 4.5 sacks.
- Also spent time on the Houston Texans practice squad in 2022.
- His first two NFL sacks were registered against NFL All-Pro Drew Brees.

#12 Chris Rowland

WR – 27– 5-8- 170

Nolensville, TN – Tennessee State

- In 2024 UFL season, had a breakout season as a kick returner, with 45 returns for 1,226 yards, earning All-UFL honors.
- Was also an integral part of the team's offense with 20 receptions for 262 yards and three touchdowns.
- Finished the regular season with a league-high 1,655 all-purpose yards.
- Began his spring career with the Philadelphia Stars in the legacy USFL, spending two seasons with the team. In 2022, he was a part of a Stars unit that made a Championship run, posting 215 yards and a touchdown.
- At Tennessee State broke the HBCU record for most single-season receptions which was held previously by NFL Hall of Famer Jerry Rice.
- Also earned first-team all-conference as both a receiver and returner as well as the Deacon Jones Trophy for the best HBCU football player.

#83 Braylon Sanders

WR – 26 – 6-0- 196

Hogansville, GA – Ole Miss

- First year with the Defenders.
- Signed as an undrafted free agent by the Miami Dolphins in 2022 and spent two seasons on the practice squad. Joined the New England Patriots practice squad in 2024.
- Totaled 69 receptions for 1,453 receiving yards and 10 touchdowns in his four-year career with Ole Miss.
- Played with Ta'amu while at Ole Miss.

#18 Spencer Sanders

QB – 25– 6-1- 209

Deton, TX – Ole Miss

- In that 2023 season while at Ole Miss, went 19-of-29 for 278 yards and three touchdowns in limited action.
- Was named the 2019 Big 12 Offensive Freshman of the Year after he threw for 2,065 yards, 16 touchdowns and 11 interceptions while also rushing for 625 yards and two touchdowns at Oklahoma State.

#11 Momo Sanogo

LB – 25– 6-1- 231

Plano, TX – Louisville

- Last season, started five of the last six games for the Defenders and totaled 28 tackles.
- At Louisville, was an integral part of the country's 11th ranked defense in points allowed per game at 19.2 and 23rd in yards allowed per game at 330.2.
- Led the Cardinals in tackles with 89 (44 solo), while also tallying 9.5 tackles for loss, 4.5 sacks and a team-best three fumble recoveries.
- Transferred to Louisville after spending five years at Ole Miss.

#90 Niles Scott

DT – 29– 6-1- 326

Elkton, MD – Frostburg State

- Started in seven of 10 games for the Defenders in 2024 totaling 28 tackles and nine quarterback hurries.
- Most recently played in the NFL for the Miami Dolphins in 2022, recording 4 tackles.

#19 Ty Scott

WR – 25– 6-1- 199

Savannah, GA – Missouri State

- Was the Defenders leading receiver in 2024, gaining 418 yards on 25 receptions while scoring three touchdowns.
- Spent time on the Seattle Seahawks practice squad in 2024.
- An undrafted free agent out of Missouri State in 2023, signed with Kansas City Chiefs.
- In two seasons at Missouri State, caught 114 passes for 1,784 yards and 13 touchdowns, earning first-team All-MVFC honors in 2021 and honorable mention recognition in 2022.

#33 Shayne Simon

LB – 24– 6-3- 229

West Orange, NJ – Pittsburgh

- Went undrafted out of the University of Pittsburgh in 2024.
- Played in 12 games for Pittsburgh last season, compiling 48 tackles, 7.5 tackles for loss and 5.0 sacks while playing in 25 total games in two seasons.

#4 Abram Smith

RB – 26– 6-0- 213

Abilene, TX – Baylor

- Missed the 2024 season due to tearing his ACL in training camp.
- Was the first overall pick in the inaugural 2023 XFL Draft.
- In 2023, Smith led the XFL with 791 rushing yards on the year, averaging 5.0 yards per carry over 10 games. His rushing total was 348 yards more than the next closest rusher.
- Set a spring league record by rushing for 218 yards on 23 carries and three touchdowns, ripping off TD runs of 62 and 70 yards in a Week 5, 28-20, win against the St. Louis BattleHawks.
- During his 42-game Baylor career, Smith rushed 269 times for 1,647 yards with 13 TDs, helping lead the Bears to the Big 12 and Sugar Bowl Championships, setting a single-season rushing record with 1,601 yards on 257 carries. He had 12 rushing TDs in 2021 and averaged 114.4 yards per game.

#10 Jordan Ta'amu

QB – 27– 6-3- 221

Pearl City, HI – Ole Miss

- Has experience playing in both legacy XFL with the DC Defenders as well as legacy USFL with the St. Louis BattleHawks and Tampa Bay Bandits.
- In 2023, earned XFL Offensive Player of the Year honors, leading DC to the Championship game. He threw for 1,878 yards, 14 touchdowns, and three interception, while rushing for 301 yards.
- In his senior year in 2018 at Ole Miss, Ta'amu broke single-season school records for yards per attempt (9.37), 300-yard passing games (nine), and 400-yard passing games (three).

#24 Kiondre Thomas

CB – 27– 6-0- 186

Fort Smith, AR – Kansas State

- First season with the Defenders after being traded from the Houston Roughnecks for QB Jalen McClendon.
- Played in six games for the Roughnecks, posting 14 tackles, an interception, and two PBU's.
- Had a 64.6 Defensive Grade via PFF, with a 66.8 Coverage Grade.

#1 Bryce Thompson

CB – 25– 5-11- 182

Columbia, SC – Tennessee

- Traded from San Antonio to DC for DE Jalen Harris on November 15.
- In 2024, started eight of 10 games played and totaled 27 tackles, a sack, and two PBUs as a Brahma.
- Made his spring ball debut in the XFL, with the Seattle Sea Dragons. recording 34 tackles, two interceptions and six PBUs.

#99 Joe Wallace

DT – 26– 5-11- 290

Abilene, TX – Sam Houston State

- Anchor of the defensive line returns for his third Defenders season.
- Played in the first four games before an injury sidelined him for the remainder of the season.
- In 2023, started all 10 regular season games, posting 21 tackles and 2.5 sacks.

#62 Jarrid Williams

T – 27– 6-6- 323

Cedar Hill, TX – Miami (FL)

- He only played in three games, starting in all of them, posting blocking grades via PFF (61.8/77.2).
- Played the 2023 season with the San Antonio Brahmas but was waived.
- Spent time with the Pittsburgh Steelers in 2023.

#85 Seth Williams

WR – 25– 6-2- 211

Cottdonale, AL – Auburn

- Signed by the Defenders on May 13.
- Selected in the sixth round of the 2021 NFL Draft by the Denver Broncos and appeared in two games.
- Totaled 132 receptions, 2,124 receiving yards and 17 touchdowns at Auburn.

