



# DC DEFENDERS

## GAME NOTES



### GAME ONE



**0-0 (0-0)**

**DC DEFENDERS**  
vs.  
**ST. LOUIS BATTLEHAWKS**  
**ESPN**

**SATURDAY • MARCH 28 • 12 PM EST**  
**THE DOME AT AMERICA'S CENTER**  
**ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI**



**0-0 (0-0)**

**HEAD COACH: SHANNON HARRIS**  
UFL Record: 0-0 (.000)

**HEAD COACH: RICKY PROEHL**  
UFL Record: 0-0 (.000)

### THE SEASON'S SLATE

The DC Defenders will play 10 regular season games during the 2026 UFL season. The team will play against St Louis (2x), Columbus, Houston, Birmingham, Dallas, Louisville (2x) and Orlando (2x). Below are a few scheduling nuggets:

- DC will take part in home openers during Week 1 (at St. Louis) and Week 2 (at Columbus).
- Six of the team's 10 games will be played in the eastern time zone.
- DC's last four regular season games will be back-to-back matchups with Louisville and Orlando.
- Despite training in Texas, the team does not have a game in the Lone Star State this season.

### POST-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE INFORMATION

The DC Defenders Post-Game Press Conference will begin immediately following the conclusion of the game. Media members can access the press conference using the link below and are encouraged to join early to ensure they don't miss any part of it.

To ask a question, please use the "Raise Hand" feature.

**Join Zoom Meeting:**

<https://theufl.zoom.us/j/82107971417?pwd=9kwQil31AvQWVs5bgixdh0Rs6pa8fzm.1>

**Meeting ID: 821 0797 1417**

**Passcode: 149131**

### DEFENDERS AT HOME

Every Defenders home game this season will include a theme.

*April 11 vs. Houston - Championship Celebration feat. Wale Halftime Concert*

- Celebrating the 2025 Defenders UFL Championship with free Red Out T-shirt for the first 5,000 fans plus a free halftime concert by Washington, D.C. native and GRAMMY-nominated recording artist Wale.



*April 6 vs. St. Louis- United by Giving: DC Tackles Hunger*

- Football with purpose. Free clear bag for first 5,000 fans!

*May 2 vs. Dallas - Defenders School Spirit Showcase*

- Rep Your School. Defend the District. Free Defenders Championship Flag for first 5,000 fans!



*May 9 vs. Louisville - Hats Off To Heroes*

- Honoring service and sacrifice. Free Defenders Hat for first 5,000 fans!

*May 31 vs. Orlando - Defenders Kids Day*











- Suit up D.C. Kids - It's your day. Free Team Branded T-Shirt for first 5,000 fans!

### DC DEFENDERS COMMUNICATIONS

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### 2026 SCHEDULE

1		<b>ST. LOUIS BATTLEHAWKS</b> AT THE DOME AT AMERICA'S CENTER SATURDAY, MARCH 28 12:00 PM ET	<b>ESPN</b>
2		<b>COLUMBUS AVIATORS</b> AT HISTORIC CREW STADIUM SATURDAY, APRIL 4 8:00 PM ET	<b>FOX</b>
3		<b>HOUSTON GAMBLERS</b> AUDI FIELD SATURDAY, APRIL 11 12:00 PM ET	<b>ESPN</b>
4		<b>ST. LOUIS BATTLEHAWKS</b> AUDI FIELD SATURDAY, APRIL 18 12:30 PM ET	<b>abc</b>
5		<b>BIRMINGHAM STALLIONS</b> AT PROTECTIVE STADIUM FRIDAY, APRIL 24 8:00 PM ET	<b>FOX</b>
6		<b>DALLAS RENEGADES</b> AUDI FIELD SATURDAY, MAY 2 12:00 PM ET	<b>abc</b>
7		<b>LOUISVILLE KINGS</b> AUDI FIELD SATURDAY, MAY 9 1:30 PM ET	<b>FOX</b>
8		<b>LOUISVILLE KINGS</b> AT LYNN FAMILY STADIUM SATURDAY, MAY 16 12:00 PM ET	<b>abc</b>
9		<b>ORLANDO STORM</b> AT INTER&CO STADIUM FRIDAY, MAY 22 8:00 PM ET	<b>FOX</b>
10		<b>ORLANDO STORM</b> AUDI FIELD SUNDAY, MAY 31 12:00 PM ET	<b>abc</b>



### AROUND THE LEAGUE

FRIDAY, MARCH 27  
Birmingham Stallions at Louisville Kings - 8 PM ET (FOX)

SATURDAY, MARCH 28  
**DC Defenders at St. Louis Battlehawks - 12:00 PM ET (ESPN)**  
Houston Gamblers at Dallas Renegades - 4 PM ET (FOX)  
SUNDAY, MARCH 29  
Columbus Aviators at Orlando Storm - 7 PM ET (ESPN)



## HOW THE HOUSES WERE BUILT

### ABOUT AUDI FIELD



Audi Field is a state-of-the-art venue home to the DC Defenders, MLS' D.C. United and NWSL's Washington Spirit. Located in Washington, D.C.'s Buzzard Point the stadium officially opened its doors on July 14th, 2018.

We are excited to share our home and provide an accessible, affordable and family friendly stadium for all. We aim to serve the community with year-round cultural events and world-class experiences.

Our doors are open year-round, and provide private space for intimate gatherings or large social events. With 31 premium suites, 2 indoor premium spaces, 3 patios and a rooftop we are certain we can accommodate for any crowd or any type of event.

If you call yourself a sports fan or are simply curious about the opportunity to provide your friends, family, staff or clients this once in a lifetime moment we welcome you to come down and tour the stadium! Enjoy our hospitality and see how we are committed to making your event a success. Looking forward to seeing you soon!



### ABOUT THE UFL



The United Football League (UFL) is the premier professional spring football league, powered by the visionary leadership and investment of Mike Repole and Impact Capital, RedBird Capital Partners, FOX, Dany Garcia, Dwayne Johnson, and ESPN. Built on innovation, accessibility, and competitive excellence, the UFL delivers the most engaging professional football experience in the world—for both players and fans. The league features eight teams: the Birmingham Stallions, Columbus Aviators, Dallas Renegades, DC Defenders, Houston Gamblers, Louisville Kings, Orlando Storm, and St. Louis Battlehawks.

#### UFL RULES - HIGHLIGHTS

The United Football League (UFL) has adopted a number of innovative rules from both previous leagues to deliver an exciting, fast-paced game with plenty of action.

#### Four-Point Field Goal

Field goals of 60 yards or longer are worth four points instead of three.

#### Points After Touchdown (PAT) Options

- 1 point: 33-yard field goal
- 2 points: Run/pass from the 2-yard line
- 3 points: Run/pass from the 8-yard line

#### One Foot In Bounds

Only one foot in bounds is required for a legal catch (NCAA-style rule).

#### Half-Distance Penalties

Red Zone penalties will be enforced as half the distance to the goal, consistent with NFL standards.

#### Elimination of the Tush Push

The "Tush Push" quarterback sneak — where teammates push the QB forward immediately after the snap — is not allowed.

#### No Punting Inside the 50

- Teams cannot punt once the ball is inside the opponent's 49-yard line or closer.
- If the ball is made ready inside the 50, a later penalty cannot restore punting eligibility.
- Teams may punt at exactly the 50-yard line.
- This restriction does not apply after the two-minute warning of either half.

#### Overtime Format

- Teams alternate plays from the 5-yard line.
- Each team gets three attempts.
- If still tied, alternating attempts continue until a winner is decided.
- A coin toss determines first choice (offense or defense).

#### Coin Toss Procedure

- Used at the start of the game and before overtime.
- The visiting team calls heads or tails.
- The winner chooses possession or direction.

#### New Kickoff Rules

- **Kickoff Line:** The ball will be kicked off from the 30-yard line.
- **Kickoff Team:** The 10 remaining players on the kickoff team will line up at the receiving team's 45-yard line (Previously, the kickoff team lined up at the 40-yard line).
- **Receiving Team Zone:** The receiving team's set up zone will stretch from its 40-yard line to the 35-yard line and must have at least nine players in that zone. (Previously, it was the 35-yard line to the 30-yard line.)
- **Landing 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.
- **Out of Bounds:** If the ball travels out of bounds, it will be spotted at the 40-yard line.
- **Touchback Spots:** There will be two touchback spots – the 40-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. (Previously, it was the 35-yard line for balls kicked into the end zone).



## ON AND OFF THE FIELD SUCCESS

### UFL-TO-NFL SUCCESS STORIES

Overall, 65 players from the past two United Football League seasons, along with alumni from the modern era of spring football (2020–present), earned spots on NFL 53-man rosters or were added to practice squads during the 2025 NFL season. The continued presence of spring football talent at the next level highlights the UFL’s growing role as a legitimate developmental pathway to the NFL.

Among those success stories, UFL kickers have been particularly impactful, translating their spring league opportunities into standout performances on NFL special teams units. Several have quickly established themselves as reliable options at the professional level, with a few even emerging as breakout contributors for their teams. Those standout kickers are highlighted below:

#### BRANDON AUBREY



Aubrey connected on 36-of-42 field goal attempts this past season and was 11-of-17 from 50+ yards, which was tied for the most in the league.

Aubrey made NFL history in Week Seven, connecting on a 61-yard field goal to become the first player with five made field goals of 60-plus-yards. In Week Two, he became the first kicker in NFL history to convert a game-tying field goal with no time remaining and a game-winning field goal with no time remaining in overtime in the same game.

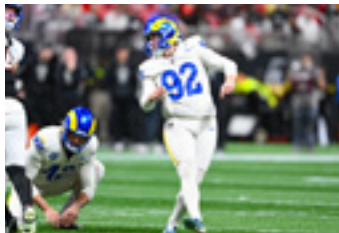
#### JAKE BATES



Bates connected on 27-of-34 field goal attempts this past season and converted 54-of-56 extra point attempts, totaling 135 points in 17 games. His 59-yard field goal marked his longest of the season, and he finished the year.

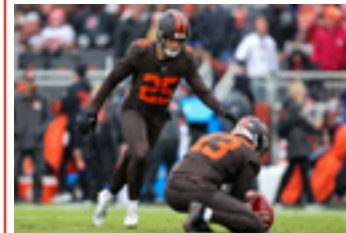
Bates also showed his range throughout the season, converting 4-of-9 attempts from 50+ yards while remaining perfect on all kicks under 40 yards.

#### HARRISON MEVIS



Mevis was promoted from the Rams’ practice squad for Weeks 10 and 11 before earning a spot on the active roster in Week 12. He made an immediate impact, hitting field goals from 52 and 40 yards. Through nine NFL games, he has successfully converted all 39 of his extra-point attempts and has gone 12-for-13 on field goals.

#### ANDRE SZMYT



Szmyt converted on 24-of-27 field goal attempts (5-of-6 from 50-plus yards) this season. He earned AFC Special Teams Player of the Week honors in Week Three after hitting a 55-yard walk-off field goal, then closed the season by converting a game-winning 49-yard kick as time expired in the Browns win last week.

Szmyt still holds the Battlehawks record with a 61-yard field goal, which he booted in Week Seven against the Birmingham Stallions in 2024.

### DEFENDERS IN THE COMMUNITY



## 2025 ALL-UFL RETURNERS

The Defenders return three All-UFL players from last season.

### Derick Roberson – DE

Tied for third in the league with 5.5 sacks last season and totaled 27 tackles in nine games.

### Joe Wallace – DT

Finished with 38 total tackles (10 for loss) and 4.5 sacks which ranked sixth in the league over 10 games last season.

### Deandre Baker – CB

A two-time All-UFL selection, recorded a career-high two interceptions in 10 games played, tied for second-most in the UFL. Totaled 10 pass breakups which ranked third in the league.

## 2025 STAT COMPARISON

	Defenders	Battlehawks
Record .....	6-4	8-2
Scoring Avg. ....	22.5	23.1
Opp. Scoring Avg. ....	22.4	16.3
Total Off. ....	3510	2898
Rushing Off. Yd/Gm. ....	98.9	144.2
Passing Off. ....	2521	1456
Tackles.....	548	585
Passes Defended .....	42	55
Sacks.....	22.0	23.0
Kickoff Return Avg. ....	21.6	23.5
Punt Return Avg. ....	11.0	11.6
Turnover Margin .....	6	3

## SERIES HISTORY

St. Louis currently owns a 3-2 series lead over DC in the UFL era.

Date	Loc.	DC W/L	Score	Date	Loc.	DC W/L	Score
4/28/24	DC	L	45-12	5/30/25	DC	L	13-8
5/19/24	STL	L	26-21	6/8/25	STL	W	36-18
4/13/25	STL	W	27-15				

## DMV TIES

The DC Defenders have a few players who hail from the DMV area or have played college football nearby: Safety Sam Kidd (Reston, Va), guard Johari Branch (Maryland football) and tackle Jaelyn Duncan (Maryland football).

## FIRST TIME, LAST TIME

The first time these two teams faced off in the UFL era on April 28, 2024, the Defenders suffered a 45-12 loss at home and dropped their record to 2-3.

The last time these two teams faced off was in the XFL Conference Championship Game on June 8, 2025. Running back Deon Jackson had a career-high 110 rushing yards and two touchdowns on 21 carries. DC's defense held St. Louis in check with five sacks throughout the night. Quarterback Jordan Ta'amu threw for 204 yards and a touchdown in the 36-18 win.

## ST. LOUIS/MISSOURI TIES

- Center Mike Maetti played collegiately at Missouri.
- Tight End Briley Moore is from Blue Springs, Missouri.
- Wide Receiver Ty Scott played collegiately at Missouri State.
- Defensive Coordinator Blake Williams served as the Defensive Coordinator for the St. Louis Rams in 2012.



## DEFENDERS QUICK HITS



## MVP CHANTS

Quarterback Jordan Ta'amu had an MVP-caliber season and was at the top in multiple categories. Below is a breakdown of where Ta'amu ranked amongst UFL passers last season:

Jordan Ta'amu 2025 Stats - UFL Rank		
Stats	Total	Rank
Passing Touchdowns.....	17	1st
Passing Yards Per Game .....	239.2	1st
Passing Yards.....	2,153	2nd
Pass Completions.....	155	2nd
QBR.....	92.9	4th

## BIG TIME RUSH

Deon Jackson finished in the UFL's top three in rushing yards last season. Below is a breakdown of where Jackson ranked amongst UFL running backs last season.

Individual Rushing Yards - UFL 2025				
Player / Team.....	Att.	Yds.	Avg.	TDs
Jashaun Corbin / SA.....	97	514	5.3	4
Jacob Saylor / STL.....	113	499	4.4	5
<b>Deon Jackson / DC .....</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>4</b>
Dae Dae Hunter / DAL.....	113	406	3.5	2
Nate McCrary / Mich.....	97	380	3.9	2

## BOOM BOOM POWELL

Wide receiver Cornell Powell added a major impact to DC's receiving corps in his first season with the squad last year. His seven receiving touchdowns led the league and he ranked ninth with 418 receiving yards in nine games played this season. Here's where he ranked among UFL wide receivers last season.

Receiving Touchdowns - UFL 2025	
Player / Team.....	TDs
<b>Cornell Powell/ DC.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Deon Cain/ BHM.....	6
Keke Chism / HOU .....	4
Tyler Vaughns/ DAL .....	4
Hakeem Butler/ STL .....	4
Malik Turner / Mich .....	4
Justin Hall/ HOU .....	3

## SACK LUNCH BUNCH

The Defenders finished with three players in the UFL's top five for sacks in 2025. Here's where they ranked.

Sacks - UFL 2025	
Player/Team	No.
Pita Taumoepenu/STL.....	7.5
Willie Taylor III/DAL .....	7.0
<b>Derick Roberson/DC .....</b>	<b>5.5</b>
<b>Andre Mintze/DC .....</b>	<b>5.5</b>
<b>Joe Wallace/DC .....</b>	<b>4.5</b>

## 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.

## SEEING RED

DC's defensive unit led the UFL in tackles for loss (59) and ranked tied in second in forced fumbles (9) and takeaways (16). The Defenders were third in sacks (22) and interceptions (7). Here's where DC ranked in takeaways among the league in 2025

Takeaways - UFL 2025	
Team	No..
Houston.....	17
St. Louis .....	17
<b>DC.....</b>	<b>16</b>
Dallas .....	16

## DC DEFENDERS NUMERICAL ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	AGE	LAST COLLEGE	HOMETOWN
0	Gareon Conley	CB	6-0	190	30	Ohio State	Massillon, OH
1	Bryce Thompson	CB	5-10	187	26	Tennessee	Irmo, SC
2	Deandre Baker	CB	5-11	181	28	Georgia	Miami, FL
3	Braylon Sanders	WR	6-0	188	27	Ole Miss	Hogansville, GA
4	Abram Smith	RB	5-11	230	27	Baylor	Abilene, TX
5	Durrell Johnson	LB	6-3	246	27	Liberty	Baltimore, MD
6	Ferrod Gardner	LB	6-0	225	28	Louisiana	Dayton, OH
7	Joe Wallace	DT	5-10	300	27	Sam Houston	Dallas, TX
8	Derek Parish	DE	6-0	241	27	Houston	Pearland, TX
9	Deontay Anderson	S	6-1	207	28	Houston	Houston, TX
10	Jordan Ta'amu	QB	6-2	225	28	Ole Miss	Pearl City, HI
11	Seth Williams	WR	6-3	211	25	Auburn	Cottondale, AL
12	Mike DiLiello	QB	6-0	200	25	Austin Peay	Pembroke Pines, FL
13	Erik Ezukanma	WR	6-2	206	26	Texas Tech	Fort Worth, TX
14	Cornell Powell	WR	6-0	217	28	Clemson	Greenville, NC
15	Keke Coutee	WR	5-9	179	29	Texas Tech	Lufkin, TX
16	Matt McCrane	K	5-10	176	31	Kansas State	Brownwood, TX
17	Kai Gray	CB	6-1	215	28	Lincoln (PA)	Newark, NJ
18	Spencer Sanders	QB	6-0	205	26	Oklahoma State	Denton, TX
19	Ty Scott	WR	6-1	198	26	Missouri State	Estill, SC
20	Azizi Hearn	CB	6-0	204	26	UCLA	Oceanside, CA
21	Gabriel Taylor	CB	5-10	193	24	Rice	Miami, FL
22	Willie Drew Jr.	CB	6-0	193	25	Virginia State	Smithfield, VA
23	Curtis Jacobs	LB	6-1	243	24	Penn State	Glen Burnie, MD
24	Xazavian Valladay	RB	5-11	204	27	Arizona State	Chicago, IL
25	Deon Jackson	RB	5-11	218	27	Duke	Atlanta, GA
26	Sam Kidd	S	6-1	218	26	James Madison	Reston, VA
28	Ekow Boye-Doe	CB	5-11	177	26	Kansas State	Accra, Ghana
40	Brandon Smith	LB	6-3	244	24	Penn State	Henrico, VA
44	Micah Baskerville	LB	6-0	244	26	LSU	Shreveport, LA
45	Brian Abraham	LB	6-4	230	25	Albany	Brockton, MA
47	Paxton Brooks	P	6-5	203	26	Tennessee	Lexington, SC
48	Macklin Ayers	LB	6-1	226	24	UMass	Elizabethville, PA
50	Derick Roberson	DE	6-2	257	30	Sam Houston	San Antonio, TX
51	Michael Maietti	C	6-1	297	28	Missouri	West Orange, NJ
56	Johari Branch	G	6-2	326	27	Maryland	Chicago, IL
59	Adrian Ealy	T	6-6	338	26	Oklahoma	Gonzales, LA
68	Steven Losoya	G	6-3	300	24	Vanderbilt	Nashville, TN
70	Michael Tarquin	T	6-5	296	24	Oklahoma	Ocala, FL
71	Jaelyn Duncan	T	6-6	322	25	Maryland	New Carrollton, MD
75	Trey Wedig	T	6-6	313	24	Indiana	Oconomowoc, WI
79	Tykeem Doss	G	6-5	369	26	Southern Miss	Aliceville, AL
80	Trae Barry	TE	6-6	252	27	Boston College	Summerdale, AL
84	Mason Fairchild	TE	6-5	256	24	Kansas	Andale, KS
87	Ben Bresnahan	TE	6-3	248	25	Vanderbilt	Cumming, GA
88	Briley Moore	TE	6-4	258	28	Kansas State	Blue Springs, MO
90	Carlos "Boogie" Basham	DE	6-3	274	28	Wake Forest	Roanoke, VA
91	Dennis Johnson	DT	6-1	306	27	Grand Valley State	Columbus, OH
95	Devonnsha Maxwell	DT	6-1	284	26	Chattanooga	Valdosta, GA
98	Casey Rogers	DT	6-4	294	27	Oregon	Syracuse, NY

## ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.
45	Abraham, Brian	LB
9	Anderson, Deontay	S
48	Ayers, Macklin	LB
2	Baker, Deandre	CB
80	Barry, Trae	TE
90	Basham, Boogie	DE
44	Baskerville, Micah	LB
28	Boye-Doe, Ekow	CB
56	Branch, Johari	G
87	Bresnahan, Ben	TE
47	Brooks, Paxton	P
0	Conley, Gareon	CB
15	Coutee, Keke	WR
12	DiLiello, Mike	QB
79	Doss, Tykeem	G
22	Drew Jr., Willie	CB
71	Duncan, Jaelyn	T
59	Ealy, Adrian	T
13	Ezukanma, Erik	WR
84	Fairchild, Mason	TE
6	Gardner, Ferrod	LB
17	Gray, Kai	CB
20	Hearn, Azizi	CB
25	Jackson, Deon	RB
23	Jacobs, Curtis	LB
5	Johnson, Durrell	LB
91	Johnson, Dennis	DT
26	Kidd, Sam	S
68	Losoya, Steven	G
51	Maetti, Michael	C
95	Maxwell, Devonnsha	DT
16	McCrane, Matt	K
88	Moore, Briley	TE
8	Parish, Derek	DE
14	Powell, Cornell	WR
50	Roberson, Derick	DE
98	Rogers, Casey	DT
3	Sanders, Braylon	WR
18	Sanders, Spencer	QB
19	Scott, Ty	WR
4	Smith, Abram	RB
40	Smith, Brandon	LB
10	Ta'amu, Jordan	QB
70	Tarquin, Michael	T
21	Taylor, Gabriel	CB
1	Thompson, Bryce	CB
24	Valladay, Xazavian	RB
7	Wallace, Joe	DT
75	Wedig, Trey	T
11	Williams, Seth	WR

## PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Devonnsha Maxwell ..... Deh-von-shay  
Durrell Johnson ..... Duh-rell  
Ekow Boye-Doe ..... Echo Boy-Dough  
Erik Ezukanma ..... Eh-zoo-con-muh  
Ferrod Gardner ..... Fuh-rod  
Gareon Conley ..... Gary-on

Jordan Ta'amu ..... Tah-moo  
Keke Coutee ..... Q-tee  
Mike DiLiello ..... Di-Lell-Oh  
Xazavian Valladay ..... X-zay-vee-en



## WEEK 1 UNOFFICIAL DEPTH CHART

### DEFENDERS OFFENSE

<b>QB</b>	10	Jordan Ta'amu	12	Mike DiLiello	18	Spencer Sanders
<b>LT</b>	71	Jaelyn Duncan	75	Trey Wedig		
<b>LG</b>	79	Tykeem Doss	68	Steven Losoya III		
<b>C</b>	51	Michael Maetti	68	Steven Losoya III		
<b>RG</b>	56	Johari Branch	68	Steven Losoya III		
<b>RT</b>	70	Michael Tarquin	59	Adrian Ealy		
<b>RB</b>	25	Deon Jackson	4	Abram Smith	24	Xazavian Valladay
<b>TE</b>	84	Mason Fairchild	88	Briley Moore	87	Ben Bresnahan
<b>WR</b>	19	Ty Scott	3	Braylon Sanders		
<b>WR</b>	11	Seth Williams	14	Cornell Powell		
<b>WR</b>	15	Keke Coutee	13	Erik Ezukanma		

### DEFENDERS DEFENSE

<b>DE</b>	50	Derick Roberson	45	Brian Abraham	5	Durrell Johnson
<b>DT</b>	7	Joe Wallace	91	Dennis Johnson		
<b>DT</b>	95	Devonnsha Maxwell	98	Casey Rogers		
<b>DE</b>	90	Boogie Basham	8	Derek Parish		
<b>LB</b>	40	Brandon Smith	44	Micah Baskerville	48	Macklin Ayers
<b>LB</b>	23	Curtis Jacobs	6	Ferrod Gardner		
<b>CB</b>	0	Gareon Conley	28	Ekow Boye-Doe		
<b>NIC</b>	1	Bryce Thompson	21	Gabriel Taylor		
<b>CB</b>	20	Azizi Hearn	2	Deandre Baker	22	Willie Drew Jr.
<b>S</b>	26	Sam Kidd	17	Kai Gray		
<b>S</b>	9	Deontay Anderson				

### DEFENDERS SPECIAL TEAMS

<b>P</b>	47	Paxton Brooks				
<b>PK</b>	16	Matt McCrane				
<b>H</b>	47	Paxton Brooks				
<b>LS</b>	80	Trae Barry				
<b>KR</b>	24	Xazavian Valladay	4	Abram Smith		
<b>PR</b>	15	Keke Coutee				



## ★ MEET THE STAFF ★

**SHANNON HARRIS**

Head Coach

Tennessee State  
Defenders: 4th year

Shannon Harris, the recipient of the 2025 UFL Buddy Teevens Coach of the Year Award, was promoted to head coach last July after serving as the interim head coach for the 2025 season. In Harris' first season guiding DC, the Defenders improved from a 4-6 record in 2024 to 6-4 in 2025 before going on to a 36-18 victory over the St. Louis Battlehawks in the 2025 XFL Conference Championship Game and then to a 58-34 win over the Michigan Panthers in the 2025 UFL Championship.

In his second season as the quarterbacks coach in 2024, 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 preseason 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.

**FRED KAISS**

Offensive Coordinator

La Salle  
Defenders: 4th year

The 2025 UFL Assistant Coach of the Year, Kaiss, who helped lead the DC Defenders to the 2025 UFL Championship, returns as the team's offensive coordinator, a role that he has held since 2023.

During his coaching career, he has served on the offensive side of the ball in various coaching positions with Alcorn State University (2015-17), Alabama State University (2011-14), Tennessee State University (206-09), Hampton University (2001-05), Alabama A&M University (2000), Tennessee State University (1997-99), and Southern University (1993-95).

**BLAKE WILLIAMS**

Defensive Coordinator

Princeton  
Defenders: 2nd Year

A graduate of Princeton University where he was four-year letterman at defensive back, Williams returns as defensive coordinator for the DC Defenders after helping to lead the team to the 2025 UFL Championship. Prior to being named defensive coordinator, Williams was the team's interim defensive coordinator.

The son of former NFL Head Coach Gregg Williams, he was a defensive assistant for the NFL's New York Jets (2019-20) and a defensive coach for Cleveland Browns (2017-18). In 2012, he served as the defensive coordinator for the St. Louis Rams (2012). Williams was also on the defensive staffs for the

New Orleans Saints (2009-11), Jacksonville Jaguars (2008) and Washington Redskins (2006-07). With the Saints in 2009, he contributed to the team's Super Bowl XLIV championship.

**BRIAN BRASWELL**

Offensive Line/Tight Ends

Hampton  
Defenders: 2nd Year

Braswell is an experienced Offensive Line Coach currently leading the front line for the DC Defenders in the UFL.

With a coaching career spanning over 15 years, he has established a reputation for developing elite talent across the NFL, XFL, and collegiate levels, most notably during a successful four-year stint at the University of Maryland.

His professional resume includes five seasons in the NFL with the Cincinnati Bengals and Cleveland Browns, as well as specialized work with the St. Louis Battlehawks.

A former standout lineman at Hampton University, Braswell is widely recognized for his technical expertise in pass protection and his ability to mentor prospects into NFL-caliber starters.

**DAVID JOHNSON**

Quarterbacks

Edward Waters  
Defenders: 4th Year

Returning for his fourth season with the Defenders, Johnson last year assisted Coach Harris with the quarterback position, transforming talent on the squad into champions.

A former quarterback at Edward Waters University, he began his coaching career at South Oak Cliff High School, helping guide the team to two state titles and mentoring an MVP quarterback.

Having also served as a video assistant for the Defenders, Johnson combines deep knowledge and insight to help drive an explosive DC offense.



## ★ MEET THE STAFF, CONT. ★

**ANDRE SIMMONS**

Wide Receivers

Colorado  
Defenders: 2nd year

Andre Simmons is the wide receivers coach for the DC Defenders, who recently secured the 2025 UFL Championship.

before joining the professional ranks with the Defenders in 2025.

A standout athlete from Blackville-Hilda High School, Simmons was a two-time JUCO All-American at Independence Community College before continuing his collegiate career at the University of Colorado and Southwestern Oklahoma State.

After a professional playing stint, he transitioned to coaching, serving as a pass game coordinator for his high school alma mater and as a wide receivers coach at Independence CC

**VERNON DEAN**

Defensive Backs

San Diego State  
Defenders: 5th year

Dean is the defensive backs coach for the DC Defenders, bringing a championship pedigree to the UFL after a decorated seven-season NFL career as a cornerback.

secondaries.

A two-time Super Bowl champion with the Washington Redskins (XVII, XXII), Dean transitioned into coaching with a resume that includes stints with the Kansas City Chiefs and several collegiate programs.

Since joining the Defenders in 2022, he has been a cornerstone of the defensive staff, leveraging his extensive professional experience to develop one of the league's most formidable

**JEROD KRUSE**

Special Teams/Linebackers

Emporia State  
Defenders: 1st Year

Kruse is an accomplished football coach who served as the Special Teams Coordinator and Secondary Coach at Tennessee State University.

In addition to his on-field leadership, he has influenced the sport digitally as a scheme consultant for the EA Sports Madden and College Football franchises.

With over two decades of experience spanning the NFL, NCAA, and NAIA levels, Kruse's career highlights include a tenure as the Head Coach at William Jewell College—where he was named the 2014 GLVC Coach of the Year—and coaching roles with the Kansas City Chiefs and Cleveland Browns.



## ★ DC DEFENDERS 2026 PLAYER BIOS ★

## GAREON CONLEY

0 • Cornerback

6-0 • 190 • 6/29/1995  
 College: Ohio State  
 Defenders: 2nd Year



## 2024

- Totaled 25 tackles, a tackle for loss and two interceptions in seven games with DC in 2024.
- Signed with Defenders as a free agent on February 2, 2026.
- **Prior to the Defenders**
- Was drafted in the first round of the 2017 NFL Draft by the Oakland Raiders.
- Totaled 94 tackles and four interceptions in 31 career games between the Raiders and Houston Texans from 2017-2019.
- Played collegiately at Ohio State from 2014-16 and was a member of the 2014 National Championship team.

## BRYCE THOMPSON

1 • Cornerback

5-9 • 187 • 9/20/1999  
 College: Tennessee  
 Defenders: 2nd Year



## 2025

- Tallied 30 total tackles (four for loss), one sack and three pass breakups in nine games played in 2025 with DC.
- Recorded a season-high eight tackles against San Antonio in week four.
- **Prior to the Defenders**
- Traded from San Antonio to DC for DE Jalen Harris on November 15, 2024.
- 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 in 2023, recording 34 tackles, two interceptions and six PBUs.
- Played in a combined eight games with the New Orleans Saints between the 2021-2022 seasons.
- Played collegiately at Tennessee from 2018-2020 and racked up 102 total tackles (eight for loss), two sacks and eight interceptions in 32 games.

## DEANDRE BAKER

2 • Cornerback

5-11 • 181 • 9/4/1997  
 College: Georgia  
 Defenders: 2nd Year



## 2025

- Played in 10 games and recorded a career-high two interceptions, tied for second-most in the UFL. Totaled 10 pass breakups which ranked third in the league.
- The Georgia Bulldog's late interception against Arlington on week eight secured a 33-30 win to clinch a playoff berth for the Defenders.
- A 2024 and 2025 All-UFL Team selection.
- **2024**
- Originally signed by the Defenders in 2024.
- Appeared in nine games in 2024, allowing a 70.5 QB rating when targeted (sixth-best in UFL).
- Earned an NFL workout with the Dallas Cowboys after the season.
- **Prior to the Defenders**
- Former first-round pick in the 2019 NFL Draft by the New York Giants.
- 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 in 26 total games.

## BRAYLON SANDERS

3 • Wide Receiver

6-0 • 188 • 1/21/1999  
 College: Ole Miss  
 Defenders: 2nd Year



- Was acquired via trade from Houston for T Gottlieb Ayedze on March 13, 2026
- **2025**
- Was signed by DC on March 5, 2025.
- Finished 11th in receiving yards (332) last season on 13 receptions and scored three touchdowns in seven games played for the Defenders.
- Recorded a season-high 87 receiving yards in week four's contest against San Antonio.
- **Prior to the Defenders**
- Joined the New England Patriots practice squad in 2024.
- Signed as an undrafted free agent by the Miami Dolphins in 2022 and spent two seasons on the practice squad.
- Totaled 69 receptions for 1,453 receiving yards and 10 touchdowns in his four-year career with Ole Miss.
- Played with Ta'amu while with the Rebels.

## ABRAM SMITH

4 • Running Back

5-11 • 230 • 9/14/1998  
 College: Baylor  
 Defenders: 4th year



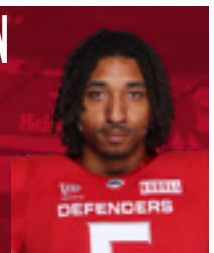
## 2025

- In 2025, totaled 326 rushing yards on 101 carries in 10 games played.
- Registered a season-high 64 rushing yards with a touchdown in the XFL Conference Championship game at St. Louis..
- **2024**
- Missed the 2024 season due to tearing his ACL in training camp.
- **2023**
- 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.
- **Prior to the Defenders**
- 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.

## DURRELL JOHNSON

5 • Linebacker

6-3 • 246 • 6/26/1998  
 College: Liberty  
 Defenders: 1st year



- Selected by the Defenders on day one of the 2026 UFL Draft.
- **2025**
- Spent the 2025 season with the Dallas Renegades totaled five tackles and a sack in three games played.
- **Prior to the Defenders**
- Signed with the Dallas Cowboys as a 2024 future, spent training camp with the team then was placed on Reserve/Injured at the end of training camp before being released by the Cowboys in Oct.
- Signed with Dallas as an undrafted free agent after the 2023 NFL draft, went to training camp with the team, released at the roster cutdown date then signed to the Cowboys practice squad for the season.
- Played 32 games over three years at Liberty, totaling 120 tackles, 17.5 sacks, 44 tackles for loss, two interceptions, six pass breakups and three fumble recoveries. Was a two-time all-conference honoree and JUCO All-American at ASA College in Brooklyn, N.Y., prior to transferring to Liberty.

## FERROD GARDNER

6 • Linebacker

6-0 • 225 • 3/26/1997  
 College: Louisiana  
 Defenders: 4th Year



## 2025

- Appeared in three games in 2025 and totaled 10 tackles.
- **2024**
- Appeared in all 10 games, tallying 24 tackles.
- **2023**
- Totaled 10 tackles in seven games.
- Spent time with the Washington Commanders practice squad in 2022 and 2023.
- **Prior to the Defenders**
- Played collegiately at Louisiana and totaled 238 tackles, 14 tackles for loss and 6.5 sacks in 47 games from 2018-2021.



## ★ DC DEFENDERS 2026 PLAYER BIOS, CONT. ★

## JOE WALLACE

7• Defensive Tackle

5-10 • 300 • 7/9/1998  
College: Sam Houston  
Defenders: 4th Year

2025

- Named to the 2025 All-UFL team after he finished with 38 total tackles (10 for loss) and 4.5 sacks which ranked sixth in the league over 10 games last season.
- After 2025 UFL season, signed with CFL's Toronto Argonauts in August and recorded three tackles and one sack in three games played.

2024

- Played in the first four games before an injury sidelined him for the remainder of the season.

2023

- Started all 10 regular season games, posting 21 tackles and 2.5 sacks.

Prior to the Defenders

- Played his first three years of college football at Texas Tech before transferring to Sam Houston State for his final three years.
- In his last year at SHS, he earned All-WAC first team with 25 total tackles (five for loss) and three sacks in 12 games played.

## DEREK PARISH

8• Defensive End

6-0 • 241 • 1/4/1999  
College: Houston  
Defenders: 1st Year

Signed as a free agent by the Defenders on February 2.

Prior to the Defenders

- Played for the CFL's Toronto Argonauts for the past two seasons.
- Over those two seasons, Parish combined for 53 tackles and 11 sacks in 34 games
- Also was a member of Toronto's Grey Cup team in 2024.
- Drafted by the Jacksonville Jaguars in the seventh round of the 2023 NFL Draft and spent time on the practice squad before being released in October.
- Played with the University of Houston for five seasons and recorded 158 total tackles, 33.5 for loss, 17 sacks and a pair of forced fumbles in 51 games
- Was described as a "weight room monster" in his NFL Draft profile.

## DEONTAY ANDERSON

9• Safety

6-1 • 207 • 11/11/1997  
College: Houston  
Defenders: 3rd Year

2025

- Tallied 40 tackles in nine games last season with three pass breakups and a forced fumble.
- Recorded season-high seven tackles twice last season (week eight at Michigan, week six vs. Dallas).

2024

- 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.

Prior to the Defenders

- 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.
- Totaled 209 tackles and 10.5 tackles for loss in 44 games with the University of Houston.

## JORDAN TA'AMU

10• Quarterback

6-2 • 225 • 12/10/1997  
College: Ole Miss  
Defenders: 4th year

2025

- Tossed a league-best 17 touchdowns and set a career-high with 2,155 passing yards (second in UFL) in nine games last season.
- Led the Defenders to a 58-34 UFL Championship win over the Michigan Panthers with a season-best 390 passing yards and five total touchdowns (four passing, one rushing) and earned Championship MVP.
- Rushed for a season-high 74 yards against San Antonio in week four.

2024

- Passed for 1,584 yards and recorded 15 touchdowns in 10 games played.

2023

- 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 interceptions, while rushing for 301 yards.
- Served a short stint with Minnesota Vikings from August 18-23.

Prior to the Defenders

- 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.
- Spent 2022 season with Bandits and threw for 2,014 passing yards and 14 touchdowns.
- Played on Detroit Lions practice squad from August 18-24, 2021.
- Played on both Washington Commanders and Carolina Panthers practice squads in December 2021.
- Played the first five games of the 2020 season with the St. Louis Battlehawks and totaled 1,050 passing yards with five touchdowns.
- 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).

## SETH WILLIAMS

11• Wide Receiver

6-3 • 211 • 4/10/2000  
College: Auburn  
Defenders: 2nd year

2025.

- Signed by the Defenders on May 13, 2025 and totaled eight receptions for 63 receiving yards and a touchdown in two regular season games.
- Scored a 42-yard touchdown in the XFL Conference Championship at St. Louis.
- Signed with the Las Vegas Raiders on July 22 last year and played in one preseason game before he was waived on August 13..

Prior to the Defenders

- Spent time on the Jacksonville Jaguars (2023) and Dallas Cowboys (2024) practice squads.
- 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 throughout his three-year career with them.

## MIKE DILIELLO

12• Quarterback

6-0 • 200 • 4/13/2000  
College: Austin Peay  
Defenders: 3rd year

2025

- Earned his first start in week 10 vs. St. Louis, recorded 202 yards of total offense and threw a touchdown pass.
- Threw for 206 yards and one touchdown in week nine at Houston last season.

2024

- 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.

Prior to the Defenders

- 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.

## ERIK EZUKANMA

13• Wide Receiver

6-2 • 206 • 1/25/2000  
College: Texas Tech  
Defenders: 1st year

Signed as a free agent by the Defenders on February 9.

Prior to the Defenders

- Spent time on the Jacksonville Jaguars practice squad in 2025.
- Drafted in the fourth round of the 2022 NFL Draft by the Miami Dolphins and appeared in five games from 2022-2024.
- Played collegiately at Texas Tech and totaled 2,165 receiving yards on 138 receptions and scored 15 touchdowns in 35 games played.



## ★ DC DEFENDERS PLAYER BIOS, CONT. ★

## CORNELL POWELL

14 • Wide Receiver

6-0 • 217 • 10/30/1997  
College: Clemson  
Defenders: 2nd Year

2025

- Led the UFL with seven receiving touchdowns on 29 receptions and finished eighth in the league with 418 receiving yards in nine games played this season.
- Signed with the Houston Texas on August 19 but was released on August 27. Was later added to the Pittsburgh Steelers practice squad on November 25 but was released December 2.
- Prior to the Defenders**
- Spent previous four seasons on the Kansas City Chiefs practice squad where he was a member of the Super Bowl LVIII and LVIII Championship teams.
- Drafted by the Chiefs in the fifth round of the 2021 NFL Draft.
- Totaled 1,211 receiving yards on 93 receptions for 10 touchdowns from 2016- 20 at Clemson.
- Had a standout fifth-year in 2020 with 53 catches for 882 receiving yards and seven touchdowns.
- Was part of Clemson teams that earned five ACC titles, five College Football Playoff berths, three national title game berths and two national championships from 2016-20.

## KEKE COUTEE

15 • Wide Receiver

5-9 • 179 • 1/14/1997  
College: Texas Tech  
Defenders: 2nd YearSigned as a free agent on February 4  
2024

- Totaled 18 receptions and 173 receiving yards in nine games throughout the 2024 season with DC.
- Prior to the Defenders**
- Drafted by the Houston Texans in the fourth round of the 2018 NFL Draft.
- Totaled 941 receiving yards with the Texans in three seasons from 2018-2020.
- Played in 10 games with the Indianapolis Colts in 2021-2022.
- Played collegiately at Texas Tech and was among the national leaders with 1,429 receiving yards and 10 touchdowns as a Junior in 2017.

## MATT McCRAVE

16 • Kicker

5-10 • 176 • 9/8/1994  
College: Kansas State  
Defenders: 3rd

2025

- Went 14-for-20 in the 2025 season and made all five field goals in the postseason.
- Made a season-high four field goals, including a season-long 53-yarder, against Birmingham in the season opener.
- 2024**
- Went 16-for-20 on field goals in 2024, making clutch kicks throughout the year – including a 49-yard game winner in Week 3 against Arlington on the road.
- Spent part of the 2024 NFL season on the Detroit Lions practice squad.
- Prior to the Defenders**
- Began his career with the Arizona Cardinals and has had stints with the then-Oakland Raiders, Pittsburgh Steelers, Cleveland Browns, Philadelphia Eagles and New York Guardians of the XFL.
- Is 8-for-12 in his NFL career, with all of those attempts

coming in 2018.

- In his four seasons at Kansas State, made 57 of his 66 field-goal attempts and connected on all but one his 134 extra points.
- Holds the longest field goal in his high school's history at 52 yards

## KAI GRAY

17 • Safety

6-1 • 215 • 8/15/1997  
College: Lincoln (PA)  
Defenders: 1st Year

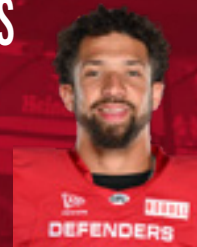
Signed as a free agent on January 2.

**Prior to the Defenders**

- Spent the last two years playing for the CFL's Edmonton Eskimos and totaled 112 tackles, five interceptions, a touchdown and a forced fumble in a combined 36 games.
- Was the West Division nominee for the Most Outstanding Rookie award in 2023.
- Finished his collegiate career at Lincoln University with 82 tackles, four forced fumbles and seven pass break-ups in eight games.
- Also played for Sam Houston State (2019) and Rutgers (2016-2017).

## SPENCER SANDERS

18 • Quarterback

6-0 • 205 • 12/15/1999  
College: Oklahoma State  
Defenders: 2nd Year

2025

- Saw action at wide receiver late in the 2025 season.
- Prior to the Defenders**
- In 2023 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.

## TY SCOTT

19 • Wide Receiver

6-1 • 198 • 3/27/1999  
College: Missouri State  
Defenders: 3rd Year

2025

- In 2025, totaled 205 receiving yards on 13 receptions and one touchdown through his first three weeks before breaking his arm.
- Returned for the UFL Championship and scored a 73-yard receiving touchdown.
- 2024**
- 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.
- Prior to the Defenders**
- An undrafted free agent out of Missouri State in 2023, signed with the 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.

## AZIZI HEARN

20 • Cornerback

6-0 • 204 • 6/5/1999  
College: UCLA  
Defenders: 1st Year

Selected in the 2026 UFL Draft

**Prior to the Defenders**

- Had practice squad stints with the Kansas City Chiefs (2025), New York Giants (2024), Carolina Panthers (2024) and New England Patriots (2023-2024).
- Was signed as an undrafted free agent by the Las Vegas Raiders in 2023.
- Spent the first season of his collegiate career with Arizona before transferring to Wyoming for three seasons and finished at UCLA for his redshirt senior season.
- While with the Bruins, he appeared in all 13 games with six starts and led the team with six breakups.

## GABRIEL TAYLOR

21 • Cornerback

5-11 • 193 • 9/27/2001  
College: Rice  
Defenders: 1st Year

Selected in the 2026 UFL Draft

**Prior to the Defenders**

- Appeared in Washington Commanders minicamp in 2025.
- Played collegiately at Rice from 2021-2024.
- Earned a Second Team All-AAC selection by conference coaches in his senior season after leading the team with 57 tackles, three interceptions, 10 passes defended and a career-best three sacks.
- Younger brother of the late two-time pro bowler Washington Redskins safety Sean Taylor.
- Wears #21 in honor of his brother.

## WILLIE DREW JR.

22 • Cornerback

6-0 • 193 • 7/5/2000  
College: Virginia State  
Defenders: 2nd

2025

- Totaled four tackles and an interception in seven games played with DC in 2025.
- Recorded a fumble recovery in the UFL Championship game against Michigan
- Signed with the CFL's Toronto Argonauts after the 2025 UFL season and totaled 14 tackles and an interception in seven games played
- Prior to the Defenders**
- 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.



## ★ DC DEFENDERS PLAYER BIOS, CONT. ★

## CURTIS JACOBS

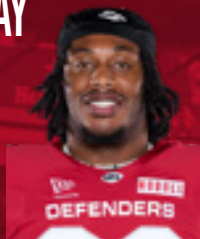
23 • Linebacker

6-1 • 243 • 2/18/2002  
College: Penn State  
Defenders: 1st Year

- Selected by Defenders in 2026 UFL Draft  
**Prior to the Defenders**
- Played in 12 total games with the New England Patriots (2024) and Tennessee Titans (2025).
- Also spent time on the New York Giants practice squad in 2025.
- Signed as an undrafted free agent by the Kansas City Chiefs in 2024
- Totaled 171 total tackles, 24 tackles for loss, 9.5 sacks and four fumble recoveries from 2020-2024 with Penn State
- Originally from Glen Burnie, Maryland which is 34 miles north of the nation's capital.

## XAZAVIAN VALLADAY

24 • Running Back

5-11 • 204 • 7/3/1998  
College: Arizona State  
Defenders: 1st Year

- Selected by Defenders in 2026 UFL Draft  
**Prior to the Defenders**
- Spent time on the Minnesota Vikings practice squad in 2025.
- Played for the New Orleans Saints practice squad in 2024.
- Played in one game for the New York Jets in 2023.
- Played his first four years of college football at Wyoming and totaled 3,281 rushing yards and 19 touchdowns from 2017-2020.
- Transferred to Arizona State in 2022 for his final season and recorded 16 rushing touchdowns which led the Pac-12.

## DEON JACKSON

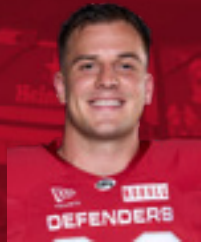
25 • Running Back

5-11 • 218 • 2/18/1999  
College: Duke  
Defenders: 2nd Year

- 2025**
- Finished third in the UFL last season with 417 rushing yards and added two touchdowns.
- Recorded a season-high 110 rushing yards on 20 carries and scored two touchdowns in DC's 36-18 XFL Conference Championship win over the St. Louis Battlehawks.
- Prior to the Defenders**
- 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 two 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.

## SAM KIDD

26 • Safety

6-1 • 215 • 5/23/1999  
College: James Madison  
Defenders: 3rd Year

- 2025**
- Totaled 11 tackles in four games played in 2025.
- Recorded a game-sealing interception in week three at St. Louis.
- 2024**
- Spent the 2024 UFL season on the Defenders injured reserve list.
- Prior to the Defenders**
- Played for JMU from 2017-22, appearing in 42 career games. He tallied 112 tackles with eight tackles for loss, one sack, one interception, 11 pass breakups, a pair of forced fumbles and one recovery.
- Was a 2022 Honorable Mention All-Sun Belt selection.
- Attended Madison HS in Vienna, VA where he was Liberty District Defensive Player of the Year as a senior and was also chosen as All-State.
- Grew up 30 minutes away from Audi Field

## EKOW BOYE-DOE

28 • Cornerback

5-11 • 177 • 11/4/1999  
College: Kansas State  
Defenders: 1st Year

- Selected by Defenders in 2026 UFL Draft  
**Prior to the Defenders**
- Spent time with the Arizona Cardinals' practice squad in 2025.
- Was a member of the Kansas City Chiefs Super Bowl LVIII championship team.
- Appeared in six games with the Chiefs in 2023.
- Signed to Kansas City's minicamp in 2023.
- Totaled 74 tackles and 13 pass deflections in 42 career games with Kansas State.
- Born in Ghana and moved to the US at three years old.
- Pronounced Echo Boy-Dough

## BRANDON SMITH

40 • Linebacker

6-3 • 244 • 4/12/2001  
College: Penn State  
Defenders: 1st Year

- Selected by Defenders in 2026 UFL Draft  
**Prior to the Defenders**
- Was originally signed by the Dallas Renegades in October of last year.
- Signed to the Las Vegas Raiders practice squad in December 2024 and was waived in May of 2025.
- In October 2023, signed with the Philadelphia Eagles practice squad, where he remained for the rest of the season. He was elevated to the active roster twice, appearing in two games for the Eagles in Weeks 16 and 17, recording one tackle while contributing primarily on special teams.
- Began his professional career with the Carolina Panthers, who selected him in the fourth round of the 2022 NFL Draft. As a rookie, he appeared in 12 games, recording eight tackles on defense while making key contributions on special teams.
- Collegiatly, he appeared in 34 games across three seasons at Penn State, even contributing as a true freshman. He totaled 132 tackles, 19 tackles for loss, 4.0 sacks, one interception, six pass breakups, one forced fumble, and one fumble recovery for the Nittany Lions.

## MICAH BASKERVILLE

44 • Linebacker

6-0 • 244 • 10/19/1999  
College: LSU  
Defenders: 2nd Year

- 2025**
- Posted eight tackles in three games played.
- Forced a pair of fumbles throughout DC's postseason run last season.
- Prior to 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 pre-season 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.

## BRIAN ABRAHAM

45 • Linebacker

6-4 • 230 • 5/15/2000  
College: Albany  
Defenders: 2nd Year

- 2025**
- Appeared in six games and tallied seven total tackles including two for loss
- Prior to the Defenders**
- Invited to Chicago Bears rookie minicamp in 2024.
- 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 semifinals 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 and switched to linebacker in his last couple of years at Yale.

## PAXTON BROOKS

47 • Punter

6-5 • 203 • 2/21/2000  
College: Tennessee  
Defenders: 3rd Year

- 2025**
- Averaged 42.2 yards per punt last season with a season-best 56-yarder in last year's season opener vs. Birmingham.
- 2024**
- Averaged 43.1 yards per punt.
- Prior to the Defenders**
- Played college at the University of Tennessee from 2018-23, serving as a punter and kickoff specialist under head coaches Jeremy Pruitt and Josh Heupel.
- 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

## ★ DC DEFENDERS 2026 PLAYER BIOS, CONT. ★

## MACKLIN AYERS

48 • Linebacker

6-1 • 226 • 8/17/2001  
College: UMass  
Defenders: 1st Year

- Signed by Defenders on February 20. **Prior to the Defenders**
- Spent his graduate season with UMass in 2024 and totaled 38 tackles in 12 games.
- Played three seasons at Dartmouth, posting 165 tackles (68 solo, 97 assisted), 4.5 tackles for loss for 10 yards, one sack, an interception and five pass deflections
- Tallied a career-high 16 tackles, including nine solo takedowns, at Yale (10/8/22).
- Hit 1,000-point mark on the basketball court at Upper Daughin High School in Elizabethtown, PA.

## JOHARI BRANCH

56 • Guard

6-2 • 326 • 9/18/1998  
College: Maryland  
Defenders: 2nd Year

- **2025**  
Was part of an offensive line that allowed the fewest sacks in the UFL (10)
- **Prior to the Defenders**  
In 2024, played for the IFL's Massachusetts Pirates, was one of the top linemen in the indoor scene and was named to the All-Rookie team
- Played three seasons at University of Maryland, where he was a starter the entire time, playing most center.

## MICHAEL TARQUIN

70 • Tackle

6-5 • 296 • 6/14/2001  
College: Oklahoma  
Defenders: 1st Year

- Selected by Defenders in 2026 UFL Draft. **Prior to the Defenders**
- Signed as an undrafted free agent by the Carolina Panthers in April 2025 and was released in August.
- Played his senior year of college football at Oklahoma and made seven starts in 2024.
- Prior to Oklahoma, played one year at USC and played in 11 games.
- Played his first two seasons at the University of Florida and played in a combined 21 games.

## DERICK ROBERSON

50 • Defensive End

6-2 • 257 • 11/15/1995  
College: Sam Houston  
Defenders: 3rd Year

- **2025**  
Was named to the All-UFL team in 2025, tied for third in the league with 5.5 sacks last season and totaled 27 tackles in nine games.
- Posted two sacks and two forced fumbles in two post-season games.
- **2024**  
In 2024 with the Defenders, recorded 31 tackles, four tackles for loss, 4.5 sacks, two forced fumbles, and 16 quarterback hurries.
- **Prior to the Defenders**  
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 Hall of Famer Drew Brees.
- Began his first two years of college football at Texas before transferring to Sam Houston State for three years.

## ADRIAN EALY

59 • Tackle

6-6 • 338 • 8/7/1999  
College: Oklahoma  
Defenders: 1st Year

- Was DC's first selection in the 2026 UFL Draft. **Prior to the Defenders**
- Selected by the Dallas Renegades in 2024 after spending the previous seasons with the Seattle Sea Dragons.
- Spent 2022 training camp with the LA Rams then the Pittsburgh Steelers before being released at the roster cutdown date.
- Signed with the Baltimore Ravens as an undrafted free agent after the 2021 NFL Draft then released and signed to their practice squad at the conclusion of training camp.
- Spent brief stints with Denver, LA Rams, Baltimore and Green Bay's practice squads for the remainder of the 2021 season.
- Started in 23 games in his final two seasons at Oklahoma where he earned Second Team All-Big 12 honors in 2019 and 2020.

## JAELYN DUNCAN

71 • Tackle

6-6 • 322 • 7/8/2000  
College: Maryland  
Defenders: 1st Year

- Selected by Defenders in 2026 UFL Draft. **Prior to the Defenders**
- Drafted by the Tennessee Titans in the sixth round of the 2023 NFL Draft and played a combined 15 games in his first two seasons.
- Played collegiately at Maryland from 2018-22 and totaled 39 starts.
- Blocked for a Maryland passing offense that ranked third in the Big Ten in 2022 by averaging 259.8 yards per game in the air.
- Participated in the Reese's Senior Bowl.

## MICHAEL MAETTI

51 • Center

6-1 • 297 • 8/26/1997  
College: Missouri  
Defenders: 4th Year

- **2025**  
Started in all 10 games in 2025 and anchored an offensive line that allowed the least sacks in the UFL last season (10).
- **2024**  
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.
- **2023**  
Started all 10 games.
- **Prior to the Defenders**  
Began his collegiate career at Rutgers from 2016-2019 before transferring to Missouri for two graduate seasons.
- Was an All-SEC first-team selection by the Associated Press, Pro Football Focus and USA today in his final season.

## STEVEN LOSOYA

68 • Guard

6-3 • 300 • 5/25/2001  
College: Vanderbilt  
Defenders: 1st Year

- Signed by DC on January 27. **Prior to the Defenders**
- Signed by the Carolina Panthers as an undrafted free agent in 2025 and saw action in three preseason games.
- Finished his collegiate career with Vanderbilt for the 2024 season and started all 13 games, the first four at center and the remainder at strong guard.
- Prior to Vanderbilt, spent time with Mississippi State (2022-23) and Middle Tennessee State (2019-21).

## TREY WEDIG

75 • Tackle

6-6 • 313 • 1/10./2002  
College: Indiana  
Defenders: 1st Year

- Signed as a free agent on February 9. **Prior to the Defenders**
- Was signed as an undrafted free agent by the Los Angeles Rams in April 28, 2025 and saw action in three preseason games before he was waived on August 26.
- Began his collegiate career with three years at Wisconsin where he 35 total games.
- Transferred to Indiana for the 2024 season and started all 13 games including the first round of the College Football Playoff against Notre Dame.

## ★ DC DEFENDERS 2026 PLAYER BIOS, CONT. ★

## TYKEEM DOSS

79 • Guard

6-5 • 369 • 9/25/1999  
College: Southern Miss  
Defenders: 2nd Year

2025

- Started all 10 games.
- Prior to the Defenders**
- 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.

## BEN BRESNAHAN

87 • Tight End

6-3 • 248 • 12/15/2000  
College: Vanderbilt  
Defenders: 3rd Year

2025

- Finished with 10 receptions for 163 receiving yards in 10 games.
- Totaled a season-high 53 receiving yards in week nine at Houston last season.
- Recorded his first career touchdown vs. Memphis in week two.

2024

- Did not play in 2024
- Prior to the Defenders**
- Has worked out for the Kansas City Chiefs and the Atlanta Falcons.
- Totaled 61 receptions, 701 receiving yards and five touchdowns in five seasons with Vanderbilt.

## DENNIS JOHNSON

91 • Defensive Tackle

6-1 • 306 • 8/28/1998  
College: Grand Valley State  
Defenders: 3rd Year

2025

- Appeared in four games (no starts) and totaled seven tackles.

2024

- Appeared in nine games (no starts) and totaled 14 tackles.
- Prior to the Defenders**
- Invited to New York Giants minicamp in 2022.
- Was named First-Team All-GLIAC in his senior season at Grand Valley State after recording 24 tackles, seven tackles for loss and 1.5 sacks in 12 games played.

## TRAE BARRY

80 • Tight End

6-6 • 252 • 5/26/1998  
College: Boston College  
Defenders: 4th Year

2025

- Played all 10 games as the team's primary long snapper.

2024

- Played all 10 games.

2023

- Played in three games.

**Prior to the Defenders**

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

## BRILEY MOORE

88 • Tight End

6-4 • 258 • 1/13/1998  
College: Kansas State  
Defenders: 4th Year

2025

- Collected 205 receiving yards on 15 receptions and scored two touchdowns in 10 games played.
- Recorded a season-high five receptions for 71 receiving yards at San Antonio in week seven.

2024

- Totaled seven catches for 48 yards, and a touchdown through the first two weeks in 2024 prior to being sidelined with an injury.

2023

- Played in eight games and totaled 11 receptions, 80 receiving yards and one touchdown.
- Prior to the Defenders**
- Went undrafted in the 2021 NFL Draft and signed as an undrafted free agent to the Tennessee Titans.
- Transferred to Kansas State from Northern Iowa for the 2020 season and finished the season with the second most receiving yards (338 yards) and tied for the most touchdown receptions (3 touchdown receptions).

## DEVONNSHA MAXWELL

95 • Defensive Tackle

6-1 • 284 • 5/5/1999  
College: Chattanooga  
Defenders: 2nd Year

2025

- Totaled 20 tackles, three tackles for loss and a blocked kick in 10 games played last season with DC.

**Prior to the Defenders**

- Signed with the Cincinnati Bengals in 2024 after going undrafted out of Chattanooga in 2023.
- At UT-Chattanooga, holds the school-record for sacks in a single game with five.
- Finished his Mocs career with 163 total tackles, 45.5 TFL, and 28 sacks.

## MASON FAIRCHILD

84 • Tight End

6-5 • 256 • 8/30/2001  
College: Kansas  
Defenders: 2nd Year

2025

- Played in eight games throughout the 2025 season.

**Prior to the Defenders**

- 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 Andale HS before signing with the Defenders.

## BOOGIE BASHAM

90 • Defensive End

6-3 • 274 • 12/16/1997  
College: Wake Forest  
Defenders: 1st Year

Signed as a free agent on March 13.

**Prior to the Defenders**

- Signed with the Carolina Panthers in 2025 and played in four games and collected four tackles before being released in November.
- Was later signed to the Las Vegas Raiders practice squad on November 26 before being released on January 12.
- Spent the 2023 and 2024 seasons with the New York Giants and tallied 20 total tackles in 17 games.
- Was drafted by the Buffalo Bills in the second round of the 2021 NFL Draft. Registered 37 total tackles (five for loss) and 4.5 sacks in 23 games throughout his first two seasons.
- Played collegiately at Wake Forest and posted 173 total tackles (36.5 for loss), four forced fumbles and 20.5 sacks.

## CASEY ROGERS

98 • Defensive Tackle

6-4 • 294 • 12/18/1998  
College: Oregon  
Defenders: 1st Year

Signed by Defenders on January 27

**Prior to the Defenders**

- Spent time on the New York Giants practice squad in 2025 and played in one game.
- Was featured on HBO's Hard Knocks last August when he was vying for a roster spot with the Buffalo Bills but was released in training camp.
- Signed by the Giants in December 2024 and played in two games. Made his NFL debut in Week 14 against the New Orleans Saints and blocked a 60-yard field goal attempt to end the first half.
- Spent his final two collegiate seasons at Oregon and recorded 56 total tackles (six for loss) and 1.5 sacks in 27 games played.
- Prior to Oregon, spent first three years at Nebraska. Was named All-Academic Big Ten in his last two seasons.
- Garnered nicknames Aquaman and Flowseidon for his long hair

