

THE NEW YORK GIANTS’ BIGGEST POSITIONS OF NEED HEADING INTO DRAFT DAY

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It is officially draft day. With the New York Giants holding two top 10 selections in the 2026 NFL Draft, Thursday night will be a key opportunity for the team to address a weakness among a plethora of needs. The most glaring hole on the roster is on the interior defensive line. That hole is approximately 6-foot-4 and 340 pounds after the Giants traded Dexter Lawrence to the Cincinnati Bengals on Saturday to get the second of those top 10 selections. Even before the Lawrence trade, the position group was the weakest on the roster. The Giants spent a third-round selection on Darius Alexander last season, but the Toledo product was a healthy scratch early in the season. He showed flashes in the second half but will already be 26 years old going into the 2026 regular season. None of Roy Robertson-Harris, Marlon Tuipulotu, Elijah Chatman or Sam Roberts are more than rotational pieces on even a bottom of the barrel team and Chauncey Golston is better suited as an end in a 4-3 on run downs. The 2026 draft class has a lack of top-of-the-line interior talent.

Players like Ohio State’s Kayden McDonald and Clemson’s Peter Woods project better as early second round talent, though both have a chance to slip into the final few picks of the first. Neither will fall within the Giants range in round one unless New York executes a trade down. Either way, expect the Giants to make an addition to the position before Day Two is over. New York is far more likely to add a cornerback in the first round. General Manager Joe Schoen would be hoping that this time around goes smoother than it did in 2023. In that draft, the Giants took Deonte Banks 24th overall. Despite showing promise as a returner on special teams, Banks has been a bust at corner due to a lack of ability to locate the ball in the air coupled with multiple miscues related to on-field discipline. Schoen also struck out on big-ticket free agent signing Paulson Adebo in the 2025 off-season, signing the former New Orleans Saint to a three-year, \$54 million contract despite the defensive back being limited to seven games in 2024 with a broken femur. Adebo was again limited in 2025 due to a lingering knee injury, playing 12 contests while being largely ineffective.

The Giants do have third-year slot corner Dru Phillips coming back for another attempt at truly cementing himself inside after a sophomore slump. They also signed former Cleveland Browns first-rounder Greg Newsome II to a one-year prove-it deal. Still, New York needs long-term help outside. Both LSU’s Mansoor Delane and Tennessee’s Jermod McCoy fit the billing of potential number-one corners who could go within the top 10. Though Delane is generally projected to go higher, McCoy’s stock dropped due to him missing all of 2025 due to a torn ACL. Some believe he would have been the best cornerback in the class had he not gotten hurt, and he ran a 4.38 at his pro day with impressive jump testing results as well. Both will be instant starters for their new teams. Across the ball, the Giants also need plenty of help at wide receiver. While the eventual return of Malik Nabers will be a major addition within itself, the Giants don’t have many exciting options. Darius Slayton, now the Giants’ longest tenured player after the Lawrence deal, is projected to start across from Nabers. Calvin Austin III will likely replace Wan’Dale Robinson in the slot, while fellow free

agent signing Darnell Mooney will work in both spots. New York did host former franchise receiver Odell Beckham Jr. for a visit earlier this week, but he is more of backup option at this point in his career, exciting as though of a reunion may be. There are multiple avenues to addressing the position that would make sense within the top 10 picks. OSU wideout Carnell Tate is the most prototypical receiver among the top of the class is projected for that reason to come off the board first. Arizona State’s Jordyn Tyson is up there with Tate skill wise, though his history of injuries while in college creates a gap. If the Giants are looking to upgrade in the slot, USC’s Makai Lemon would work with pick 10. Even if New York strikes out at the position on Day One, this is another position where an addition should be made before Day Three arrives. No matter who the Giants bring in to catch passes from Dart, it won’t matter unless they can continue to improve the blocking up front. With the Giants’ bookends solidified for the time being in Andrew Thomas and Jermaine Eluemunor, that leaves the interior offensive line as the area in

need of the most improvement. John Michael Schmitz will likely get one more year to make good on his draft position. Left guard Jon Runyan Jr. is trending towards replacement level, but the Giants not making him a cap casualty this offseason suggests he’ll receive another year in the starting lineup as well. The right guard is a different story. Greg Van Roten, who has served as New York’s starter for the past two seasons, is still a free agent. 2025 draft pick Marcus Mbow is still on the roster. Still, in addition to the hope that Mbow could develop into a serviceable swing tackle, the Giants may be aiming higher when looking for a new starter. Miami right tackle Francis Mauigoa is generally considered a top 10 pick and is viewed as an option to slide outside in the pros. He could also eventually take over for Eluemunor when that time comes. The best true interior lineman is Penn State’s Olaivavega Ioane, who is right on the fringe of being in play at 10, depending on how the first nine picks shake out and whether the Giants opt to fill needs or select the best player available. No matter what route they take, the right guard will almost certainly be upgraded prior to week one.

The Weekly Power Play.

Breaking down each series in the Eastern Conference



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The quest for the Stanley Cup began on Saturday, with 16 teams battling it out for the same goal. Here’s a look at how each series in the Eastern Conference currently stands: **Buffalo Sabres vs Boston Bruins: Series Tied 1-1** After securing a spot in the playoffs for the first time since the 2010-11 season, Buffalo entered the matchup against Boston strong. In Game 1 of the series, which took place on Sunday, Boston scored early in the first and the third to give themselves a 2-0 lead. Despite this, Buffalo responded with four goals in just over four minutes late in the third to secure a 1-0 series lead. Two of Buffalo’s goals came from former UConn Hockey star Tage Thompson, who led the Sabres in goals scored (40) during the regular season. During Game 2 on Tuesday night, Boston again got the scoring started but this time in the second period with three goals, one of them coming from Morgan Geekie at center ice. Viktor Arvidsson scored his second goal of the game for Boston just 16 seconds into the third period. Buffalo got on the board after Bowen Byram got past Boston’s goaltender Jeremy Swayman but the Bruins stood strong on defense to secure a 4-2 win and tie the series 1-1. Up next, both teams will head to Boston to play Games 3 and 4 at TD Garden. Game 3 is set for Thursday night at 7 p.m., with Game 4 scheduled for Sunday at 2 p.m.

Tampa Bay Lightning vs Montreal Canadiens: Series Tied 1-1 The Lightning and Canadiens have yet to conclude a game in regulation as Games 1 and 2 have gone into overtime. The first game took place Sunday in the sunshine state, with the Canadiens getting on

the scoreboard in the first period. Tampa responded with two goals nearly thirty seconds apart in the second period, but their lead was quickly cut short when Juraj Slafkovský tied the game with a power play goal. Slafkovský did not stop there and scored another goal in the third period to give the Canadiens a 3-2 lead. Brandon Hagel scored his second of the night for the Lightning to send the game into overtime where Slafkovský completed his hat trick to secure a 1-0 series lead for the Canadiens. In Game 2 on Tuesday night, Hagel kicked off the scoring in the first, but their lead was cut short when Lane Hutson scored on the power play to tie the game entering the second period. Both the Canadiens and the Lightning added one more to the scoreboard to send the game yet again into overtime. Defenseman J.J. Moser won the game for the Lightning to even the series 1-1. Game 3 will take place this Friday, but this time it will be the Canadiens with home ice advantage. Puck drop is set for 7 p.m., and Game 4 will take place Sunday at the same start time. Carolina Hurricanes vs Ottawa Senators: CAR leads 2-0 In Game 1, goaltender Frederik Andersen was the star player for the Hurricanes, recording a shutout 2-0 victory with 22 saves. After a scoreless first period, Logan Stankoven got the Hurricanes on the board early in the second, and Taylor Hall contributed a goal of his own in the third to give Carolina a 1-0 series lead. On Monday during game two of the series, Carolina again attacked first with Stankoven giving the Hurricanes a 1-0 entering the second. It was a strong second period for both teams with Sebastian Aho contributing to Carolina’s lead. Ottawa quickly responded with two goals to tie things up and send the game into overtime. However, a scoreless twenty minutes in overtime sent the game into



Dylan Duke of the Tampa Bay Lightning skates down the ice looking for the puck. The series between the Lightning and the Montreal Canadiens is tied at 1-1, with the next game being played on Friday. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING ON FACEBOOK.

double overtime as there are no shootouts during the playoffs. Jordan Martinook was the overtime hero for the Hurricanes to send them back to Ottawa up 2-0 in the series. Game 3 is set for Thursday with puck drop at 7:30 p.m. and Game 4 on Saturday at 3 p.m. **Pittsburgh Penguins vs Philadelphia Flyers: PHI leads 2-0** Across the sixteen teams in the playoffs, the Philadelphia Flyers are the only team to currently hold a 2-0 series lead against their opponent who was ranked higher than them in the league. In Game 1 on Saturday, a scoreless first period sent both

teams searching for a goal in the second. The Flyers struck first following a goal from Jamie Drysdale, but the Penguins responded with a goal from veteran player Evgeni Malkin. During the third, the Flyers added another two goals to add to their lead along with the go-ahead goal from defenseman Travis Sanheim. Despite adding a goal late in the third, the Penguins were unable to even the scoreboard, falling to the Flyers 3-2. In Game 2, the Flyers shut-out the Penguins at home with help from goaltender Dan Vladar who made 27 saves, 25 of them coming from the final two periods. Martone scored for

the second straight game along with Garnet Hathaway and Luke Glendening to secure a 3-0 win over the Penguins. Despite Pittsburgh having more shots on goal (27), the Flyers defense stayed strong along with Vladar to eliminate the Penguins scoring chances. The Flyers return back to Philadelphia with the chance to close out the series at home already up 2-0 in the series. Game 3 is set for Wednesday at 7 p.m. with Game 4 on Saturday at 8 p.m. Author’s Note: Article was written before Game 3 contest between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh occurred