FRANCHISE TAG SEASON: THE NEXT NFL PLAYERS THAT MIGHT BE TAGGED

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A franchise tag is a specific contract in the NFL that allows a team to keep a pending free agent for another season. They can do this by offering a one-year deal at the average price of the league's top salary in that position.

So far this season there have been only three players to be franchise tagged by their team: Kyle Pitts, Breece Hall and George Pickens.

Pitts is a tight end for the Atlanta Falcons who received a tag that is worth about $16.5 million for the upcoming season. Pitts was one of the Falcons' most talented offensive weapons on the receiving core, and they did not want him to enter free agency. They used the tag on him in hopes of working into a possible long-term contract. He is one of the most dynamic tight ends in the league, making him a key player that Atlanta does not want to lose.

The Jets tagged their running back Breece Hall as the centerpiece and explosive weapon to their offense. He can contribute as both a runner and pass catcher, making his versatility a top weapon for their offense. The Jets are hoping to add more offensive weapons to their roster this offseason with the draft and look for a more successful season in 2026.

The final player that was tagged this offseason was CeeDee Lamb of the Dallas Cowboys. Lamb has been the Cowboys' top receiving option for many seasons now with some of the best numbers in the league. His strong chemistry with quarterback Dak Prescott also adds to his success, making the Cowboys jump on the opportunity to keep him around.

Additionally, Daniel Jones was placed on a transition tag. This is similar to a franchise tag but allows other teams to still make offers for the player. If the original team cannot match the offer, then the player leaves. However, if they do match it, then they stay and continue playing for their team that season.

These tags in the offseason are important in the NFL as they directly impact the teams' star players, their rosters and the whole free-agency market. When stars are suddenly held to stay for their team, other teams lose the ability to jump on them and add another star to their roster. This can cause all sorts of drama as most players want consistency and contracts that will last them years. These franchise tags only last for a season, which can cause uncertainty for the player and team.

Uncertainty between a player and their team is the last thing you want in the NFL. If a player is nervous the franchise does not want them, it affects their performance and effort to play. They might skip practice or play poorly in order to leave the team and seek success someplace else.

The franchise tag tells a player two things. Either the team wants to look for a long-term deal, or they are unsure if they can commit to that player but still need their talent. It is a skeptical deal that can have many effects on teams and players' relationships.

This move is big for teams as a franchise tag also affects their salary. The tag is based off the top five salaries at that position in the league which could put a dent in certain franchises. If a team's salary is already tough on the season, then keeping a player for a high price could hurt the team more than it would help them.

These decisions come down to the general managers and front office who always have their work cut out for them in the offseason.

Some players such as Trey Hendrickson and Travis Etienne were potential candidates to be tagged this season. Both had solid years, however Hendrickson was coming off an injury that shortened his season. Additionally, his tag would have cost the Bengals over $24 million.

Etienne was not tagged mostly due to the financial burden. Tagging running backs can be heavy investments compared to other positions. These expensive contracts can hurt a franchise's salary, especially one trying to sign new players and make a deeper run into the playoffs this upcoming season.

The franchise tag has many uses and impacts when it comes to the market and strategy of the NFL. Learning which players are valuable to certain teams helps others plan accordingly. The franchise tag is not always about keeping the best players but also managing the salary cap and organizing success for the future.

For a league that is designed around strategy and star power, the franchise tag is another piece to the puzzle and game behind the NFL.



Trey Hendrickson, defensive end for the Cincinnati Bengals. Hendrickson was initially signed to the Saints straight out of college. PHOTO COURTESY OF @TREY_HENDRICKSON91 ON INSTAGRAM

WOMENS LACROSSE: OBRIEN BLASTS UCONN AHEAD IN VICTORY OVER UMASS

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Megan O'Brien has done it again.

For the second straight game, the sophomore found the back of the net four times to power the UConn women's lacrosse team (3-3) over the University of Massachusetts (4-2) in a four-score win, 12-8.

The win brought their record back to .500 for the first time in almost a month.

Now at 15 goals on the season, O'Brien's first goal of the contest officially put her over her scoring total from a season ago just six games in. It was O'Brien who opened the scoring, receiving a pass from Ava Plata on the crease and dumping it in for the score.

O'Brien's best goal of the day came at the start of the second quarter, putting Minutewomen defender Marisa Gatz through the spin cycle to work her way inside and score her second of the day. All four of O'Brien's goals came from close range on the crease.

That second goal extended O'Brien's six-game multi-point streak to six to open the season.

Preseason All-Big East team member Rayea Davis posted her second-straight multi-goal performance as well. Davis' running goal from dead on in the third quarter gave the Huskies a two-goal lead which prevented the Minutewomen from tying it up from that point on.

Plata and McKenna Merkel each also posted two-goal performances as well. Plata's four-point performance marked the second straight multi-point performance for her, while Merkel's pair of scores were the first two of her collegiate career.

Others to score for the Huskies included Karsyn Burnash and Abby Beran.

The final tally of the game with just 25 seconds left on the clock, Beran carried all the way from midfield and scored on an empty net with goalie Bayley Duffy out playing defense for her first goal of the season.

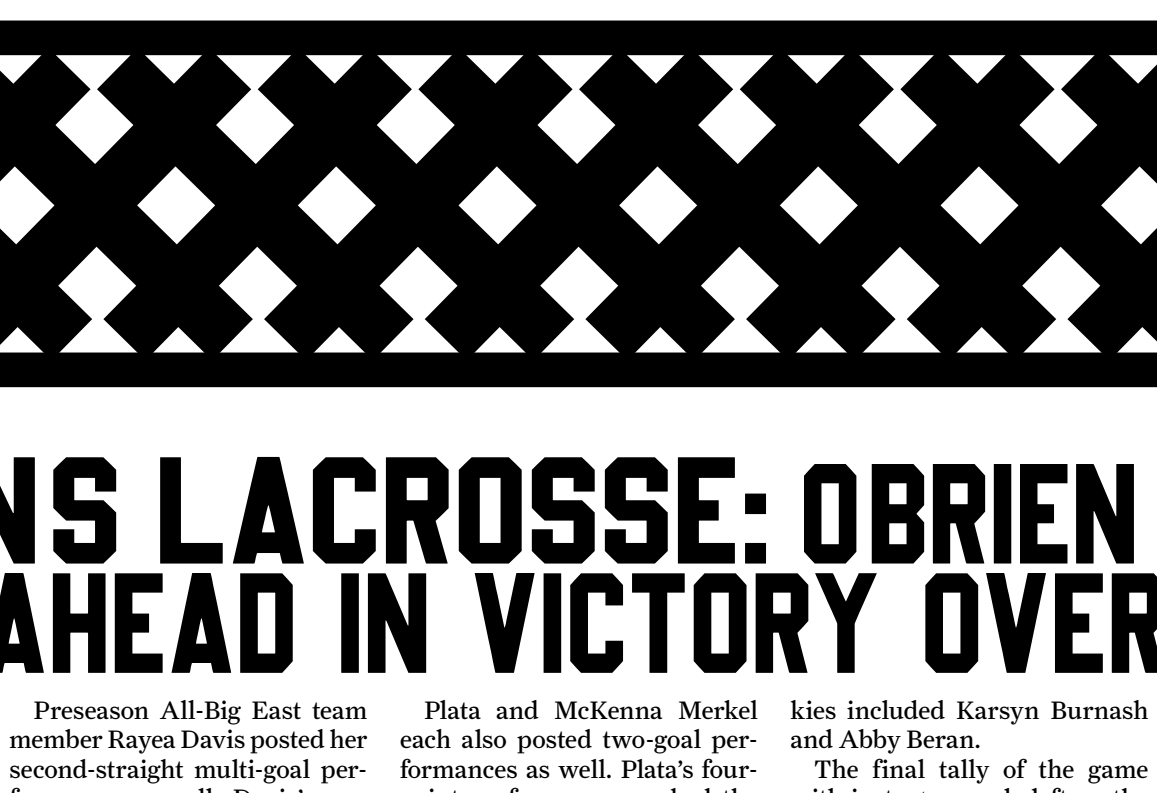
On defense, Beran maintained her reputation as one of the best defenders in the Big East. The reigning Big East Defensive Player of the Year and 2026 preseason award winner contributed five ground ball wins and forced five UMass turnovers.

The Minutewomen struggled on both sides of the ball. Duffy stopped just 36.8% of shots faced, a season low. The offense scored a season-low eight goals, coupled with a season-low 24 shots and 15 on goal. It was the first time this season that UMass has taken less than 30 shots and placed less than 20 on net.

Dylan Lyons was the standout performer for the Minutewomen, scoring two goals in the first half and adding a pair of assists.

Other scorers for the Minutewomen included Norah Prizzi, Bridget Valentine, Kassidy Morris, Lil Hancock, Ava Connaughton and Katie Peterson.

Next up, the Huskies will look to claim a winning record for the first time this season as they head down the road to take on Yale University on Saturday, March 14. Game time at Reese Stadium in New Haven, Conn. is scheduled for 3:30 p.m.



UConn women's lacrosse faces UAlbany on March 1 at Morrone Stadium in Storrs, Conn. The Huskies fought hard until the last minute to secure the win. PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS