

Patriots Free Agents

These players are placed in order from most important to retain to least (e.g. first in try to retain is the player they should try hardest to retain, first in let walk is player they should offer most but allow to walk)

Let Walk	Try to Retain	Must Retain
Jack Westover (ERFA)	Vederian Lowe	Jaylinn Hawkins
D'Ernest Johnson	K'Lavon Chaisson	Khyiris Tonga
Yasir Durant (RFA)	Thayer Munford	
Isaiah Iton (ERFA)	Jack Gibbens (RFA)	
Deneric Prince (ERFA)	Alex Austin (RFA)	
Darius Harris	Austin Hooper	
Craig Reynolds	Tommy DeVito (RFA)	
Thomas Odukoya	Jaquelin Roy (RFA)	

**Already signed*

Exclusive rights free agents (ERFAs): players with less than two accrued seasons whose contracts are expiring are eligible for the ERFA tender, a non-guaranteed league minimum salary tender (basically equivalent to a futures deal).

The team signed Marcus Jones and Ben Brown to contract extensions during the season.

Let Walk: Jack Westover played out of position as a fullback throughout 2026, and he was not good at it. It's unfortunate, and given he could be kept with the low-cost ERFA tender maybe you let him try tight end again, but he can't stay at the position next season. Johnson added little value outside of not fumbling on kickoff returns and garbage time rushes. Durant was not tendered as an RFA and is unlikely to return. Isaiah Iton and Deneric Prince could both be kept around for cheap but neither player did much to make a case to stay on the team. Darius Harris played a decent amount of special teams in his three games pre-injury and could likely be kept with a minimum contract, but cheaper value could be found in the draft. Reynolds was a practice squad player who did not sign a futures contract, which means his time in New England is likely over. Odukoya may stay around on the simple fact that he qualifies as an International Pathway player, giving the team a 91st roster spot in training camp.

Try to Retain: Vederian Lowe is not a good tackle per se, but provides adequate depth (that apparently will be sought after this offseason). Chaisson could benefit from a weaker EDGE free agent class, raising his contract value, but keeping him around on a reasonable (\$10 million or less per year) deal would be a smart play. Munford was the team's de facto jumbo tight end and could potentially be a depth option if Lowe were to leave. Jack Gibbens seems well-liked by

Vrabel and was an acceptable linebacker, though the team should probably add a player of equal or greater talent to supplement the linebacking group. Austin was not given a restricted free agent tender by the team and it sounds like he plans to be elsewhere in 2026, but if he came back he would provide decent depth at outside corner. Austin Hooper is getting old but was arguably a more talented receiver than Hunter Henry last season; it sounds like the team plans to address tight end through other means. Tommy DeVito could be your third quarterback, but the restricted tender (\$3.5 million at minimum) is a bit expensive for that position. Jacquelin Roy is also dealing with the RFA tender being too costly for a depth piece, but bringing him back on a minimum deal to compete in training camp would be a good idea. *(3/6 update: DeVito was re-signed from 2 years and \$7.4 million)*

Must Retain: Jaylinn Hawkins played reasonably well as the team's starting safety, and his pairing with former college teammate Craig Woodson seemed to be beneficial for both of them. He should be brought back especially with reports of a "cool" market for him. The team tried to extend Khyiris Tonga mid-season, but the deal fell through prior to him playing well in the playoffs, so his cost and popularity on the market has increased. The team should push hard to keep him, especially without knowing the outcome of Christian Barmore's legal troubles.

Cut/Trade Candidates

Typically I can come up with a list of a handful of guys, but there really aren't many contracts that would save significant money for the team without being a negative on on-field performance. The first two options were Garrett Bradbury and Josh Dobbs; Bradbury seems likely to stay on the team at least through training camp to compete with Jared Wilson, and Dobbs is well-regarded across the league as a backup with a cap hit slightly above what Tommy DeVito would receive at an RFA tender. Pop Douglas is an option given his \$3.7 million cap hit while languishing around the bottom of the depth chart at receiver, but he still provides value for the offense. Other options would provide minimal (less than \$2 million) cap relief, so we'll skip this for now. *(3/6 update: lol! They traded Garrett Bradbury to the Bears for a 5th round pick.)*

Extension Candidates

CB Christian Gonzalez: This one is obvious, and sounds likely to happen this offseason. The team should do this as soon as possible before another cornerback resets the market.

OL Michael Onwenu: Onwenu has been a steady, solid player at right guard for the Patriots throughout two offseasons of questions around the offensive line. He's also carrying the second highest cap hit on the team with no guaranteed money in 2026. An extension would be a win-win situation.

WR Kayshon Boutte: Boutte had a career-best season in 2025 even while dealing with injuries, and his chemistry with Drake Maye has shone since Maye's debut in 2024. He's not a top-tier receiver but played well, which might increase his price, but it's an option the team has.

External Free Agents

Offense

Maybe Interested	Should Be Interested	Top-Tier Needs & Players
OT Rasheed Walker	FB Reggie Gilliam	WR Alec Pierce
OL Jamarco Salyer	OL David Edwards	TE Cade Otton
WR Romeo Doubs	OL Connor McGovern	OL Isaac Seumalo
OL Kevin Zeitler	TE Charlie Kolar	TE Isaiah Likely
QB Sam Howell	TE Chigoziem Okonkwo	OL Joel Bitonio
OL Tyler Linderbaum	OL Cade Mays	
RB Kene Nwangwu	OL Austin Corbett	

QB: Drake Maye and Josh Dobbs are under contract, but the RFA tender for Tommy Devito might be a little too expensive. Maybe the team wants to reunite Maye with college teammate Sam Howell to bring in a young QB3.

RB/FB: The top two spots on the depth chart are secure after strong seasons from Rhamondre Stevenson and TreVeyon Henderson, but cutting Antonio Gibson leaves a hole as a strong depth piece and kick returner. While this seems like a position that gets filled through the draft, Kene Nwangwu led the league in kickoff return average (and was still top 10 when you take out a 99-yard kick return TD) while not providing much as a rusher. Josh McDaniels clearly wants to use a fullback in his offense, but Jack Westover couldn't cut it, and UDFA Brock Lampe was injured early in camp. Adding a well-regarded player like Reggie Gilliam at an unglamorous position could be a big benefit to the New England run game.

WR: 24 hours ago I thought the team wouldn't be in on Alec Pierce, especially with Stefon Diggs on the roster, but now that's changed and they should be offering a decent amount of money to add him. \$30 million per year is a bit too steep for me, but \$25 million per year would put him at WR15 in terms of contract average annual value in an era where the salary cap and contract values continue moving upward. Their current receiver room doesn't suggest improvements would come from adding any of the mid-tier free agents available this offseason. Romeo Doubs had an up-and-down stint in Green Bay on his rookie deal and would add decent size (6-2, 204) to a position that doesn't have much outside of Mack Hollins.

TE: Hunter Henry is getting older, and Austin Hooper is a free agent. CJ Dippre hasn't shown enough to warrant being a lock in 2026, so the Patriots should start addressing the tight end position ASAP. Kyle Pitts was franchise tagged, so there aren't any "top-tier" players at the position available as free agents. Cade Otton has consistently put up decent receiving numbers while being a capable blocker. Isaiah Likely is a strong receiver but not a great blocker, while the opposite is true (at least through what's been proven so far) of his teammate Charlie Kolar. Chig

Okonkwo is another potential option who may be a bit undersized but played under Vrabel for two years and has yet to miss a game in his career while being a consistent receiving option (450 or more yards in each season).

OL: The Patriots could do a handful of things here depending on how some of these positions are handled. RT Morgan Moses is going to be 36, so some sort of succession plan needs to be established there. Jared Wilson probably belongs at center but is blocked by Garrett Bradbury for now. I would move Wilson to center regardless of him winning a position battle or not and add a new left guard (whether through the draft or free agency) and draft a tackle as well. There's a bevy of mid-tier options on the interior available in free agency, including the Bills' Connor McGovern and David Edwards. The well-known names (as well-known as you can get for interior offensive linemen) on the inside this offseason are Isaac Seumalo from the Steelers and Joel Bitonio from the Browns, who are both older but talented players. Baltimore's Tyler Linderbaum is likely to command the largest contract of all linemen this offseason while playing center, which the team is unlikely to address externally.

Trade Candidates:

Las Vegas TE Michael Mayer: Mayer is an underutilized high draft pick (35th overall in 2023) that enjoyed his best season as a rookie in Josh McDaniels' offense. Maybe their history would scare him away (who knows what opinion people hold of McDaniels from his head coaching days), but Mayer would be a reliable fit as a second tight end in New England.

Chicago TE Cole Kmet: Kmet was the Bears' top tight end for his first five seasons, but was overtaken by first-round pick Colston Loveland in 2025. The Bears cap situation is up in the air, and they could clear \$8.4 million in space by trading Kmet. With the team losing Drew Dalman to retirement a year after signing him to a three-year, \$42 million deal, maybe a player-for-player trade of Garrett Bradbury for Kmet could be a win-win.

Defense

Maybe Interested	Should Be Interested	Top-Tier Needs & Players
EDGE Odafe Oweh	EDGE Boye Mafe	EDGE Jaelan Phillips
S Geno Stone	EDGE Dre'Mont Jones	
CB Eric Stokes	EDGE Kingsley Enagbare	
EDGE Joseph Ossai	LB Nakobe Dean	
CB Roger McCreary	S Kamren Curl	
	S Coby Bryant	

DL: While the Patriots are mostly good on the interior line, Khyiris Tonga's potential departure and questions surrounding Christian Barmore could provide reasons to add another body here, though it may be best addressed through the draft.

EDGE: Regardless of the K'Lavon Chaisson situation, the team needs to add at edge rusher. This should be addressed with a free agent signing and a high draft pick this season. Jaelan Phillips is a top two name on the market this offseason (alongside Trey Hendrickson) and will likely command a lot of money, but he's played very well while healthy. Boye Mafe is another name that fits the mold established by the Vrabel Patriots' additions at the position and will likely put up better numbers when given more opportunity. Kingsley Enagbare is in a similar position, though more extreme given his lesser playing time and statistics. Dre'Mont Jones would be an outlier in terms of size but could be a player commanding a similar deal to Chaisson. Odafe Oweh and Joseph Ossai are lesser-known names but could provide a solid option as pass rushers.

LB: The linebacker group for the Patriots is decent at this point, especially benefiting from Robert Spillane playing when healthy. The team should likely add another player with a top 100 pick or free agent signing if Jack Gibbens leaves, and Nakobe Dean could be a cheap option that provides a solid mix of pass coverage and rushing ability, though he has not been frequently healthy in the pros.

DB: The team could stand to add a low-cost option to provide depth at outside cornerback. Good players that are also okay with being depth pieces are hard to find, but taking a chance on high draft picks that haven't necessarily panned out (Stokes and McCreary) could be a reasonable approach here. The safety spots are likely okay if Hawkins returns, but if he leaves the team should add a young player to pair with Craig Woodson. Kamren Curl and Coby Bryant are guys going to their second contracts who are decent options, and Geno Stone will be just 27 having three straight years of starting roles in the AFC North via Baltimore and Cincinnati (you might recall he scored a pick six off of Maye in 2025). *(3/6 update: Kamren Curl resigned with the Rams for 3 years, \$36 million)*

Trade Candidates:

Cleveland EDGE Isaiah McGuire: McGuire has had consecutive seasons of solid edge play for the Browns, posting 8 TFLs in 2024 and 2025 while registering 4.5 sacks. Cleveland has a logjam on the edge with Myles Garrett taking up one spot and Alex Wright receiving a new extension. For a team that continues to struggle, the Browns could move a depth player for more draft capital or a player at a position of greater need (three starting OL part of 32 free agents with negative projected cap space in 2026).

Draft (WIP)

Picks:

Own Picks: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th

Other Picks: 4th*, 6th**, 6th^, 6th^^

**CHI via KC - acquired in 2025 draft along with 2025 pick 95 (Jared Wilson) for 2025 pick 85 (Nohl Williams)*

***Patriots traded Joshua Uche to the Chiefs in 2024 for Kansas City's 6th round pick in 2026.*

*^Patriots traded Davon Godchaux to the Saints in March 2025 for New Orleans' 7th round pick in 2026.
EDIT: this pick was traded to Pittsburgh with Kyle Dugger for Pittsburgh's 2026 6th round pick in October 2025.*

^^Patriots traded Keion White and a conditional 2026 7th round pick (if White is not active for 7 games) to the 49ers in October 2025 for San Francisco's 2026 6th round pick. White met the conditions so the Patriots will maintain their 2026 7th round pick.

Draft Philosophy

1. **EDGE addressed early** - the NFL doesn't often let players at premium positions (QB, WR, OT, EDGE) reach free agency, and this is shown in the dearth of talent at these positions with expiring contracts in 2026 and 2027. If you want a good edge rusher in today's NFL, you need to draft them. This should more likely than not be the Patriots' first round pick (as long as the board plays out in a way that avoids a significant reach), even if the team decides to bring back K'Lavon Chaisson.
2. **Offensive firepower and protection** - the team arguably should have been in the market for an early pick at receiver before cutting Stefon Diggs, and now needs to add even more at the position. The silver lining in this is that the slot receiver spot has opened up, and there are a handful of players expected to be available at the end of round 1 that could be potential fixes there. KC Concepcion and Omar Cooper compare very similarly to Diggs in terms of size, but win in different ways. Denzel Boston could be a "power slot" option that breaks the traditional mold of a smaller, quicker slot player. Tight end should also be a major focus, and while the team is likely out of the Kenyon Sadiq running, the team should look at players in the top 100 that may
3. **Depth building** - the Patriots had one of the healthiest teams in the entire NFL in 2025, and while it could be attributed to a strong training staff, betting on this trend to continue for a second year is a major risk. The team needs to add depth at positions across the board, with running back and linebacker being two specific spots that will need reinforcements.

Prospects

**Met with Patriots*

Position	Day One	Day Two	Day Three
QB	Fernando Mendoza, Indiana	Ty Simpson, Alabama	Garrett Nussmeier, LSU Carson Beck, Miami Sawyer Robertson

			Joe Fagnano, UConn Taylen Green, Arkansas Luke Altmeyer, Illinois
RB	Jeremiah Love, Notre Dame		Kaelon Black, Indiana* Adam Randall, Clemson*
WR	Carnell Tate, Ohio State Jordyn Tyson, Arizona State Makai Lemon, USC KC Concepcion, Texas A&M* Omar Cooper, Indiana	Chris Bell, Louisville Denzel Boston, Washington Skyler Bell, UConn Elijah Sarratt, Indiana Bryce Lance, NDSU De'Zhaun Stribling, Ole Miss*	Zachariah Branch, Georgia Cyrus Allen, Cincinnati*
TE	Kenyon Sadiq, Oregon	Oscar Delp, Georgia* Sam Roush, Stanford Max Klare, Ohio State Eli Raridon, Notre Dame* Nate Boerkircher, Texas A&M*	Eli Stowers, Vanderbilt Dallen Bentley, Utah
OL	G Vega Ioane, Penn State OL Francis Mauigoa, Miami OT Monroe Freeling, Georgia OT Blake Miller, Clemson OL Spencer Fano, Utah G Emmanuel Pregnon, Oregon OT Caleb Lomu, Utah OT Max Iheanachor, AZ State*	OT Kady Proctor, Alabama C Connor Lew, Auburn OT Caleb Tiernan, Northwestern C Parker Brailsford, Alabama C Jake Slaughter, Florida OL Gennings Dunker, Iowa	OT Travis Burke, Memphis* OL Jeremiah Wright, Auburn*
DL	Peter Woods, Clemson Kayden McDonald, Ohio State*	Lee Hunter, Texas Tech	
EDGE	Rueben Bain, Miami David Bailey, Texas Tech Keldric Faulk, Auburn TJ Parker, Clemson Cashius Howell, Texas A&M*	Zion Young, Mizzou* Akheem Mesidor, Miami R Mason Thomas, Oklahoma* Romello Height, Texas Tech*	George Gumbs Jr., Florida*
LB	Arvell Reese, Ohio State Sonny Styles, Ohio State CJ Allen, Georgia	Anthony Hill Jr, Texas Jake Golday, Cincinnati	
DB	S Caleb Downs, Ohio State CB Mansoor Delane, LSU CB Avieon Terrell, Clemson CB Brandon Cisse, S. Car. S Emmanuel Mcneil-Warren*	S AJ Haulcy, LSU	S Kamari Ramsey, USC* S Zakee Wheatley, Penn State*

Mock Draft

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43.		Zion Young EDGE Missouri	157.		Ephesians Prysock CB Washington	243.		Eli Heidenreich WR Navy
63.		Skyler Bell WR UConn	169.		Aaron Anderson WR LSU	246.		Travis Burke OT Memphis
78.		Oscar Delp TE Georgia	170.		Red Murdock LB Buffalo	2027 MIA 2nd		
130.		Zane Durant DT Penn State	209.		Joe Fagnano QB UConn	2027 NYG 7th		