

QUARTERBACKS ONCE AGAIN IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Quarterbacks in the National Football League dream about reaching a Super Bowl one day, maybe even winning it. Tom Brady has been to 10 of them, and seven times he's been a winner. NFL pre-season oddsmakers say the 44-year-old Brady and his Tampa Bay Buccaneers are the second most likely Super Bowl winner as this new season gets under way, behind only the Kansas City Chiefs.

But enough about Brady. There are many more interesting quarterback situations happening around the NFL, including another old goat and a quarterback room full of young 'uns with a variety of upside levels.

Here are seven QBs to watch, and why:

Aaron Rodgers represents the 'old goat' reference, even though he's seven years Brady's junior. Generally regarded among the top three QBs in the league, Rodgers is unhappy in Green Bay and wants a new home. So, even though he's under contract through 2023, Rodgers and management came up with a plan: Play this season with the Packers and then he'll be given his freedom to sign elsewhere next year. Watch for him to wind up in Denver.

Trevor Lawrence is the youngest, newest and, the experts say, the best young QB this year. The Clemson grad was the No. 1 pick in the draft, Jacksonville Jaguars, who need a lot more than a great quarterback to fix what ails them. However, Lawrence will be the focus of attention around the league, and not only because of his exceedingly long hair.

Justin Herbert was last year's rookie quarterback breakout star and the Los Angeles Chargers are hoping his brilliance continues. He's a big man, 6-foot-6 and 237 pounds who threw for 4,300 yards last year. He could become one of the greats.

Chicago Bears hope they have their QB of the future in Justin Fields, who will start the season behind veteran Andy Dalton. It used to be a regular occurrence for a rookie to spend a year or two learning the ropes behind a veteran and it appears that's what the Bears have planned for Fields, late of Ohio State.

Mac Jones was not as heralded a draft prospect as Lawrence or Fields, but he was snapped up by the New England Patriots late in the first round and, when veteran Cam Newton was released, is the first-game starter for Bill Belichick and the Patriots. New England is looking for its next Tom Brady and they're hoping Jones, the former Alabama QB, is the man for the job.

Finally, Matthew Stafford goes from a perennially bad team (the Lions) to a contender (the Rams) and he might just light it up in the new surroundings. And can Joe Burrow, the No. 1 draft selection one year ago, rebound from knee surgery to rekindle playoff hopes in Cincinnati?

- **Dylan Dethier** of golf.com, on how to handle the pressure of an 18th-hole putt for 59: "My approach is to stay far, far away from putts for 59 to avoid the potential embarrassment of missing them."
- **Patti Dawn Swansson**, on the power structure in women's hockey: "In Ponytail Puck it's Canada-U.S. and every other country is the Buffalo Sabres."
- **Alex Kaseberg** again: "The New England Patriots released **Cam Newton** after he 'misunderstood' COVID-19 procedures. Translation: He is an anti-vaxxer who risked causing an outbreak on the team that could cause them to forfeit games. Now teams won't touch Newton with a ten-foot swab."
- **Greg Cote** of the Miami Herald: "ESPN got duped by nationally televising a high school football game involving a fake team, 'Bishop Sycamore.' That's B.S. High, for short."
- **Scott Ostler** of the San Francisco Chronicle, on baseball's new extra-inning rule: "They should start every half inning with bases loaded. And all three runners blindfolded."
- **Jack Finarelli**, at SportsCurmudgeon.com, on a less-than-inviting Sunday night NFL prep-season game: "On Sunday night, the Falcons played the Browns in a final meaningless exhibition game. My choices for spending that evening boiled down to two things: 1. Watch the Falcons/Browns on TV. 2. Rearrange my sock drawer."
- **RJ Currie** of sportsdeke.com: "A great-grandmother and former softball player caught a foul ball at a San Francisco Giants game. Minutes later she was offered a contract by the Orioles."
- Currie again: "CapGeek.com recently had the New York Islanders as the only NHL club with an average player salary below \$2 million. Talk about cheapskates."
- Headline at fark.com: "**Cristiano Ronaldo** broke the international goal-scoring record, now targeting the smugness and douche records."
- Fark.com again, on **Blayre Turnbull** of the Canadian women's hockey team: "Cool: Winning the world hockey championship. Not so cool: Breaking your ankle in the celebration. Awesome: Coming back to the ice on a stretcher to

get your gold medal.”

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