

THE SPORTIER

Watson Out?

Over the past weeks, it has become evident that Houston Texans star QB Deshaun Watson is disgruntled with the organization. Even Watson, who led the NFL with 4,823 passing yards, can not control the mismanagement that plagues the Texans' organization. Former head coach/general manager Bill O'Brien was notorious for poorly running the Texans in his one year serving both roles, in 2019-2020. In August of 2019, the Texans made a move that has a lingering impact on the future of the organization. March of 2019 saw the first sign of what was to come, as the Texans let their All Pro safety, Tyrann Mathieu, walk in free agency. Mathieu is currently a major contributor in the Kansas City Chiefs secondary, as he helped them win their first Super Bowl in 50 years in February of 2020. In August of 2019, Laremy Tunsil, a 26-year-old offensive lineman, was the centerpiece of a deal between the Texans and Miami Dolphins. Tunsil, headed to Houston, was essentially traded for two first round picks, in the 2020 and 2021 NFL Drafts, from Houston. Even though Tunsil was named to his second Pro Bowl this season, Houston's 2021 first round pick unfortunately has been locked in as the third overall pick, as Houston's weak defense contributed to a 4-12 record. Even further, the September following the acquisition of Tunsil, the Texans dealt their Pro Bowl defensive end Jadeveon Clowney for two linebackers and a 2020 third round pick. These moves mentioned previously have not panned out for the team, as not only are they left with one of the worst defenses in the league and without their original top 3 pick in the upcoming draft, but they still remain well over the salary cap even with the loss of two star players. But none of these moves compare to the final move of the Bill O'Brien era. In March of 2020, the Texans agreed to a deal with the Arizona Cardinals to send their All Pro wide receiver DeAndre Hopkins westward for Cardinals running back David Johnson and a second- and fourth-round pick. One of the most questionable trades in recent history, Hopkins has continued his success, becoming the favorite target of Arizona QB Kyler Murray, as the Cardinals appear to have a bright future. With the questionable trades, coupled with the recent rumors that the Texans would not even interview Watson's preferred coach, Chiefs Offensive Coordinator Eric Bieniemy, for the Texans head coaching vacancy until very recently, a trade out of Houston is inevitable for the star QB. Unfortunately for Houston, they may have just seen one of the most prolific quarterbacks in their history slip away.

The End of an Era?

Before Sunday night's divisional round game between the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the New Orleans Saints, it was rumored that future Hall of Famer and Saints franchise quarterback Drew Brees would be retiring following the conclusion of the current season. Standing between him and a date with the Green Bay Packers and Aaron Rodgers, for what could have been Brees' fourth conference title game appearance, was the Bucs' Tom Brady. Brees and Brady hold the top two spots for some of the most notable stat categories for QBs in NFL history, with Brees ranking first in passing yards and completions and Brady holding the lead for passing TDs. In the matchup of the oldest quarterbacks in the league, this historic meeting was shaping up to be a great one. Unfortunately, one of these legends had to be on the losing end of the contest, and it ended up being Brees. To make matters worse, his performance was disappointing for his likely last one in the league. Brees ended the game with 134 yards passing and 1 touchdown, but the most eye-catching stat was his 3 interceptions. It was clear that Brees' arm was exhausted, as his inaccuracy on deeper passes and lack of power behind his throws was evident. Even though this was bound to happen at age 42, it was not aided by the multiple rib fractures that Brees suffered earlier in the season. Adding to the issues on the Saints side, a fumble by tight end Jared Cook turned into a score for the Buccaneers, making 3 out of the 4 total turnovers by the Saints convert into Buccaneer points. Brees' best target and one of the best wideouts in the league, Michael Thomas, was held reception-less, and Saints star running back Alvin Kamara only rushed a total of 18 times when it was evident that the passing game was struggling. Playing without the versatile backup tight end and quarterback Taysom Hill only hurt the Saints' efforts. Taking a look at the Buccaneers offense, they were for sure helped by the Saints' miscues. Brady by no means had a stellar game, completing 55% percent of his passes for 199 yards and 2 touchdowns, but the key was that he did not turn over the ball through the air. The Buccaneers were simply able to capitalize on poor quarterbacking and play calling, allowing Brady to lead the team to a 30-20 victory at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome in New Orleans. The moments following the game may have been the best of the whole night, though. After Brady was ready to leave the stadium, he went back out to the field to see Brees and his family hanging out near the end zone. Brady congratulated Brees on a fantastic career, and even played catch with Brees' sons. Either way, it was clear that Brady respected Brees as a player and person, and he knew how much he had meant to the city of New Orleans and the NFL as a whole. Even though Brees may not have had a signature game last night, his on-field and off-field work proves how excellent a player and man he is.

Sources: