

Offseason Player Movement

Intro/Lead - Michael Brown
Quarterback - Jason Wood
Running Back - Jeff Pasquino
Wide Receiver - Mark Wimer
Tight End - Jeff Pasquino
Offensive Line - Chris Smith
Kicker/Returners - Mike Herman
Individual Defensive Players - Aaron Rudnicki

Every year, some journeyman turns into a star simply because he's got a new address. Is it due to a new system? The weather? Something in the water? The answers to these are: probably, probably not, usually.

Some situations may upgrade a player for obvious reasons. For instance, if someone was a backup before but now he's going to start, the chances are pretty good that he'll be more valuable. But how do we know which players will turn into stars? And how do we know how the stars (I'm looking at you, Jay Cutler) will respond to a change of scenery? That's where we come in.

We've broken down each key situation by position to give a comprehensive look at all that has gone on this offseason in the fantasy world. Our team of writers has managed to steal playbooks for all 32 teams to see exactly how these players will be utilized. And even if certain aspects of that last sentence are complete fabrications, just know that you're in good hands here with our evaluation and analysis.

Even if you don't take our suggestions to the bank, be aware that all of these players are in the unique position of having just about everything you knew about them basically tossed out the window. We simply can't guarantee with any certainty how one player adjusts or adapts to his new surroundings, especially this early in the offseason. But that's what makes this part of fantasy football so much fun. It's also why you'd do well to read what is below, and then follow up with us on our website throughout the summer months to see exactly how each player is adjusting.



QUARTERBACK

1. Jay Cutler - Chicago (from Denver)

What happened: Once it became clear that new head coach Josh McDaniels coveted Matt Cassel to run his offense, the coach and Cutler didn't see eye to eye. Bears GM Jerry Angelo pulled the trigger on a bold move that gives the Bears their best signal caller in decades, if not ever.

What it means: Bears fans will now find out if they really have been a quarterback short of a title these last few years. Cutler will solidify the position and should dramatically improve Chicago's passing attack.

2. Matt Cassel - Kansas City (from NE)

What happened: Cassel stepped in for an injured Tom Brady last year and played quite well. Scott Pioli obtained the rights to Cassel, who will serve as the cornerstone of the Chiefs rebuilding effort.

What it means: Cassel will be the unquestioned starter for a team in desperate need of offensive cohesion. The good news is that head coach Todd Haley

worked wonders when he was in Arizona. The bad news is that Kansas City doesn't have many proven weapons, particularly following the trade of future Hall of Fame TE Tony Gonzalez to Atlanta.

3. Sage Rosenfels - Minnesota (from Houston)

What happened: After three seasons backing up Matt Schaub in Houston, Rosenfels was traded to Minnesota to compete for the starting role with Tarvaris Jackson.

What it means: Rosenfels is a gunslinger who brings a startlingly different approach to the position than Jackson. On one hand, Rosenfels completes a high percentage of passes. On the other hand, he's a turnover machine (29 interceptions in 453 attempts). If he wins the job, Rosenfels could be a fantasy sleeper in leagues that don't penalize turnovers harshly. Of course, all of this goes out the window if Favre comes to town.

4. Byron Leftwich - Tampa Bay (from Pittsburgh)

What happened: Leftwich played well in limited action last year as Ben Roethlisberger's backup, and parlayed that into a two-year contract with Tampa.

What it means: With a new coach, several other veteran quarterbacks on the roster, and a rookie first rounder in tow, Leftwich has precious little time to make his mark. Rookie Josh Freeman realistically needs some seasoning, so Leftwich could emerge as the opening week starter and, if he plays well, could hold onto the job for much of the season.

5. Kyle Orton - Denver (from Chicago)

What happened: The Bears didn't hesitate to send Orton packing for the chance to bring Jay Cutler aboard. He'll now compete for the starting job against Chris Simms in Denver.

What it means: Most assume Orton will win the job in Denver, which would make him an attractive sleeper given the likes of Brandon Marshall and Eddie Royal at his disposal. But Orton is hardly a pedigreed passer and must earn the job against a healthy and focused Simms.

6. Chris Simms - Denver (from Tennessee)

What happened: Last year, Simms quietly served Tennessee well as a backup, and signed with Denver to be Jay Cutler's backup. But with Cutler's trade to Chicago, new Head Coach Josh McDaniels has promised an open competition between Simms and Kyle Orton.

What it means: While Simms hasn't done enough to bet on his success, he always possessed the size, mechanics and temperament to earn a starting role. Orton should be considered the favorite, but he's by no means assured of winning the job. If Simms emerges, he has the supporting cast to put up respectable numbers.

7. Jon Kitna - Dallas (from Detroit)

What happened: The Cowboys struggled when Tony Romo was sidelined last season, so they made acquiring Kitna a priority to insulate against a similar occurrence in the future.

What it means: Kitna has been a Top 10 fantasy quarterback for three different teams and gives the Cowboys the safety valve they sorely missed in 2008. Just as importantly, he has chemistry with wide-out Roy Williams, having thrown to him in Detroit during both of Kitna's 4,000-passing seasons.

8. Jeff Garcia - Oakland (from Tampa Bay)

What happened: After two seasons starting in Tampa, the new regime decided to go in a different direction. Garcia

landed in one of the few places he might actually see the field. Oakland is Garcia's fifth team in six years.

What it means: Garcia isn't the kind of veteran who comfortably mentors a younger player willingly, and he still believes he should start. Make no mistake – the Raiders have every intention of playing JaMarcus Russell. But you can never predict what's going to happen in Oakland. Garcia won't hesitate to press for a chance at the first sign of discontent with his young teammate.

OTHER NOTABLE QUARTERBACKS WHO CHANGED TEAMS:

Kyle Boller - Saint Louis (from Baltimore)
Ryan Fitzpatrick - Buffalo (from Cincinnati)
Damon Huard - San Francisco (from Kansas City)
J.T. O'Sullivan - Cincinnati (from San Francisco)
Dan Orlovsky - Houston (from Detroit)
Patrick Ramsey - Tennessee (from Denver)
Brett Ratliff - Cleveland (from NY Jets)

Note: As of press time, Brett Favre was still unsigned but was possibly contemplating a comeback with the Minnesota Vikings.

RUNNING BACK

1. Derrick Ward - Tampa Bay (from NYG)

What happened: The Bucs added Derrick Ward as a free agent, awarding him a four-year contract.

What it means: Tampa Bay's running back stable got pretty thin in a hurry. Warrick Dunn was not re-signed and Cadillac Williams blew out his knee again late last year and may be lost for 2009. Although he'll share carries with Earnest Graham, Ward looks to be the favorite to start and to repeat a 1,000-yard season.

2. Fred Taylor - New England (from Jacksonville)

What happened: The Patriots signed the veteran Jaguar to a two-year deal.

What it means: New England loves to use a committee approach to running the ball, and they certainly love veteran contributors looking to go on one last championship run. Taylor will compete with Laurence Maroney for the bulk of the work, and both are likely to share touches with Kevin Faulk and Sammy Morris.

3. Maurice Morris - Detroit (from Seattle)

What happened: The long-time Seahawk inked a three-year deal to join the Lions.

What it means: After Kevin Smith, the tailback depth chart gets very thin in Detroit. The Lions are bolstering their

offense with additional weapons, so if Smith needs to share time or gets injured, the job would be Morris's to lose.

4. Dominic Rhodes - Buffalo (from Indianapolis)

What happened: Rhodes signed a two-year deal with the Bills after his second go-round with Indianapolis last season.

What it means: Buffalo is preparing for a suspension of as many as three games for starter Marshawn Lynch. That would promote Fred Jackson to a starting role and leave the backup role vacant. Enter Rhodes, who is a strong secondary back and is used to a committee approach.

5. Leonard Weaver - Philadelphia (from Seattle)

What happened: The Eagles added Leonard Weaver via free agency, signing him to a one-year contract.

What it means: When Correll Buckhalter left for Denver, Philadelphia was devoid of talent after starter Brian Westbrook. So, they went out and signed Weaver. Weaver has good hands and can rush inside, and also stepped up when injuries afforded him more playing time. Weaver's role, however, is likely to be diminished once rookie LeSean McCoy learns the Eagle offense.

6. LaMont Jordan - Denver (from NE)

7. Correll Buckhalter - Denver (from Philadelphia)

8. J.J. Arrington - Denver (from Arizona)

What happened: Denver added three backs to form a new group of potential rushers during the free agency period prior to the NFL Draft.

What it means: New head coach Josh McDaniels appeared to be repeating his previous approach from New England, gathering several backs to put together a large, running back committee. All that changed on Draft Day, however, as the Broncos used their first pick to select Knowshon Moreno from Georgia. They will likely insert him as their primary ball carrier. Barring an injury or a holdout, all three backs may not see much in the way of playing time for Denver in 2009.

OTHER NOTABLE RUNNING BACKS WHO CHANGED TEAMS

(INCLUDES FBS):

Heath Evans - New Orleans (from New England)
Noah Herron - Cleveland (from New York Jets)
Jason Wright - Arizona (from Cleveland)

Note: As of press time, four high-profile running backs (Warrick Dunn, Edgerrin James, Rudi Johnson, and Deuce McAllister) remained unsigned.

WIDE RECEIVER

1. Terrell Owens - Buffalo (from Dallas)

What happened: After Owens was released by the Cowboys, he surprisingly signed to play for the Bills.

What it means: Owens will team with Lee Evans to form an impressive starting duo, but will he be able to be a good teammate this year? Historically, he behaves fairly well in his first year in a new city. If he's got his attitude where it needs to be, Owens can still be a dominant player.

2. T.J. Houshmandzadeh - Seattle (from Cincinnati)

What happened: Houshmandzadeh was an unrestricted free agent and got a huge deal to play for Seattle.

What it means: Houshmandzadeh was one of the best receivers in this year's free-agent pool. Despite working with sub-par quarterback talent for parts of the last three years, he still caught at least 90 passes each season. It remains to be seen how he'll transition from the Bengals' to the Seahawks' system, but he is expected to be their top receiver in 2009.

3. Laveranues Coles - Cincinnati (from NYJ)

What happened: After the Jets released Coles, he got a four-year deal to join Cincinnati. He'll attempt to fill the void left by the departed T.J. Houshmandzadeh.

What it means: Coles is a hard working player who landed in a potentially good spot (depending on whether Carson Palmer returns to full health). If Palmer struggles again this year, though, Coles will have a hard time making an impact fantasy-wise.

4. Torry Holt - Jacksonville (from St. Louis)

What happened: Holt was released by the Rams and signed with Jacksonville for three years.

What it means: Holt has been a leading NFL wideout for many years, but he's starting to show all the mileage on his legs. He'll be a veteran leader for the Jaguars, but the drop-off to 64 receptions and three touchdowns last year with Saint Louis was an ominous sign. Still, a change of scenery could rejuvenate him.

5. Bryant Johnson - Detroit (from San Francisco)

What happened: Johnson was an unrestricted free agent and signed with Detroit to play second-fiddle to Calvin

Johnson.

What it means: Though he was given a shot to be a featured receiver in San Francisco, he put up mediocre numbers (45/546/3). Now he joins an 0-16 team that figures to start a rookie quarterback for most of the year.

6. Brandon Jones - San Francisco (from Tennessee)

What happened: Jones was an unrestricted free agent who was signed by the 49ers.

What it means: Jones historically had trouble staying healthy in Tennessee, but he did set career highs in targets (62), receptions (41) and yards receiving (449) while playing in all 16 games. He'll get the same shot that Bryant Johnson got last year – to be a starter – but it remains to be seen if Jones is up to the task.

7. Nate Washington - Tennessee (from Pittsburgh)

What happened: An unrestricted free agent, Washington got \$9 million in guaranteed money from Tennessee to join their squad.

What it means: Washington is an upgrade for the Titans and could flourish if he gets on the same page with Kerry Collins. However, the Titans' style of offense doesn't typically produce top-tier fantasy wide receivers. They were 27th in passing offense in 2008 with Collins at the helm (2,819 pass yards) and 28th in passing touchdowns, with 13.

8. Jabar Gaffney - Denver (from NE)

What happened: Gaffney was an unrestricted free agent and followed coach Josh McDaniels from New England to Denver.

What it means: Gaffney usually plays a solid 16 games and snagged 38/468/2 receiving from Matt Cassel last year. He should be a viable third receiver for the Broncos.

9. Joey Galloway - New England (from TB)

What happened: Galloway was released by the Bucs after an injury-marred season. New England decided that the 37-year old may still have some gas in the tank and signed him.

What it means: Galloway is just one season removed from a string of three consecutive 1,000-yard campaigns. He probably won't approach those numbers as New England's third receiver, but he might have some decent games left in the old legs.

OTHER NOTABLE WIDE RECEIVERS WHO CHANGED TEAMS:

Bobby Engram - Kansas City (from Seattle)

Note: As of press time, Plaxico Burress, D.J. Hackett and Marvin Harrison, and Amani Toomer remained unsigned.

TIGHT END

1. Tony Gonzalez - Atlanta (from Kansas City)

What happened: The Falcons addressed their glaring need for a pass-catching tight end by trading their 2010 second-round draft choice to the Chiefs for Gonzalez.

What it means: Gonzalez is a future Hall of Fame tight end and is coming off a 96-catch season. Matt Ryan now has Roddy White and Gonzalez to go along with Michael Turner in what appears to be a very formidable offense for 2009.

2. Kellen Winslow - Tampa Bay (from Cleveland)

What happened: Cleveland traded away its young and talented tight end for undisclosed future draft picks.

What it means: The Bucs needed options in their passing attack, and Winslow should instantly add a strong second option to complement WR Antonio Bryant. Whoever wins the quarterback job in Tampa should be looking for Winslow quite a bit, especially in the red zone.

3. L.J. Smith - Baltimore (from Philadelphia)

What happened: Free agent L.J. Smith signed a one-year deal with the Ravens.

What it means: The writing is on the wall for Todd Heap in Baltimore. Heap's health is waning and he was used mostly as a blocker last year, so Smith becomes the receiving tight end in the Ravens offense. It is uncertain if Smith can rekindle his career and get back to being a Top 10 fantasy tight end, especially in a run-first Ravens offense.

4. Chris Baker - New England (from NY Jets)

What happened: Baker signed a five-year deal with New England in free agency.

What it means: The Patriots needed depth behind Ben Watson, who has missed an average of three games a year the past three seasons. Watson has also seen his catches and yards per catch drop in each of the last two seasons, so additional help was warranted. With Tom Brady expected back, Baker has

decent upside to be a serviceable fantasy backup.

5. Robert Royal - Cleveland (from Buffalo)

What happened: The Browns traded Kellen Winslow to Tampa Bay and added Royal via free agency.

What it means: Cleveland looks to be a team in turmoil with so many changes on offense for 2009. Royal may have the inside track to start at tight end but is unlikely to be a major contributor as a receiver.

OTHER NOTABLE TIGHT ENDS WHO CHANGED TEAMS:

Alex Smith - New England (from Tampa Bay)

Anthony Becht - St. Louis (from Arizona)

Dan Campbell - New Orleans (from Detroit)

Michael Gaines - Chicago (from Detroit)

Will Heller - Detroit (from Seattle)

Tony Curtis - Kansas City (from Dallas)

OFFENSIVE LINE

1. T Jason Peters - Philadelphia (from Buffalo)

What happened: The Bills traded their former franchise LT to Philadelphia because of a contract dispute. The Eagles gave up three picks (including the 28th overall pick this season) for the rights to Peters.

What it means: Peters has become one of the more dominant left tackles in the game. He has the speed and quickness to deal with the speed rushers and the strength to punish defenders in the running game. He is an upgrade for the Eagles over longtime starter Tra Thomas.

2. C Jason Brown - Saint Louis (from Baltimore)

What happened: The Rams needed a lot of offensive line help and landed a huge piece in revamping it this offseason when they inked Brown.

What it means: Brown is a talented, young center who will become the leader of an offensive line looking to improve this season. He is just 25 and entering his fifth season in the league. Having played in all 16 games each of the last two seasons, he is a great player to re-build a team around.

3. T Stacy Andrews - Philadelphia (from Cincinnati)

What happened: It is going to be the Andrews brothers show in 2009 after Stacy signed a six-year deal to join his brother Shawn on the right side of the Eagles offensive line.

What it means: Andrews has played in 29 of 32 games over the last two seasons

and is a large, punishing lineman. He doesn't have great quickness and can be exposed by speed rushers but his addition, along with fellow newcomer Jason Peters, ensures the Eagles offensive line will be big and physical in 2009.

4. C Matt Birk - Baltimore (from Minnesota)

What happened: The Ravens lost talented young center Jason Brown to the Rams in free agency this offseason, but somewhat made amends by signing veteran center Matt Birk to a four-year deal.

What it means: Birk has 11 years of experience. While he may not be the player he once was, his veteran savvy and talent will definitely fill the hole in the middle of the Ravens offensive line.

5. G Derrick Dockery - Washington (from Buffalo)

What happened: Dockery played well, but the Bills could not justify his salary and released him. The Redskins had a hole at the guard position and welcomed Dockery back with open arms.

What it means: He has played with the other starting linemen in the past, and he will have an easy transition back into the Redskins fold.

6. T Marvel Smith - San Francisco (from Pittsburgh)

What happened: Smith was a very good player early on in his career, but a nagging back injury has derailed his productivity. Now he is looking to regain his reputation as a top tackle with a new franchise.

What it means: If Smith can put injury woes behind him, he can step into a starting role and do a good job. It is just as likely, however, that his bad back will persist for the rest of his career, limiting his effectiveness.

7. C Samson Satele - Oakland (from Miami)

What happened: A few weeks after signing Jake Grove, the Dolphins traded their gifted, young center Samson Satele to the Raiders for a draft choice.

What it means: Satele had shoulder surgery to repair a torn labrum but should be back to full health by the start of the season. He is a strong, intelligent player and the Raiders will be very happy to have him manning the interior of their offensive line.

8. C Jake Grove - Miami (from Oakland)

What happened: Grove was unable to stay healthy throughout his five seasons in Oakland, and the Raiders allowed him

to leave and sign with Miami.

What it means: He is a very talented player, and the Dolphins believe his upside outweighs the likelihood for injury. The Dolphins gave up a talented young center in his own right in Samson Satele, so Grove needs to play exceptionally well and stay healthy this season.

9. T Tra Thomas - Jacksonville (from Philadelphia)

What happened: Jacksonville suffered through horrible injury woes along the offensive line last season. In an attempt to stabilize the offensive line and return to dominance, the Jaguars picked up Thomas.

What it means: Thomas is getting a little long in the tooth at 34, but should still have another good season or two and is certainly an upgrade at the right tackle position.

10. T Orlando Pace - Chicago (from St. Louis)

What happened: The Bears signed formerly-elite lineman Orlando Pace in an attempt to shore up a weakness at left tackle.

What it means: At the top of his game, Pace was truly dominant. He has been injury prone for a few seasons now, however, and has not been as effective as he was early in his career. Still, his arrival alone is a boon for the offensive line as he'll give them a strong, veteran presence. Pace has had a Hall of Fame career, and if he can come even close to his past production, he could have a Pro Bowl season for the club.

OTHER NOTABLE OFFENSIVE LINE-MEN WHO CHANGED TEAMS:

T Khalif Barnes - Oakland (from Jacksonville)

G Mike Goff - Kansas City (from San Diego)

C Geoff Hangartner - Buffalo (from Carolina)

T Daniel Loper - Detroit (from Tennessee)

T Frank Omiyale - Chicago (from Carolina)

T Erik Pears - Oakland (from Denver)

G Duke Preston - Green Bay (from Buffalo)

T Kevin Shaffer - Chicago (from Cleveland)

T John St. Clair - Cleveland (from Chicago)

G Floyd Womack - Cleveland (from Seattle)

DEFENSIVE LINE

1. DT Albert Haynesworth - Washington (from Tennessee)

What happened: The league's most dominant defensive tackle left the Titans and signed with the Redskins for seven years.

What it means: Haynesworth has yet to play a full 16-game season, but over the past couple of years he has clearly

emerged as one of the best fantasy defensive tackles in the game. He will certainly help solidify the interior of the Redskins defensive line and should make things much easier for pass rushers like Andre Carter and rookie Brian Orakpo.

2. DE Antonio Smith - Houston (from Arizona)

What happened: Smith left Phoenix and signed a five-year contract to play opposite Mario Williams.

What it means: A former fifth-round pick with just 15.5 career sacks, Smith was the best pass rusher available in free agency this year. Playing opposite Mario Williams along with the switch from a 3-4 to a 4-3 defense should boost his numbers and could make him a Top 20 fantasy defensive end.

3. DE Chris Canty - NY Giants (from Dallas)

What happened: The Giants added a versatile player for their defensive line by signing Canty from Dallas to a six-year deal.

What it means: Canty's numbers in Dallas were not that impressive (10 career sacks in 64 games), but he is moving to a much better situation. The Giants have the league's best collection of pass rushers, which should create a lot of one-on-one situations. Canty could see a lot of snaps at defensive tackle, but he can also play end on run downs and the contract he signed should ensure that he gets plenty of playing time.

4. DE Kenyon Coleman - Cleveland (from NY Jets)

What happened: In a draft day trade, the Jets shipped Kenyon Coleman and a package of players and picks to the Browns for the chance to draft Mark Sanchez.

What it means: Coleman has been an effective starter for the past two years and should make a quick adjustment playing in the same scheme under Eric Mangini. Look for him to start at DE on a strong defensive line. Although he has limited upside as a pass rusher, Coleman is a reliable fantasy option due to his surprisingly high tackle numbers.

5. DT Jovan Haye - Tennessee (from Tampa Bay)

What happened: After losing Albert Haynesworth in free agency, the Titans signed Haye to a four-year contract.

What it means: Haye broke out in 2007 and finished as the top fantasy defensive tackle, but he struggled with injuries for much of 2008. While he doesn't have

near the size or strength of Haynesworth, Haye is one of the quickest defensive tackles in the league. The Titans will likely use a committee approach to try and fill Haynesworth's shoes, but Haye could become a serviceable starter in DT-required leagues.

OTHER NOTABLE DEFENSIVE LINEMEN WHO CHANGED TEAMS:

DT Rocky Bernard - NY Giants (from Seattle)
 DT Shaun Cody - Houston (from Detroit)
 DT Colin Cole - Seattle (from Green Bay)
 DT Rod Coleman - New Orleans (from Atlanta)
 DE Demetric Evans - San Francisco (from Washington)
 DT Grady Jackson - Detroit (from Atlanta)
 DT Tank Johnson - Cincinnati (from Dallas)
 DT C.J. Mosley - Cleveland (from NY Jets)
 DT Cory Redding - Seattle (from Detroit)
 DE Darrell Reid - Denver (from Indianapolis)
 DE Darrell Robertson - Kansas City (from New England)

LINEBACKER

1. ILB Bart Scott - New York Jets (from Baltimore)

What happened: Scott signed a six-year contract to follow Rex Ryan out of Baltimore and join him with the Jets.

What it means: Ryan signed Scott to become a focal point of the new defense. Scott has often been overshadowed by Ray Lewis and Terrell Suggs in Baltimore, but he'll combine with David Harris to give the Jets a very strong ILB tandem. While he may not live up to the huge contract, Scott should see a bump in his production and wind up as a Top 20 fantasy LB.

2. OLB Julian Peterson - Detroit (from Seattle)

What happened: Peterson refused to take a salary cut, so the Seahawks traded him to Detroit for Cory Redding and a fifth round pick.

What it means: The Seahawks felt Peterson's skills were on the decline and that he was no longer worth the money he was due. Peterson should provide a big boost to the Lions defense. He's expected to line up at SLB in the base package but could also see plenty of time as a DE in passing situations after averaging eight sacks per year over the last three seasons.

3. OLB Michael Boley - New York Giants (from Atlanta)

What happened: Boley left the Falcons to sign a five-year contract with the Giants.

What it means: Boley was a three-year starter for the Falcons and enjoyed

a breakout season in 2007. Although he played SLB in Atlanta and wasn't always a three-down player, he'll likely be moved to WLB with the Giants and play in all downs and situations. With all the talent the Giants have on the defensive line and an aging Antonio Pierce at MLB, Boley is in a great situation and could produce like a LB3 for fantasy owners.

4. ILB Kevin Burnett - San Diego (from Dallas)

What happened: Burnett joins a very strong LB group in San Diego after signing a two year contract.

What it means: Although Burnett was never able to emerge as a starter during his four years in Dallas, he proved to be a very strong nickel linebacker. The Chargers have not gotten a lot of production from Matt Wilhelm and Tim Dobbins at ILB, so they should give Burnett a chance to win that job. Given his strength in coverage, there is a good chance that Burnett could emerge as a three-down linebacker alongside Stephen Cooper.

5. OLB Angelo Crowell - Tampa Bay (from Buffalo)

What happened: After spending last year on injured reserve, Crowell left the Bills and signed a one-year contract with Tampa.

What it means: Crowell has been a very productive fantasy linebacker in Buffalo, but he may be limited to a two-down role in Tampa. Initial indications are that Jermaine Phillips will be moved from safety to WLB replace Derrick Brooks, which would leave Crowell at SLB. He's an athletic and versatile linebacker, but he may need some breaks to become a quality fantasy starter again.

OTHER NOTABLE LINEBACKERS WHO CHANGED TEAMS:

OLB Tully Banta-Cain - New England (from San Francisco)
 ILB Eric Barton - Cleveland (from NY Jets)
 ILB Keith Brooking - Dallas (from Atlanta)
 ILB Andra Davis - Denver (from Cleveland)
 OLB Cato June - Houston (from Tampa Bay)
 OLB Niko Koutouvides - Tampa Bay (from Denver)
 OLB Mike Peterson - Atlanta (from Jacksonville)
 ILB Pat Thomas - Buffalo (from Kansas City)
 ILB Zach Thomas - Kansas City (from Dallas)
 OLB Mike Vrabel - Kansas City (from New England)

DEFENSIVE BACK

1. S Gibril Wilson - Miami (from Oakland)

What happened: One year after signing a big contract, the Raiders released

Wilson and he quickly signed a five-year contract with the Dolphins.

What it means: Wilson has been one of the most consistent fantasy defensive backs in the league over the last five seasons. Although he is at his best playing up in the box, the Dolphins already use Jeremiah Bell in that role. Therefore, Wilson is expected to start out at free safety. His tackle numbers will likely take a hit, but he could also see a corresponding bump in big plays. He should remain a top ten safety.

2. S Sean Jones - Philadelphia (from Cleveland)

What happened: Jones left the Browns to sign a one-year contract with the Eagles.

What it means: Jones has proven to be one of the league's best playmaking safeties, with 14 interceptions over the past three seasons. Although he played strong safety in Cleveland, he's expected to compete for the free safety spot vacated by Brian Dawkins. He'll get competition for the starting spot from Quintin Demps, but Jones is a physical presence and a ballhawk who should be an excellent fit in the Eagles aggressive defense.

3. S Brian Dawkins - Denver (from Philadelphia)

What happened: The longtime Eagle left Philadelphia by signing a five-year contract with the Broncos.

What it means: Dawkins has been one of the best safeties in the league and a great leader for the Eagles over the years. At 35, he's probably lost a step, but he'll be a great addition for a Broncos defense that struggled to stop anybody last year. While he may not get as many opportunities to blitz in Denver, he should remain a reliable fantasy option as long as he is healthy.

4. CB Leigh Bodden - New England (from Detroit)

What happened: After a disappointing season in Detroit, Bodden signed a one-year deal with the Patriots.

What it means: Bodden finished 2007 as the highest scoring fantasy cornerback in the league, but struggled in 2008 after a trade to Detroit. There were reports that the Patriots offered a multiyear deal, but it appears that Bodden hopes to turn his career around with a big 2009 and then sign an even bigger contract next season. Bodden is a physical cornerback who excels in man-to-man coverage, and the Patriots system should be a great fit.

5. S James Butler - St. Louis (from NY Giants)

What happened: Butler signed a four-year contract to be the Rams strong safety.

What it means: Butler's production with the Giants was not that impressive, but he was often splitting time with others. He has ideal size for strong safety and should see plenty of time up in the box as O.J. Atogwe patrols the deep secondary. With rookie James Laurinaitis playing in front of him, Butler could be headed for a breakout season.

OTHER NOTABLE DEFENSIVE BACKS WHO CHANGED TEAMS:

S CC Brown - New York Giants (from Houston)
 CB Phillip Buchanon - Detroit (from Tampa Bay)
 S Josh Bullocks - Chicago (from New Orleans)
 CB Chris Carr - Baltimore (from Tennessee)
 S Sean Considine - Jacksonville (from Philadelphia)
 CB Travis Daniels - Kansas City (from Miami)
 CB Drayton Florence - Buffalo (from Jacksonville)
 CB Domonique Foxworth - Baltimore (from Atlanta)
 CB Andre Goodman - Denver (from Miami)
 CB Eric Green - Miami (from Arizona)
 CB Jabari Greer - New Orleans (from Buffalo)
 CB Anthony Henry - Detroit (from Dallas)
 S Renaldo Hill - Denver (from Miami)
 CB Corey Ivy - Cleveland (from Baltimore)
 CB Eric King - Detroit (from Tennessee)
 S Jim Leonhard - NY Jets (from Baltimore)
 CB Bryant McFadden - Arizona (from Pittsburgh)
 CB Karl Paymah - Minnesota (from Denver)
 CB Hank Poteat - Cleveland (from NY Jets)
 S Gerald Sensabaugh - Dallas (from Jacksonville)
 S Darren Sharper - New Orleans (from Minnesota)
 CB Lito Sheppard - NY Jets (from Philadelphia)
 CB Shawn Springs - New England (from Washington)
 CB Donald Strickland - NY Jets (from San Francisco)

KICKER

1. Mike Nugent - Tampa Bay (from NY Jets)

What happened: After suffering a quad injury in Week 1, Nugent did not play the remainder of the year. Jay Feely then kicked well enough to keep the job even after Nugent was healthy. Nugent made the decision of which kicker to keep a relatively easy call by opting to test free agency.

What it means: The Bucs signed Nugent to compete with incumbent Matt Bryant. Bryant, meanwhile, had a strong scoring year in 2008, although he did miss some long range kicks, which continues to be his weak area.

2. Dave Rayner - Washington (from Cincinnati)

What happened: Washington is

Rayner's sixth stop in the NFL. He previously played for Indianapolis, Green Bay, Kansas City, San Diego and Cincinnati.

What it means: Rayner, whose strength is on kickoffs, will compete with incumbent Shaun Suisham. Suisham struggled last year and missed 10 field goal attempts (although some of that has been attributed to his holder, punter Ryan Plackemeier - who is no longer with the team).

Note: As of press time, three high-profile kickers (John Carney, Martin Gramatica, and Matt Stover) remained unsigned.

RETURNER

1. CB Chris Carr - Baltimore (from Tennessee)

After several years of quantity with the Raiders, and a year of quality with the Titans in 2008, Carr landed with the Ravens. He'll take over on both kickoff and punt returns. WR Yamon Figurs gradually lost both jobs last year due to injury and ineffectiveness.

2. RB J.J. Arrington - Denver (from Arizona)

Eddie Royal was drafted by the Broncos last year to be their return specialist but quickly emerged as a starting wide receiver. So, his special teams work was scaled back to just punt returns. Arrington emerged as a decent threat on kickoff return with the Cardinals, and should step into that role for Denver.

3. WR Mark Jones - Tennessee (from Carolina)

Jones has evolved into a journeyman return specialist. He grew into the role with Tampa before getting injured. Last year, the Panthers brought him in after WR Ryne Robinson was injured. This year, he'll take over the job for the Titans after Chris Carr landed in Baltimore.

4. WR Glenn Holt - Minnesota (from Cincinnati)

Holt will compete for a spot on the roster as starting kickoff returner and backup wide receiver. The Vikings have had a different annual leading kickoff returner for 11 consecutive years.

OTHER NOTABLE RETURNERS WHO CHANGED TEAMS:

CB Phillip Buchanon - Detroit (from Tampa Bay)
 RB Correll Buckhalter - Denver (from Philadelphia)
 WR Bobby Engram - Kansas City (from Seattle)
 CB Ellis Hobbs - Philadelphia (from New England)
 WR T.J. Houshmandzadeh - Seattle (from Cincinnati)
 RB Derrick Ward - Tampa Bay (from NY Giants)