



Browns quarterback Deshaun Watson warms up before a preseason game Saturday in Cleveland. AP PHOTO/CAROLYN KASTER

Watson named Browns starting quarterback

By Joe Reedy
AP Sports Writer

BEREA, Ohio (AP) — Not many thought Deshaun Watson had a chance of reclaiming the starting quarterback job with the Cleveland Browns over the past 22 months. Since Watson ruptured his right Achilles tendon the first time in a Week 7 game in 2024, owner Jimmy Haslam had said during last year’s owners meetings that the Browns “took a big swing and miss” when they sent three first-round picks to Houston for the controversial quarterback in 2022. After Shedeur Sanders had a solid first half in last Saturday’s 31-7 loss to Buffalo, a frustrated Watson said the

boos from the crowd were “personal” and showed “disrespect” after he took the field in Cleveland for the first time in 22 months. Despite the hurdles and a close competition with Sanders, Watson will be the Browns’ starting quarterback for their Sept. 13 opener at the Jacksonville Jaguars. Coach Todd Monken made the announcement Monday after informing Watson and Sanders. “I took in the full body of work over the course of the offseason to training camp to the games, the joint practice, and ultimately felt like to start the season on the road, Deshaun gave us the best chance to move the ball and score points. I mean,

that’s really what it’s about,” Monken said. “I felt that way going into the last game, but wasn’t sure. And after we talked as a staff and we re-looked at everything, we’re going to go that direction.” Watson, a 10-year veteran, split reps with Sanders with the first unit throughout the off-season, training camp and the preseason. The decision to start him will not be popular with Browns fans, who have booed Watson repeatedly during his time in Cleveland, and have put a lot of support behind Sanders since he was drafted last year. Monken reiterated that fan sentiment and Watson’s comments did not play a role in his decision.

“Ultimately, the fans want us to win. That’s our job as coaches, why we’re hired to try and put the best product on the field. And when we don’t, then I understand their frustration. But ultimately they don’t decide who plays. I mean, who would I be if I let someone outside of the building decide who plays?” Monken said. Watson has started only 19 games for Cleveland since being acquired from Houston and signing a fully guaranteed \$230 million contract that will perhaps go down as one of the worst trades and contracts in NFL history. He is 9-10 with the Browns, with 19 touchdown passes, 12 interceptions and an 80.7 passer rating.

BUTKER

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year after leading the Bucs to the playoffs two of the past three seasons, started and played two series in his first preseason action since 2024. He was 2 of 4 for 10 yards before being replaced by backup Jake Browning late in the first quarter. With three-time Super Bowl champion Patrick Mahomes sitting out, Justin Fields opened at quarterback

for the Chiefs, who have not said whether Mahomes will play in next week’s preseason finale against Seattle. The two-time league MVP is coming back from a knee injury suffered last December and has been a full participant in training camp practices. Fields departed in the second quarter, replaced by rookie Garrett Nussmeier after leading a drive that produced the first of Butker’s three first-half field goals. Nuss-

meier’s first series led to a 58-yard field goal and Butker added his 69-yarder after Tampa Bay turned the ball over on at the Kansas City 49 with 3 seconds remaining before half-time. Most of Tampa Bay’s starters only played a couple of series. Browning was 9 of 12 for 84 yards, but was also sacked three times before giving way to Daniels, who finished 9 of 14 for 71 yards and his TD throw to Kieft. A penalty nullified

Butker’s successful extra point after Emmett Johnson’s 1-yard TD run hiked Kansas City’s lead to 15-7. The re-try hit the right upright and bounced away. “Butker, until the last field goal, had a heck of a day. But he’ll be the first to tell you that’s the one he’ll remember,” Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. “He’ll learn from it and move on. He’s made enough of those big ones for us that we know what he can do.”

WOLFF

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transfer from Hutchinson Community College. Others who could see action are redshirt freshman P.J. Wallace and freshmen Syre Padilla from Gardner-Edgerton (2,882 yards and 43 TDs as a senior), Marcus Hanish from Dallas (2,398 yards in the last two seasons) and Brayden Christian from Lebanon, Mo. (1,111 yards in eight games last season). “We have powerful guys who can run downhill,” Gilbert said. “We have guys who can catch it out of the backfield, and we have guys who can do a little bit of everything. As a coach, I try to recruit versatility in my room.”

WIDE RECEIVERS
Seniors Greyson Holbert (59 catches for 586 yards, one touchdown) and Kuron Parchmon (39 for 603 yards, five TDs) return after being PSU’s top wide receivers last season. Kam Gillespie, a senior, had three catches for 16 yards last season and has had “a phenomenal camp”

according to Hollins. “We have some good, veteran senior leadership in that group for sure,” said coach Gregg Hollins, who was tight ends coach the previous two seasons. Also expected to contribute are sophomore T.J. Sparks (transfer from Arkansas State), sophomore Luke Coon (transfer from Missouri Western), redshirt freshman Jino Boyd (coming off a knee injury last season), sophomore Khali Best and sophomore Damien Long. “They’re feisty,” Hollins said. “They get after it. They work hard, and that’s what you want. You can coach them hard. They want to be coached, which as a coach is a blessing. Some guys don’t want to be coached and held accountable. These guys want to be pushed.”

TIGHT ENDS
Junior Luke Niggemann and senior Jaydon Knight return at tight end. Niggemann caught nine passes for 112 yards and two touchdowns last season, and he rushed for 124

yards and three scores as the quarterback in the wildcat formation. Knight had eight receptions for 49 yards. Senior Jaydon Hill and junior Eli Youman are tight ends who played on all four special teams a year ago. More depth comes from redshirt freshmen Karson Murray, Jayden Houghton, Connor Payne and freshman Andrew Harris. “When we go to our jumbo formation, there could be five tight ends on the field,” coach Chance Rieken said. “They are so versatile and just good human beings. They are awesome to be around. We talk character, discipline, toughness, and that group is the epitome of all three.”

LINEMEN
Senior Kaden DeGraffenried started every game at left tackle last season and has played in 23 games during the past two seasons. “He’s unbelievable,” new offensive line coach Grant Garner said. “Extremely high character, he gets the guys right. He’s all in. “He’s one of the most

impressive leaders I’ve ever been around honestly. You can tell it’s more than just a game to him. He lives it and breathes it. I’m extremely lucky as a first-year coach here to have him as a part of the unit.” Peko Leasiolagi, another senior, started all 13 games at right guard. Juniors Matt Craig and Kyle Russell, a transfer from NCAA Division III Illinois College, are battling at center. Sophomore Quinton Bradley and junior Max Hansen are starting at left guard and right tackle, respectively. Providing depth are sophomore Manny Conley, junior Colin Beesley, redshirt freshman Luke Harris and freshmen Harrison Vaughn and Ethan Villarreal. “They work hard,” Garner said. “They’re low maintenance. They’re tough, they’re athletic. They’re a lot of fun to coach. They are hungry to be good. They’re a very selfless group, just want to be great and serve the team.”

Wright could be heading back to LSU after court order

By Brett Martel, Rob Maaddi
AP Sports Writers

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — After a stop in the NFL, former Ole Miss tight end Dae’Quan Wright could be heading to LSU thanks to a court order that is creating havoc throughout college sports by allowing Wright and others an unexpected fifth year of eligibility. Wright’s agent, Drew Rosenhaus, told The Associated Press on Monday that the tight end had been waived by the Cleveland Browns and, if he clears waivers, will join Lane Kiffin’s roster at No. 11 LSU. If he joins the Tigers, Wright is believed to be the first player to return to college after playing in the NFL. He may not be the last. At a news conference Monday, Kiffin declined to discuss any specific players, but he did say of the players in the lawsuit: “They’re available

to recruit. So, ourselves, like many places around the country, are recruiting them.” Not doing so, Kiffin said, could lead to a situation where “we may end up playing against them.” Wright signed with the Philadelphia Eagles as an undrafted rookie following the draft. After Philly released him on Aug. 11, the Browns signed him. Wright didn’t play in Cleveland’s two preseason games. Wright played two seasons for Kiffin at Ole Miss. Last year, he caught 39 passes for 635 yards and five touchdowns for the Rebels. Wright was among a group of players who sued in a Louisiana court, saying a new NCAA rule granting five years of eligibility to most athletes should apply to him and others who were not “grandfathered” into the rule, which did not include those who graduated high school in 2022.

LEGALS

(Published in The Morning Sun on August 25th, 2026)

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS RESOLUTION NO. 2026-030

WHEREAS, petitioners representing the record owners of fifty-one percent (51%) or more of the front feet of the platted lots abutting on or fronting on the following on the following streets, and being owners of sixty percent or more of the unplatted frontage on such streets thereby making a sufficient percentage of the frontage of the platted land abutting on or fronting on such streets to make fifty-one percent or more of the total frontage platted and unplatted on such streets with said platted and unplatted frontage lying in the First Replat of Trowbridge Estates 2nd Addition Subdivision, Crawford County, Kansas, to-wit:

Meadow Lane have petitioned the County Commissioners of Crawford County, Kansas, (the “County”) to construct certain improvements and do all other things necessary and incidental thereto to said streets pursuant to K.S.A. 68-728 et seq.; and **WHEREAS**, the construction of the aforementioned streets is necessary and in the best interest of the public generally; and **WHEREAS**, there are no bonds outstanding and none have been issued by the County to pay the cost of improving said streets; and **WHEREAS**, the boundaries of the proposed benefit district which will be subject to special assessment taxes is as follows, to-wit: Lots One (1) through Eight (8) in the First Replat of Trowbridge Estates 2nd Addition Subdivision, Crawford County, Kansas; and **WHEREAS**, the improvement shall consist of the excavation for and construction of the aforementioned streets including paving, ditches and all other things necessary and incidental thereto; and **WHEREAS**, the estimated cost of the improvements is \$23,000; and **WHEREAS**, the proposed method of assessment is equally per lot benefited; and **WHEREAS**, the cost of the improvements shall be apportioned one hundred percent to the properties in the proposed benefit district and zero percent to the County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS, sitting in regular session this 14th day of August, 2026, that the improvement of the above-named street, as hereinbefore described, is necessary and is hereby authorized and ordered to be done.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the full cost of the improvements shall be apportioned and special assessments levied therefor upon the property within the boundaries of the benefit district hereinbefore described and, with these proceedings, hereby established.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be published once in the official paper of the County and that a copy hereof be sent by certified mail to the owners of the property liable for taxation of the costs of the improvements do not, within 20 days of the date of the publication of this Resolution, file with the County Clerk their protest against such improvement project the Board of County Commissioners shall have the power to cause such roads to be built and levy taxes therefore.

IT IS SO RESOLVED.
DATED this 14th day of August, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CRAWFORD COUNTY, KANSAS

Bruce Blair, Chairman
Carl R. Wood
Tom Moody

ATTEST:
Lisa Lusker, County Clerk