Collin Klein can quickly reshape K-State's football roster with impact transfers

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MANHATTAN

Here's an extra reason for Kansas State football fans to be excited about the arrival of 2026: The transfer portal is about to open.

After all the doom and gloom that transpired for the K-State football roster in December with nearly two dozen players announcing plans to transfer away from the Wildcats, positive news is on the horizon.

New head coach Collin Klein can officially start recruiting impact transfers when the portal opens on Friday.

Over the past month, there has been a steady drip of news about outgoing transfers. That should be replaced with a faster flash of news about incoming players.

Unlike high school recruiting, transfers like to choose their new college destination quickly. With that in mind, K-State will be busy lining up campus visits with prospects for as early as this weekend. We might even see some transfers commit to the Wildcats without stepping foot in Manhattan.

A few positions will be important for Klein.

On offense, the Wildcats need new blood at wide receiver. K-State must replace the void left by Jayce Brown in the passing game and elevate its overall talent at receiver. Assuming quarterback Avery Johnson returns for his senior season at Bill Snyder Family Stadium, he could use a strong group of targets to work with when he drops back to throw.

On defense, K-State will be on the hunt for linemen. The Wildcats are losing seven players from their defensive front to the transfer portal, including significant contributors like Chiddi Obiazor and Tobi Osunsanmi. Klein will need talent and depth to rebuild at defensive end and defensive tackle.

The Wildcats could also use help for Joe Jackson at running back and a big name or two to help replace Austin Romaine at linebacker.

It seems unlikely that Klein will be in the market for a marquee quarterback, given that Johnson remains on the roster. But a developing passer could help add depth to the position.

Bottom line: With K-State coming off a 6-6 season, it could use talent upgrades across the roster.

The next few weeks will be important for Klein as he looks to build his inaugural football roster at K-State.

K-STATE FOOTBALL TRANSFER TRACKER

- Malcolm Alcorn-Crowder (defensive line)
- Callen Barta (wide receiver)
- Jayce Brown (wide receiver)
- Teagan Cobb (defensive end)
- Daniel Cobbs (defensive back)
- Ryan Davis (defensive end)
- Dylan Edwards (running back)
- Amarion Fortenberry (defensive back)
- Truman Griffith (defensive end)
- Brayden Loftin (tight end)
- Antonio Martin (running back)
- Colby McAlister (defensive end)
- Andrew Metzger (tight end)
- Chiddi Obiazor (defensive end)
- Ralph Ortiz (linebacker)
- Tobi Osunsanmi (defensive end)
- JB Price (running back)
- Austin Romaine (linebacker)
- Jacques Spradley-Demps (running back)
- Kanijal Thomas (defensive back)
- Devin Vass (offensive line)

FROM PAGE 1B

MISSOURI

- Tre Bell (Iowa State) went to Parkway West High School in Ballwin and started at Lindenwood.
- JK Johnson (Oklahoma State) went to De Smet in Creve Coeur and had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Trey Patrick (Central Missouri) is from Blue Springs.
- Ashton Stamps (LSU) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Ashton McShane (Boston College) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Braylon Conley (USC) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Jay Crawford (Auburn) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Dawayne Galloway Jr. (West Virginia) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Markie Grant (Wyoming) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Jarvis Lee (USF) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Vernon Woodward III (Illinois) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Ja'Bril Rawls (Florida State) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Cai Bates (Florida State) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Jayden Lewis (Tulane) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Jayvon Thomas (Texas A&M) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Donovan Starr (Auburn) had a Mizzou offer in high school.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Out of the five primary starters at offensive line in 2025 (Cayden Green, Dominick Giudice, Connor Tollison, Curtis Peagler and Keagen Trost), only Tollison and Trost are out of eligibility.

But the Tigers have experienced an exodus from the offensive line room, as three reserve offensive linemen from 2025 on Dec. 30 announced their intentions to enter the portal (Johnny Williams IV, Jayven Richardson and Brandon Solis). Henry Fenuku, a four-star recruit in the class of 2025, also intends to enter the portal.

While Green has another year of eligibility remaining, he could declare for the NFL Draft and he is projected as an early-round pick.

The Tigers will have four incoming freshmen along the offensive line, but it's rare for them to contribute immediately.

Players in the portal with Missouri connections:

- Josh Atkins (Arizona State) was at Houston when current MU offensive line coach Brandon Jones was there. Jones coached the Cougar offensive line from 2019 to 2022.
- Carius Curne (LSU) had a Mizzou offer in high school and took an official visit to MU in June 2024.
- Mario Nash Jr. (Florida State) had a Mizzou offer in high school. MU was in his top 10.
- Makai Saina (USC) had a Mizzou offer as well as a Houston offer in high school when Jones was at UH.
- Miles McVay (North Carolina) is from East St. Louis and had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Austin Kawecki (Oklahoma State) was offered by Houston when Jones was there.
- Connor Jones (Michigan) played under Mizzou offensive coordinator Chip Lindsey at Michigan last season.
- Calib Perez (UAB) was offered by Houston when Jones was there.
- Trevor Buhr (Iowa State) went to Washington High School in Washington.
- Maximus McCree (Washington) is from Grandview.
- Jimothy Lewis Jr. (Mississippi State) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Trovon Baugh (South Carolina) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Dylan Senda (Auburn) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Ory Williams (LSU) had a Mizzou offer in high school.

DEFENSIVE LINE

A handful of main contributors along the defensive line are expected to return for the 2026 season. Darris Smith, Langden Kitchen and Nate Johnson all have one more year of eligibility remaining, as do defensive tackles Marquis Gracial and Jalen Marshall.

But edge rusher Zion Young, as well as a pair of defensive tackles who saw significant snaps in 2025 (Chris McClellan, Sterling Webb), are out of eligibility. Defensive tackle Bralen Henderson, who played 83 snaps in 2025, is also out of eligibility.

Edge rusher Damon Wilson II has one year of eligibility left, but he could also enter the NFL Draft, as he's garnered buzz as a potential first-round pick.

Players in the portal with Missouri connections:

- Ed Smith IV (South Alabama) played under MU defensive coordinator Corey Batoon, who was USA's DC from 2021 to 2023.
- RJ Moss (South Alabama) also played under Corey Batoon at USA.
- Tarvorise Brown (Florida) and Jaden Jones (Florida State) went to. Hutchinson C.C., where Mizzou has taken a player from in consecutive years (offensive tackle Jayven Richardson in 2024 and defensive lineman Demarcus Johnson in 2025). Mizzou offered Jones out of Hutchinson C.C..
- Caleb Redd (Kansas) went to De Smet High School in Creve Coeur.
- Jamal Wallace (Tennessee) is from Kansas City.
- Darin Conley (Ball State) is from Kansas City.
- Kellen Lindstrom (Tennessee) is from Springfield and had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Jayden Woods (Florida) went to Mill Valley High School in Shawnee, Kansas and had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Michael Riles (Oklahoma State) had a Mizzou offer in high school
- Ahmad Breaux (LSU) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- L A Jessie Harrold (Florida State) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Devan Thompkins (USC) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Omari Abor (SMU) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Solomon Williams (Texas A&M) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Taje McCoy (Oklahoma State) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Chaz Coleman (Penn State) had a Mizzou offer in high school.

WIDE RECEIVER

Kevin Coleman Jr. and Xavier Loyd are out of eligibility, while Josh Manning, Marquis Johnson and James Madison II intend to enter the portal.

The only wideout with at least 200 snaps in 2025 who's set to return next season is Donovan Olugbode. The Tigers will also have DaMarion Fowlkes, who spent most of his freshman season as a kick returner, as well as Daniel Blood, Shaun Terry II and a pair of incoming freshmen in 3-star Jabari Brady and 3-star Devyon Hill-Lomax.

Players in the portal with Missouri connections:

- Fredrick Moore (Michigan) played with MU safety Marvin Burks Jr. at Cardinal Ritter in St. Louis and also played under Lindsey this past season.
- Chase Hendricks (Ohio) played with MU wideout Kevin Coleman Jr. and MU running back Jamal Roberts at St. Mary's High in St. Louis.
- David Washington Jr. (Kentucky) went to high school at St. Joseph's Prep in Philadelphia at the same time as MU linebacker Josiah Trotter.
- Elijah Moore (Florida State) played with MU wideout DaMarion Fowlkes in at Our Lady of Good Counsel High School in Olney, Maryland.
- Zy Robinson (Iowa State) had a Mizzou offer in high school and played at Valley High School in Des Moines, Iowa, with cornerback Jayden McGregory, a four-star Mizzou commit in the Class of 2026.
- Muizz Tonkara (Florida) is former Mizzou edge rusher Serigne Tounkara's younger brother. Serigne played one season at MU in 2023 before transferring to Cal.
- Davion Dozier (Appalachian State) played two seasons at Arkansas in 2023 and 2024. After Mizzou dominated the Razorbacks 48-14 in 2023, Dozier commented, "spots open?" on former MU wideout Luther Burden III's Instagram Live.
- Jaylen Lloyd (Oklahoma State) went to Omaha Westside High School in Omaha, Nebraska, where 2027 3-star commit Braylen Warren plays.
- Larenzo Fenner (South Dakota) is from Independence and went to Fort Osage High.
- Rico Barnes (Lindenwood) went to East St. Louis High.
- Arhmad Branch (Purdue) went to Festus High.
- Tavarius Green (North Carolina) played under Lindsey in 2024.
- Andre Greene Jr. (Virginia) played under Lindsey at UNC in 2023.
- Jelani Watkins (LSU) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Ray Ray Joseph (Miami) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Bryson Rodgers (Ohio State) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Xavier Townsend (Iowa State) had a Mizzou offer in high school.

QUARTERBACK

Beau Pribula, Mizzou's leading passer in 2025, announced his intention to enter the portal on Dec. 18 following just one season with the Tigers.

That means that the only three scholarship quarterbacks with eligibility in 2026 are Matt Zollers, Sam Horn and incoming freshman Gavin Sidwar. Horn's future with the Tigers is still up in the air, as he signed a contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers after being selected by them in the MLB Draft this past summer.

How Mizzou approaches the quarterback position in the portal will be interesting. The Tigers could go one of two routes: they dub Zollers the starting quarterback and seek a surefire backup (i.e., Drew Pyne in 2024), or they aim for a potential starter who could either be the de facto QB1 or compete with Zollers for the spot starting with spring ball.

The second option is tricky. Many of the top quarterbacks in the transfer portal, such as Florida's DJ Lagway and Nebraska's Dylan Raiola, have multiple years of eligibility remaining. Bringing in a potential starter with multiple years of eligibility could make keeping Zollers beyond 2026 difficult.

A potential solution would be acquiring a surefire starter with only one year of eligibility remaining. That way, Zollers could develop on the bench for another year (barring an injury to the QB1) while also knowing that he'll likely be the starter in his junior and senior seasons.

Two quarterbacks who fit the above criteria are TCU's Josh Hoover and Iowa State's Rocco Becht.

Players in the portal with Missouri connections:

- Davis Warren (Michigan) played under Lindsay this past season.
- Jadyn Davis (Michigan) also played under Lindsey this past season.
- Dylan Raiola (Nebraska) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Jake Merklinger (Tennessee) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Tayven Jackson (UCF) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Colin Hurley (LSU) had a Mizzou offer in high school.
- Zane Flores (Oklahoma State) had a Mizzou offer in high school.

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iStorage, 6410 Vista Dr, Shawnee, KS 66112: Ashlee Brown, Ashlee Brown

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