

2018 Chicago Bears season



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The **2018 Chicago Bears season** will be the franchise's upcoming 99th season in the National Football League and the first under new head coach Matt Nagy, the franchise's fourth coach this decade. The Bears hope to seek their first winning season since 2012 and make the playoffs for the first time since 2010.

2018 Chicago Bears season				
Owner	The McCaskey Family			
General manager	Ryan Pace			
Head coach	Matt Nagy			
Home field	Soldier Field			

Offseason

Organizational changes

On January 1, 2018, head coach John Fox was fired after spending three seasons with the Bears, compiling a 14–34 record. [1] Two days later, the Bears began interviewing for the position starting with defensive coordinator Vic Fangio, followed by Minnesota Vikings defensive coordinator George Edwards (January 4), Vikings offensive coordinator Pat Shurmur and New England Patriots offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels (January 5), Philadelphia Eagles quarterback coach John DeFilippo (January 6), and Kansas City Chiefs offensive coordinator Matt Nagy (January 7).[2] The day after his interview, Nagy was ultimately hired as the 16th head coach in franchise history. [3][4]

Nagy's first assistant coach hiring was Harry Hiestand as offensive line coach, joining the team on January 10; Hiestand had spent the last six seasons with the Notre Dame Fighting Irish at the same position, while also working as the OL coach for the Bears from 2005-2009. Two days later, the Bears replaced offensive coordinator Dowell Loggains, who departed the Bears to join the Miami Dolphins in the same position on January 4, [6] with former Oregon Ducks head coach Mark Helfrich, while also hiring three new coaches: former Bears assistants Chris Tabor and Charles London as special teams and running backs coaches, respectively, and Mike Furrey as wide receivers coach. Tabor served as an assistant special teams coach with the team from 2008–2010 before joining the Cleveland Browns as the special teams coordinator, while London had spent the last three seasons as the running backs coach of the Houston Texans. [7] A former wide receiver, Furrey was Nagy's New York Dragons teammate in the Arena Football League in 2002, which was followed by an eightyear NFL career, including a 2006 campaign in which he ranked second in the league in receptions with 98; he was most recently the head coach of the Limestone Saints football team. [8][9] During the day, Fangio signed a three-year extension to remain in Chicago. [10] On January 13, the Bears hired New York Giants tight ends coach Kevin M. Gilbride to serve in the same role. [11] Brock Olivo, a former colleague of Nagy in Kansas City and Denver Broncos special teams coordinator, joined the Bears as an assistant special teams coach on January $19.^{[12]}$

In January, head trainer <u>Nate Breske</u> was released by the team, as were strength coaches <u>Jason George</u> and <u>Rick Perry</u>. In their places, the Bears hired Browns trainer <u>Andre Tucker</u> and <u>Washington State University</u> strength and conditioning coach Jason Loscalzo, respectively. [13]

On February 27, the Bears formally announced their full staff, with every defensive coach returning to their posts for the 2018 season. Other newcomers included <u>Brad Childress</u> as a senior offensive consultant, <u>Donovan Raiola</u> as assistant offensive line coach, <u>Brian Ginn</u> and <u>Mike Snyder</u> as offensive quality control coaches, <u>Shane Toub</u> as an offensive assistant, and <u>Bill Shuey</u> as defensive quality control coach. <u>[14]</u> Childress was the head coach of the <u>Minnesota Vikings</u> before joining the Chiefs in 2013, and served as their co-offensive coordinator alongside Nagy in 2016. He had intended to retire after 2017, but elected to rejoin Nagy in Chicago. <u>[15]</u> A former center, Raiola was on the Bears' practice squad in 2009 and worked with Hiestand in Chicago before following him to Notre Dame as a graduate assistant for two years. <u>[16]</u> Ginn was Nagy's wide receiver at <u>Delaware</u> before becoming a coach for the school. Shuey was a colleague of Nagy's during their tenures with the Eagles and was most recently working as the <u>Widener Pride</u>'s defensive coordinator. <u>[17]</u> Toub, the son of Chiefs and former Bears special teams coordinator <u>Dave Toub</u>, was a graduate assistant for the <u>Illinois Fighting Illini</u> under ex-Bears head coach <u>Lovie Smith</u> in 2017. <u>[18]</u>

Roster changes

The Bears entered free agency with 25 free agents, including 19 unrestricted, four restricted, and two exclusive rights free agents. [36]

Acquisitions

On January 1, the Bears signed wide receivers <u>Demarcus Ayers</u>, <u>Tanner Gentry</u>, and <u>Mekale McKay</u>, offensive linemen <u>Travis Averill</u> and <u>Will Pericak</u>, tight end <u>Colin Thompson</u>, and defensive back <u>Doran Grant</u> to reserve/futures contracts. <u>[37]</u> Nine days later, <u>Montreal Alouettes</u> cornerback <u>Jonathon Mincy</u> signed with the Bears; in 32 games in the <u>Canadian Football League</u>, Mincy recorded 108 tackles with three interceptions and two forced fumbles. He was named to the Eastern Division All-Star team in 2017. <u>[38]</u>

The NFL's legal tampering window, during which teams could negotiate with incoming unrestricted free agents, opened on March 12. During the period, wide receivers Allen Robinson and Taylor Gabriel, tight end Trey Burton, and kicker Cody Parkey expressed their intentions to sign with the Bears. Robinson tore an anterior cruciate ligament in the first game of 2017 with the Jacksonville Jaguars; in the three prior years, he recorded 2,831 receiving yards and 22 touchdowns, and was named to the 2015 Pro Bowl. During the 2017 Atlanta Falcons season, Gabriel caught 33 passes for 378 yards and a touchdown. Burton, who played for the Eagles in 2017, had 23 receptions for 248 yards and five scores. In Super Bowl LII, he threw a touchdown pass to quarterback Nick Foles. Parkey, who worked with Tabor during his tenure with the Browns, converted 21 of 23 field goals with the Miami Dolphins in 2017. The four signings were officially announced on March 14. [41]

When free agency began on March 14, quarterback <u>Chase Daniel</u> signed a two-year deal with the Bears; Daniel worked with Nagy in Kansas City, establishing himself as a liked backup quarterback with the Chiefs and <u>New Orleans Saints</u>. During the so-called second wave of free agency a few days later, the Bears signed defensive end/linebacker <u>Aaron Lynch</u> from the <u>San Francisco 49ers</u> and quarterback <u>Tyler Bray</u> from the Chiefs. Lynch, who played with Fangio in his 2014 rookie season, registered six sacks in his rookie campaign and 12.5 in his first two NFL seasons before a PED suspension and calf injury cut his production the last two years. Bray was Alex Smith's backup in Kansas City under Nagy.

Position	Player	Free agency Tag	Date signed	2018 team
OLB	Sam Acho	UFA	March 14 ^[19]	Chicago Bears
СВ	Prince Amukamara	UFA	March 14 ^[19]	Chicago Bears
WR	Josh Bellamy	RFA	March 13 ^[20]	Chicago Bears
TE	Daniel Brown	ERFA	March 16 ^[21]	Chicago Bears
СВ	Bryce Callahan	RFA	March 13 ^[20]	Chicago Bears
OL	Tom Compton	UFA	March 22 ^[22]	Minnesota Vikings
RB	Benny Cunningham	UFA	March 22	Chicago Bears ^[23]
LS	Andrew DePaola	UFA	March 16 ^[24]	Oakland Raiders
СВ	Kyle Fuller	UFA	March 16 ^[25]	Chicago Bears
OLB	Lamarr Houston	UFA		
WR	Dontrelle Inman	UFA		
NT	John Jenkins	UFA	April 8 ^[26]	Chicago Bears
ILB	Christian Jones	UFA	March 15 ^[27]	Detroit Lions
СВ	Sherrick McManis	UFA	March 22 ^[28]	Chicago Bears
WR	Cameron Meredith	RFA	April 11 ^[29]	New Orleans Saints
TE	Zach Miller	UFA		
K	Mike Nugent	UFA		
Р	Pat O'Donnell	UFA	March 16 ^[21]	Chicago Bears
QB	Mark Sanchez	UFA		
K	Cairo Santos	UFA	March 15 ^[30]	New York Jets
LS	Patrick Scales	ERFA	March 27 ^[31]	Chicago Bears
OL	Bradley Sowell	UFA	March 12 ^[32]	Chicago Bears
ILB	John Timu	RFA	March 20 ^[33]	Chicago Bears
DE	Mitch Unrein	UFA	March 16 ^[34]	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
WR	Kendall Wright	UFA	March 30 ^[35]	Minnesota Vikings

On April 3, <u>Arizona Cardinals</u> guard <u>Earl Watford</u> signed with the Bears, becoming the third ex-Cardinal on Chicago's offensive line alongside <u>Bradley Sowell</u> and <u>Bobby Massie</u>. [45]

Departures

On February 20, the Bears announced they were releasing linebacker <u>Jerrell Freeman</u> and declining a 2018 option on offensive lineman <u>Josh Sitton</u>; in 2017, Freeman was placed on injured reserve after suffering a torn pectoral muscle in the first game of the year, followed by a ten-game suspension for using performance-enhancing drugs. Sitton missed the last two games of the season with an ankle injury. Six days later, linebacker <u>Pernell McPhee</u> and safety <u>Quintin Demps</u> were cut. McPhee recorded 14 sacks in three seasons with the Bears, but also struggled with injuries. Demps was benched following the emergence of <u>Eddie Jackson</u> and <u>Adrian Amos</u> as the new starters during the 2017 season. Outside linebacker <u>Willie Young</u>, who only played four games in 2017 due to a torn triceps, was released on February 28. Adrian to a one-year contract; he started the first four games of the 2017 season before suffering a back injury and losing his starting spot.

During free agency, various free agents signed with other teams. On March 15, linebacker <u>Christian Jones</u> and kicker <u>Cairo Santos</u> signed with the <u>Detroit Lions</u> and <u>New York Jets</u>, respectively; in 2017, Jones set career highs in tackles (84) and sacks (two) in addition to forcing and recovering a fumble. Santos played two games for the Bears before suffering reaggravating a groin injury. Defensive end <u>Mitch Unrein</u>, who recorded 32 tackles and 2.5 sacks in 2017, was signed by the <u>Tampa Bay Buccaneers</u> on March 16. Andrew <u>DePaola</u> joined the <u>Oakland Raiders</u> for 2018 and became the highest-paid long snapper in the league. On March 22, offensive lineman <u>Tom Compton</u>, who started five games at guard for the Bears in 2017, signed with the <u>Minnesota Vikings</u>. In early April, wide receiver and restricted free agent <u>Cameron Meredith</u> was offered a two-year, 10 million contract by the <u>New Orleans Saints</u>, which the Bears elected to not match after five days.

Draft

The Bears entered the draft needing to address positions like linebacker, defensive back, and offensive line. [49][50] Such positions were suggested in various mock drafts from those like Sean Wagner-McGough of CBSSports.com, Matt Eurich of 247Sports.com, and Lorin Cox of *USA Today* as they projected Notre Dame guard Quenton Nelson, Florida State defensive back Derwin James, and Boston College linebacker Harold Landry, respectively. [51][52][53]

With the eighth-overall pick, the Bears selected Georgia Bulldogs linebacker Roquan Smith, reuniting him with 2016 first-round pick and former Bulldog linebacker Leonard Floyd. In 2017, the Butkus Award winner helped lead Georgia to the 2018 College Football Playoff National Championship. [54] In the second round, Chicago opted to fill the offensive positions as the team drafted Iowa center James Daniels and Memphis receiver Anthony Miller. In 2017, Daniels was honorable mention for the All-Big Ten Conference team as he helped lead an Iowa offense that averaged 190.2 passing yards and 139.2 rushing yards per game. [55] Although he played center in college, the Bears elected to move him to guard to start his NFL career. [56] Miller, whose selection was made possible when the Bears traded up to the 51st-overall pick in a trade with the New England Patriots that sent the 105th overall and a 2019 second rounder to New England, recorded 1,448 receiving yards and 16 touchdowns in the 2016 and 2017 seasons; during the latter, he averaged 3.47 yards per route run, fourth-best among receivers in the draft. [57]

The third and final day of the draft saw rounds four through seven. [58] With their fourth-round pick, the Bears drafted Western Kentucky linebacker Joel Iyiegbuniwe; a Chicago native, Iyiegbuniwe played both inside and outside linebacker in college; in his final season, he had 116 tackles, 11.5 tackles for loss, two forced fumbles, two sacks, and a fumble recovery. The fifth round saw defensive tackle Bilal Nichols of Delaware be selected; a

fellow Delaware alumnus like Nagy, Nichols recorded 5.5 sacks and 6.5 tackles for loss in 2017, earning him a spot on the first-team All-Colonial Athletic Association team. Chicago filled the gap at edge rusher by drafting Utah defensive end Kylie Fitts; Fitts struggled with injuries throughout his college career, but racked up 23 tackles, three tackles for loss, three sacks, and a forced fumble in 2017. In the seventh round, the Bears drafted another receiver and Bulldog in Javon Wims; in 2017, Wims led the Bulldogs with 45 catches for 720 yards and seven touchdowns. [59]

After the draft, the Bears signed fifteen undrafted free agents: running back Ryan Nall (Oregon State), wide receivers Garrett Johnson (Kentucky) and Shaq Roland (West Georgia), offensive lineman Dejon Allen (Hawaii), defensive linemen Abdullah Anderson (Bucknell) and Cavon Walker (Maryland), linebackers Nyles Morgan and Andrew Trumbetti (Notre Dame) and Elijah Norris (Shepherd), cornerbacks Michael Joseph (Dubuque) and Kevin Toliver II (LSU), safety Nick Orr (TCU), and punter Ryan Winslow (Pittsburgh). [60]

2018 Chicago Bears Draft									
Round	Selection	Player	Position	College	Notes				
1	8	Roquan Smith	LB	Georgia					
2	39	39 James Daniels C Iowa							
2	51	Anthony Miller	WR	Memphis	From New England				
4	115	Joel lyiegbuniwe	LB	Western Kentucky	From <u>Arizona</u>				
5	145	Bilal Nichols	DT	Delaware					
6	181	Kylie Fitts	DE	<u>Utah</u>					
7	224	Javon Wims	WR	Georgia					

Draft trades

- The Bears traded their third-round selection (70th overall), and their first-, third- and fourth-round selections in 2017 (3rd, 67th, and 111th overall) to San Francisco in exchange for San Francisco's first-round selection in 2017 (2nd overall).
- In 2017, the Bears traded their second-round selection (36th overall) to Arizona in exchange for Arizona's 2018 fourth round selection (115th overall), as well as their 2017 second, fourth, and sixth round selections (45th, 119th, 197th overall).

Offseason activities

Offseason workouts began on April 3; as the Bears entered the offseason with a new head coach, they were permitted to start workouts earlier than other teams. [61] Also thanks to having a new coach, the team held a voluntary veteran minicamp from April 17–19. [62]

In May, Rookie Minicamp was held from May 11–13. [62] After its conclusion, the Bears signed five tryout players: wide receiver Matt Fleming, offensive linemen Jeremi Hall and Matt McCants, and defensive backs John Franklin III and Tyrin Holloway. Fleming played football and ran track for Division III school Benedictine University, recording 45 receptions for 731 yards and 10 touchdowns in 2017. Hall started 25 games for the South Florida Bulls in 2016 and 2017, [63] while McCants, a sixth-round draft pick in 2012 by the New York Giants, returned to the Bears after playing for them in 2016. [64] After transferring to Western Illinois for his final season in 2017, Holloway played four games for the Leathernecks and had three interceptions. [63] Franklin, a

former quarterback at Florida State, attracted attention when he appeared on the <u>Netflix</u> series <u>Last Chance U</u> during his time at <u>East Mississippi Community College</u>. He later played receiver for <u>Auburn</u> and <u>Florida Atlantic</u>. In conjunction with the signings, the Bears released Averill, Morgan, linebacker <u>Howard Jones</u>, and offensive lineman <u>Cameron Lee</u>.

The Bears conducted ten offseason team activities (OTAs) on May 15–17, May 22–24, and May 29–June 1. A mandatory minicamp involving the entire roster will take place on June 5–7. [62]

Staff

Chicago Bears staff

Front office

- Secretary of the board of directors <u>Virginia</u> <u>Halas McCaskey</u>
- Chairman George McCaskey
- President/CEO Kevin Warren
- General manager Ryan Poles
- Assistant general manager <u>Ian</u> Cunningham
- Co-directors of player personnel <u>Jeff King</u> and Trey Koziol
- Assistant director of pro scouting Chris White
- Assistant director of college scouting Breck Ackley
- Director of football administration Matt Feinstein
- Director of football analytics Krithi Chandrakasan

Head coaches

Head coach – Matt Eberflus

Offensive coaches

- Offensive coordinator Shane Waldron
- Offensive passing game coordinator Thomas Brown
- Quarterbacks Kerry Joseph
- Running backs Chad Morton
- Wide receivers Chris Beatty
- Tight ends Jim Dray
- Offensive line/offensive run game coordinator – Chris Morgan
- Assistant offensive line Jason Houghtaling
- Offensive assistant (quarterbacks/wide receivers) – Ryan Griffin

Defensive coaches

- Defensive coordinator Eric Washington
- Defensive line Travis Smith
- Assistant defensive line Brian Bing
- Linebackers Dave Borgonzi
- Cornerbacks/defensive passing game coordinator – Jon Hoke
- Nickelbacks David Overstreet II
- Safeties Andre Curtis
- Defensive quality control Kevin Koch
- Defensive quality control Kenny Norton III
- Defensive analyst (advance/special projects)– Matt Pees

Special teams coaches

- Special teams coordinator <u>Richard</u> Hightower
- Assistant special teams Carlos Polk

Coaching administration

- Director of research and analysis Harrison Freid
- Coaching administration manager Chavis Cook

Strength and conditioning

- Head strength and conditioning Jim Arthur
- Assistant strength and conditioning Noble Landry
- Assistant strength and conditioning Pierre Ngo
- Player engagement/strength and conditioningIsaiah Harris

- Offensive assistant (quarterbacks/wide receivers) - Robbie Picazo
- Offensive assistant (running backs) Jennifer King
- Offensive quality control Zach Cable
- → Coaching staff (https://www.chicagobears.co m/team/coaches/)
- → Management (https://www.chicagobears.co m/team/front-office)
- → More NFL staffs

Current roster

Quarterbacks

- 17 Tyson Bagent
- 11 Brett Rypien

Running backs

- 35 Khari Blasingame FB
- 24 Khalil Herbert
- 20 Travis Homer
- 23 Roschon Johnson
- 4 D'Andre Swift

Wide receivers

- - Keenan Allen
- 80 Collin Johnson
- 12 Velus Jones Jr.
- 2 D. J. Moore
- - Dante Pettis
- 13 Tyler Scott
- 83 Nsimba Webster

Tight ends

- 88 Stephen Carlson
- 14 Gerald Everett
- 85 Cole Kmet

Chicago Bears roster Offensive linemen

- - Ryan Bates G
- 75 Larry Borom T
- 69 Ja'Tyre Carter G
- 63 Jerome Carvin G
- 74 Aviante Collins T
- 73 Jake Curhan T
- 64 Nate Davis G
- 76 Teven Jenkins G
- 70 Braxton Jones T
- 68 Doug Kramer C
- 60 Bill Murray G
- 79 Matt Pryor T
- - Coleman Shelton C
- 58 Darnell Wright T

Defensive linemen

- 97 Andrew Billings DT
- 93 Byron Cowart DE
- 99 Gervon Dexter DT
- 72 Michael **Dwumfour DT**
- 92 Daniel Hardy DE
- 52 Khalid Kareem DE
- 55 Jacob Martin DE
- 96 Zacch Pickens DT
- 90 Dominique Robinson DE

Linebackers

- 47 Micah Baskerville MLB
- 49 Tremaine **Edmunds MLB**
- 53 T. J. Edwards **OLB**
- 45 Amen Ogbongbemiga MLB
- 57 Jack Sanborn OLB
- 44 Noah Sewell MLB

Defensive backs

- 39 Josh Blackwell CB
- 9 Jaquan Brisker SS
- - Kevin Byard FS
- 25 Adrian Colbert FS
- 38 Douglas Coleman III SS
- 6 Kyler Gordon CB
- 22 Elijah Hicks FS
- 33 Jaylon Johnson CB
- 26 Quindell Johnson SS
- 31 Jaylon Jones CB
- - Tarvarius Moore FS
- 36 Jonathan Owens SS

Unrestricted FAs

- 55 Dylan Cole OLB
- 94 Rasheem Green DE
- 84 Marcedes Lewis TΕ
- 91 Yannick Ngakoue DE
- 62 Lucas Patrick C
- - Joe Reed WR
- 19 Equanimeous St. Brown WR
- 15 Trent Taylor WR
- 18 Robert Tonyan ΤE

Rookies in italics

Roster (https://www.c hicagobears.com/tea m/players-roster/) updated April 1, 2024

Depth chart (https://www.ch icagobears.com/team/depth -chart/) · Transactions (http s://www.chicagobears.com/t eam/transactions/)

68 active, 10 free agent(s)

→ AFC rosters → NFC rosters

- 98 Montez Sweat DE
- 95 <u>DeMarcus</u>Walker DE
- 32 Terell Smith CB
- 29 <u>Tyrique</u>Stevenson CB
- 27 Greg StromanCB

Special teams

- 16 Trenton Gill P
- 43 Cameron Lyons LS
- 8 Cairo Santos K
- 48 Patrick Scales
 LS
- 37 <u>Corliss Waitman</u>

Preseason

On February 13, the NFL announced that the Bears will play the <u>Baltimore Ravens</u> in the <u>Pro Football Hall of Fame Game</u> on Thursday, August 2, at the <u>Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium</u> in <u>Canton, Ohio. [66]</u> The remaining preseason games were revealed on April 11. [67]

Week	Date	Kickoff (CDT)	Opponent	Result	Record	Game site	TV	NFL.com GameBook	NFL.com recap
HOF	August 2	7:00 p.m.	vs. Baltimore Ravens			Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium (Canton, Ohio)	NBC		
1	August 9	6:00 p.m.	at <u>Cincinnati</u> <u>Bengals</u>			Paul Brown Stadium	WFLD		
2	August 18	8:05 p.m.	at Denver Broncos			Sports Authority Field at Mile High	WFLD		
3	August 25	12:00 p.m.	Kansas City Chiefs			Soldier Field	WFLD		
4	August 30	7:00 p.m.	Buffalo Bills			Soldier Field	WFLD		

Regular season

Schedule

The Bears' 2018 schedule was announced on April 19.

Week	Date	Kickoff (CT)	Opponent	Result	Record	Game site	TV	NFL.com GameBook	NFL.com recap
1	September 9	7:20 p.m.	at Green Bay Packers			<u>Lambeau</u> <u>Field</u>	NBC		
2	September 17	7:15 p.m.	Seattle Seahawks			Soldier Field	ESPN		
3	September 23	3:25 p.m.	at <u>Arizona</u> <u>Cardinals</u>			University of Phoenix Stadium	Fox		
4	September 30	12:00 p.m.	Tampa Bay Buccaneers			Soldier Field	Fox		
5					Bye				
6	October 14	12:00 p.m.	at <u>Miami</u> Dolphins			Hard Rock Stadium	Fox		
7	October 21	12:00 p.m.	New England Patriots			Soldier Field	CBS		
8	October 28	12:00 p.m.	New York Jets			Soldier Field	CBS		
9	November 4	12:00 p.m.	at <u>Buffalo</u> <u>Bills</u>			New Era Field	Fox		
10	November 11	12:00 p.m.	Detroit Lions			Soldier Field	Fox		
11	November 18	12:00 p.m.	Minnesota Vikings			Soldier Field	Fox		
12	November 22	11:30 a.m.	at Detroit Lions			Ford Field	CBS		
13	December 2	12:00 p.m.	at New York Giants			MetLife Stadium	Fox		
14	December 9	12:00 p.m.	Los Angeles Rams			Soldier Field	Fox		
15	December 16	12:00 p.m.	Green Bay Packers			Soldier Field	Fox		
16	December 23	3:05 p.m.	at <u>San</u> <u>Francisco</u> <u>49ers</u>			Levi's Stadium	Fox		
17	December 30	12:00 p.m.	at Minnesota Vikings			U.S. Bank Stadium	Fox		

Notes: Intra-division opponents are in **bold** text. Networks and times from Weeks 6–17 are subject to change as a result of <u>flexible</u> scheduling, for the exception of Week 12 (Thanksgiving).

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