

Reynolds: Coach of the Year Awards Analysis

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For our final NFL awards preview, we'll dive into the most broken award there is: Coach of the Year. I say broken because Hall of Fame-bound coaches like **Andy Reid** and **Sean Payton** have each won this award once, while guys like **Ron Rivera** and **Kevin Stefanski** have each taken it down twice. **Mike Tomlin** hasn't had a losing season in nearly a generation, yet he's never won this award, while the likes of **Matt Nagy** and **Jason Garrett** have won within the last decade. As I said, broken, which gives us advantages long term.

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Coach of the Year (COY) Trends

- Nine of the last 10 COY winners won at least 11 games, with Giants coach **Brian Daboll**'s 9-7-1 record in 2022 being the lone exception during that span.
- Daboll is the only COY winner since **Jimmy Johnson** (7-9) in 1990 to win fewer than 10 games.
- Seven of the last 10 COY winners beat their preseason win total by at least 3.5 games.
- Over the last six seasons, three COY winners had a win total of 8.5 or more.
- Since 2013, only three COY winners had a win total of 8.5 or more.
- Nine of the last 10 COY winners won at least four more games than they did the previous season.
- Eight of the last 10 COY winners were first-time winners of the award, with Stefanski and Rivera being the exceptions during this span.
- Four of the last 10 COY winners were first-time head coaches.

What We're Looking for in a COY Candidate

At its core, COY is an exceeds expectations award. The profile of most COY winners is that their team had a losing record last year, with a .500 or worse preseason win total, that then exceeds expectations behind a winning record and a postseason appearance. If you're betting in this market before the season, that's the profile you're looking for: a team that has a path to win 11 games and their division.

Once the season begins, coaches of teams that overcome abnormal injury situations that still make the postseason become eligible.

Last year's battle between **Kevin O'Connell** and **Sean Payton** involved two of the best COY candidates in recent memory, where O'Connell resurrecting the career of **Sam Darnold** behind a 14-3 record edged

out Payton, who got the absolute most out of Bo Nix.

COY Notes

- I think this market is generally correct right now with **Mike Vrabel** (+600), **Ben Johnson** (+700), **Liam Coen** (+1200), **Jonathan Gannon** (+1400), **Dave Canales** (+1600), and **Aaron Glenn** (+1600) serving as the top of this market.
- Vrabel's Patriots still have a well-below-average roster, but New England has a very soft schedule through the first eight games. Few are better at getting more out of mediocre rosters than Vrabel.
- Johnson's Bears have more talent than Vrabel's Patriots, but Chicago has a tough schedule with no true soft spots through the whole season.
- Coen is in one of the two most winnable divisions in football, where if **Trevor Lawrence** takes a leap and Jacksonville makes the playoffs, Coen will be in the COY conversation at year's end. The Jaguars have a relatively soft schedule through the whole season.
- Gannon's Cardinals could get off to a fast start at New Orleans and versus Carolina, but he's my least favorite candidate in this cluster, as the Cardinals need a lot to break right to make the playoffs.
- Canales already has **Bryce Young**'s career back on track and, like Coen, the Panthers are in one of the two most winnable divisions in football. That said, Carolina has the same problem as New England: a below-average roster.
- Most years, there is a run-heavy team that plays high-end defense that serves as what I call the uncomfortable matchup team. Glenn's Jets look like that team this year. I could see the Jets starting 0-2 against the Steelers and Bills. In that scenario, I'll look to see if Glenn can be had at a major value.
- **Matt LaFleur** (+1400) is a cross-off in this market, as he'll need Green Bay to win 15+ games or overcome injuries to have any path to contention.
- **Kyle Shanahan** (+2000) deserves a win in this award, and his team was sub .500 last year, but they have a 10.5-game win total. The 49ers have the league's easiest schedule, so they could have a big enough year to put Shanahan in contention, but I wouldn't frame him as a clean candidate, as San Francisco is expected to be a good team this year.
- Titans head coach **Brian Callahan** (+2200) is a candidate on my radar, as his Titans have a path in the winnable AFC South but they open the year at Denver and versus the Rams, which looks like an 0-2 start. However, if Tennessee is feisty in this games and **Cam Ward** looks good, similar to Glenn, I will check in on Callahan to see if there is an insertion point at long odds.

Mike Vrabel, New England Patriots, Betting, NFL Draft Kit Pro, Ryan Reynolds' Awards Betting Analysis



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