

Kansas City Chiefs

There are a lot of numbers in this book that will surprise readers. One of the most surprising, though, is the figure that stands next to the “2010 Mean Projection” line in the box on this page: 8.9. Our projection system suggests that the 2010 Kansas City Chiefs will win those 8.9 games despite winning a total of ten games over the past three seasons. It projects that the Chiefs will shockingly win the AFC West, giving them a home playoff game for the first time since 2003, when Priest Holmes was still in his pomp.

Now, when the projection system we use spits out an unexpected outcome like this, it doesn’t mean that we start attuning what we’ve seen over the past season and expect for the upcoming one to that figure. While we’re certainly proud that a fair amount of our most surprising projections in the past have turned out to be accurate, the system is not foolproof.

(Thanks, 2009 Rams.) Instead, we take the projection — and the underlying factors that contribute to the projection — into consideration when evaluating teams, and we try to reconcile that with factors that the projection system can’t consider.

With the Chiefs, though, it’s not that difficult to put together a narrative that takes them from also-rans to division champs. Some bounces will have to go their way — after all, our mean projection has them just narrowly beating out the Chargers, which means the

Chiefs fell short in plenty of our 10,000 season simulations. Still, there is a core of positive indicators and talented players strong enough to have some confidence in the numbers.

So let’s lay out a roadmap for how and why the Chiefs could win the AFC West in 2010. It starts, naturally, with something entirely out of the Chiefs’ control:

Strength of schedule.

Actually, more like lack of strength of schedule. We project the Chiefs to have the easiest schedule in football, a present that alone may compel them into a playoff berth. Of course, saying that they’ll have the easiest schedule in the upcoming season raises two questions: How likely are the Chiefs to actually have the easiest schedule in the league, and what has having the easiest schedule meant in the past?

The first question requires some clarification. Strength of sched-

ule projections made before a season are often derided in the mainstream as nonsense, which is correct *when the previous year’s win totals are used*. We know that a team’s point differential does a better job of predicting their win total in the next year than their actual wins; we also know DVOA does an even better job.

Table 1 provides the statistics for teams that have been projected with the easiest schedule in football in each of our five previous books. While it’s an extremely small sample, the 2009 season is the only one

CHIEFS SUMMARY

2009 Record: 4-12

Pythagorean Wins: 4.7 (27th)

DVOA: -27.6% (28th)

Offense: -14.2% (25th)

Defense: 11.9% (26th)

Special Teams: -1.5% (26th)

Variance: 11.4% (10th)

2009: Unless you had Jamaal Charles on your fantasy team, we doubt you paid any attention.

2010: A surprise playoff contender. No, seriously.

2010 Mean Projection: 8.9 wins

On the Clock (0-3): 2%

Loserville (4-6): 16%

Mediocrity (7-8): 20%

Playoff Contender (9-10): 34%

Super Bowl Contender (11+): 27%

Projected Average Opponent: -9.1% (32nd)

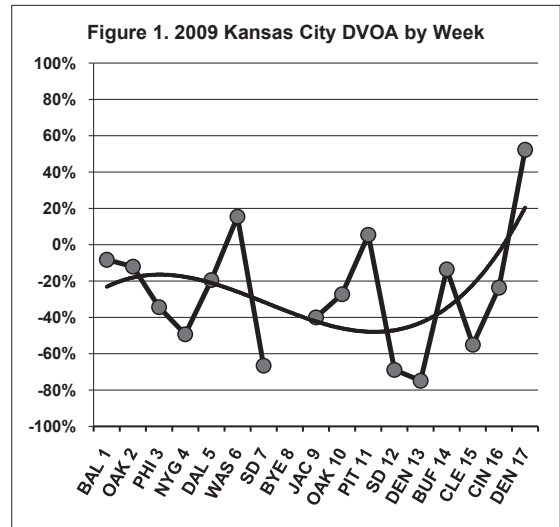
2010 Chiefs Schedule					
Week	Opp.	Week	Opp.	Week	Opp.
1	SD (Mon.)	7	JAC	13	DEN
2	at CLE	8	BUF	14	at SD
3	SF	9	at OAK	15	at STL
4	BYE	10	at DEN	16	TEN
5	at IND	11	ARI	17	OAK
6	at HOU	12	at SEA		

of the five where the team in question ended up with even a remotely difficult schedule. The 2007 49ers and 2008 Patriots both declined, but their starting quarterbacks heading into the season combined to start a total of eight games. Not even an easy schedule can overcome losing Tom Brady. It seems reasonable to believe that the Chiefs' schedule will be able to live up to its low expectations: Not only do they play within their own weak division, but they get to face the dismal NFC West (as well as the AFC South) as part of their out-of-division schedule, along with tilts against the Browns and Bills.

If the Chiefs actually end up with the league's easiest schedule, well, 8.9 could be a conservative prediction. Teams that have had the league's easiest schedule during the DVOA Era have averaged a whopping 10.8 wins, while winning an average of 2.9 games more than they did in the previous season. If a team could choose between guaranteeing themselves the league's easiest schedule every year or adding, say, Peyton Manning to their roster, they would probably be right to select what was behind Door No. 1.

An elite running game. The Chiefs had been dealing with Larry Johnson's attitude and ego issues virtually since his arrival in Kansas City. Those problems came to a head during the team's Week 9 bye, when Johnson went on Twitter and belittled both head coach Todd Haley and fans, throwing in a few homosexual slurs along the way. Johnson was suspended and then released, which meant that the Chiefs had to hand their starting job over to the unproven Jamaal Charles.

What Charles did upon taking over was nothing short of remarkable. From Week 10 on, Charles gained 968 yards on the ground. Only Chris Johnson had more to show. Charles averaged six yards a pop — not even CJ28 could match that. His 196 DYAR during the second half of the year led the league, while Kansas City's rushing DVOA went from 30th to fifth. It was



a second half that bore a fair resemblance, ironically, to Larry Johnson's breakout half in 2005. The major difference is that the Chiefs' running game was great before Johnson got in the lineup that year, while it was DOA before Johnson got booted in 2009.

How could a professional team with a dozen coaches and hundreds of years of combined coaching experience fail to recognize that Charles was a better option for the 2009 Chiefs than Larry Johnson? We don't know the answer to that one, either. What we do know is that the Chiefs have a power running game that can stand up to anyone in football, one that should be buoyed by the arrival of veteran free agent linemen Casey Wiegmann and Ryan Lilja this offseason. That will help the Chiefs close out games if they have the lead in 2010, which wasn't necessarily a problem last year; they ranked eighth in offensive DVOA when they led by nine or more points, but no higher than 21st in any other score differential. The problem was that they didn't have the lead in many games, and the schedule will help with that issue.

New offensive coordinator Charlie Weis, late of Notre Dame and the dynasty years in New England,

Table 1: Easiest Projected Schedules, 2005-09

Year	Team	Prev. Record	Record	Actual Schedule Rank
2005	CHI	5-11	11-5	29
2006	CHI	11-5	13-3	32
2007	SF	7-9	5-11	27
2008	NE	16-0	11-5	28
2009	NE	11-5	10-6	7

should be able to construct an offense around such a talented runner. The 2010 Chiefs offense should look pretty similar to the offense the Patriots were running with a nascent Tom Brady during the 2001 season: Lots of running the ball on first and second down, creating manageable third downs for an inexperienced quarterback otherwise prone to mistakes. We normally suggest that teams throw the ball far less frequently than they should, but the Chiefs pretty clearly should be a run-first team with Charles in the backfield. Kansas City added veteran Thomas Jones as a free agent to serve as Charles' backup; Jones looked washed up in the playoffs, but a part-time role should help keep him fresh while providing a viable starter in the case that Charles gets hurt. However...

They should be healthy. While teams like the Lions and Rams have seen their downward spiral over the past three years coincide with a run of rough health, the Chiefs have remained a very healthy football team. By our AGL metric, their starters have been the fourth-healthiest in football over the past three years, behind only the Titans, Jets, and Vikings. You'll note that those teams have enjoyed slightly more success than the Chiefs have. While we're not at the point yet where we can definitively say that certain training staffs keep teams healthier than others, Kansas City only had one season all decade where their team's AGL was lower than 17th, and that came in 2001.

That's especially valuable for this Chiefs team, which lacks depth after some seriously poor drafting at the end of the Carl Peterson era. The dropoff from their starters to middling reserves like Brodie Croyle, Lance Long, Wallace Gilberry, and Maurice Leggett is enormous. Kansas City was forced to use players at that talent level in some starting roles last year, but that's changed because...

They did a great job of addressing their biggest weaknesses in the offseason. If we had to pick one hole on either side of the ball for Kansas City to address in the offseason, it would have been center and strong safety. The team had fooled around with undrafted free agent Rudy Niswanger as the starting center for two years, but Niswanger is a project that hasn't panned out; his ideal size and LSU pedigree disguised the fact that he has poor technique and is too inconsistent. Wiegmann's return from Denver isn't a great long-term solution, but it upgrades the position dramatically for 2010.

The strong safety situation is one where Haley and general manager Scott Pioli got a little too cute. The Chiefs had a similar project at strong safety heading into the season, 2006 second-round pick Bernard Pollard. Pollard's a great athlete and special teams player, but he's still rough around the edges. Training camp saw Pollard and Haley get into shouting matches, with Pollard accusing Haley of treating players like they were children. The club promptly released Pollard at the end of training camp, while leaking stories to the media about Pollard's detrimental effects in the locker room. Pollard was forced to have former Chiefs head coach Herman Edwards call around the league as a character reference. He eventually caught on with the Texans, where he had an excellent year and — just like Pablo Picasso — was never called an asshole.

The Chiefs were forced to start longtime Bears safety Mike Brown, famed for his inability to stay healthy in Chicago. That great medical staff managed to keep him in the lineup for every game, the first time Brown had played the full 16 since 2003, but it was a Pyrrhic victory: Brown was terrible. Throw in a nagging calf injury that sidelined free safety Jarrad Page, and the Chiefs were downright abysmal at the safety spot.

Page is healthy, Brown is gone, and the team upgraded their safety spot in a huge way, spending their first-round pick on Tennessee safety Eric Berry. Berry's selection will be an interesting litmus test for Pioli's ability to sift through the annual draft game of selective adjectives and comparables and actually identify talent. Berry entered the draft upon completion of his junior season. He was immediately given a top-five grade, and compared to elite pro safeties like Troy Polamalu and Ed Reed.

Of course, we'll never know what scouts would have thought about Berry had he gone back to Tennessee for another year, which is where the case of Taylor Mays comes in. After the 2008 season — his junior campaign — Mays decided to return to USC, despite being hailed as a Ronnie Lott clone and potential top-ten pick in the 2009 Draft. Although he was higher than Berry on a fair amount of mock drafts heading into the 2009 season, a middling senior season dropped Mays all the way to the second round in the 2010 Draft. Maybe Berry would have fallen, too, in his senior year. It's impossible to say.

Furthermore, the history of safeties taken this high in the draft is not promising. LaRon Landry (sixth in 2007) is like some bizarre parody of Pollard, sprinting past plays with diving tackles that don't come close to

connecting. Michael Huff and Donte Whitner (seventh and eighth, respectively, in 2006) have already lost their starting jobs. Roy Williams (eighth in 2002) was an average player whose performance was inflated by some scholarship Pro Bowl appearances; he’s barely in football at this point. The only top ten safety who came close to matching his pre-draft scouting report was Sean Taylor (fifth in 2004), who was tragically murdered before he could reach his full potential. That’s the full list. The elite players that draft experts compare to Berry went later on: Polamalu went 16th, while Reed was 24th. Bob Sanders went 44th. Comparing Berry to these guys seems disingenuous; when they entered the NFL, no one thought Reed and Sanders were as valuable as they eventually became.

All that being said, even LaRon Landry would be an upgrade on Mike Brown.

They have a secret weapon. Well, besides Charles. In outside linebacker Tamba Hali, the Chiefs have a pass rusher just waiting to get the recognition — and perhaps the traditional statistics — his level of play deserves.

Compare Hali to another player who moved to 3-4 outside linebacker for the first time in 2009: division rival Elvis Dumervil of the Broncos (Table 2). As you probably expect, Dumervil had a huge lead in sacks and six more defeats. That counts for a lot.

Now, let’s consider the other side of the equation. Hali made a higher percentage of his team’s plays than Dumervil did, despite the fact that teams ran at Dumervil like it was going out of style. He had more quarterback hits that didn’t result in sacks than Dumervil did, with several more hurries. Adding up their sacks, hits, and hurries yields a total of 41 quarterback “incidents” for Dumervil — and 41.5 for Hali. Furthermore, five of Hali’s 8.5 sacks resulted in a forced fumble or a safety; only three of Dumervil’s 17 sacks did the same.

The soft factors strengthen Hali’s case. Denver constantly shifted Dumervil around to get him favorable matchups, something exhibited by the Blown Block list produced from his sacks. Four came when Dumervil beat right tackles (including three alone from woeful Browns tackle John St. Clair), three from left

tackles, two from running backs, and two from tight ends. He picked up three coverage sacks, one sack where he was untouched, and two from well-designed blitzes that the offensive line failed to handle as a unit.

Meanwhile, Hali spent the large majority of his time as the right outside linebacker, often placing him up against the opposition’s best pass blocker. 5.5 of his sacks came against left tackles, including 2.5 against All-Pro Broncos tackle Ryan Clady. He had one sack against a tight end, one against a right tackle, and one recorded as a coverage sack. Unlike Denver, which had a great secondary that gave Dumervil more time to get to the passer, Kansas City’s secondary was inconsistent. Even a slight improvement in pass defense could turn a fair amount of Hali’s hits and hurries into sacks, which would earn Hali a trip to the Pro Bowl. Truthfully, he belonged there this year; no one noticed his play, though, because he was toiling for a mediocre team with nothing to play for.

Of course, just because we can make a logical case for the Chiefs’ playoff contention doesn’t mean it’s guaranteed. The injuries could regress to the mean, or an irreplaceable player like Hali could be one of the few guys who gets hurt. The running game could be a fluke, with the imported linemen too small to match up against a division of 3-4 fronts. Berry could struggle in his rookie year. The schedule could swing dramatically harder. These things happen.

Then again, the Chiefs don’t need everything to go right in order for them to win the AFC West. Denver was only an 8-8 team despite having one of the healthiest years in recent memory, San Diego was a middle-of-the-pack team in DVOA powered solely by a pass offense that’s bound to regress to the mean, and Oakland is a wasteland. 8.9 isn’t a guarantee or a guess, but an expectation. Let’s see if Kansas City can live up to it.

Bill Barnwell

Table 2: AFC West Rival OLBs

Player	Pct Team Plays	Defeats	Sacks	QB Hits	Hurries	TO/Safeties Forced
E.Dumervil	6.3%	22	17	4	20	3
T.Hali	7.5%	16	8.5	7	26	5

2009 Chiefs Stats by Week

Wk	vs.	W-L	PF	PA	YDF	YDA	TO	Total	Off	Def	ST
1	@BAL	L	24	38	188	501	1	-8%	14%	22%	0%
2	OAK	L	10	13	409	166	-2	-12%	-9%	9%	5%
3	@PHI	L	14	34	196	420	0	-34%	-11%	29%	5%
4	NYG	L	16	27	212	429	1	-49%	-58%	-2%	7%
5	DAL	L	20	26	304	498	2	-19%	-1%	29%	11%
6	@WAS	W	14	6	268	265	2	15%	-19%	-22%	13%
7	SD	L	7	37	203	403	-3	-67%	-61%	-12%	-18%
8	BYE										
9	@JAC	L	21	24	301	426	1	-40%	-1%	35%	-4%
10	@OAK	W	16	10	318	272	-1	-27%	-38%	-9%	1%
11	PIT	W	27	24	282	516	2	5%	-7%	4%	17%
12	@SD	L	14	43	284	426	-3	-69%	-37%	35%	4%
13	DEN	L	13	44	222	413	0	-75%	-52%	19%	-3%
14	BUF	L	10	16	354	273	-1	-14%	-14%	-12%	-12%
15	CLE	L	34	41	491	417	2	-55%	32%	39%	-48%
16	@CIN	L	10	17	295	274	-1	-24%	-5%	7%	-12%
17	@DEN	W	44	24	524	512	1	52%	54%	11%	9%

Trends and Splits

	Offense	Rank	Defense	Rank
Total DVOA	-14.2%	25	11.9%	26
Unadjusted VOA	-12.0%	24	11.4%	23
Weighted Trend	-12.8%	25	10.2%	24
Variance	9.8%	24	3.7%	5
Average Opponent	4.4%	10	2.2%	13
Passing	-14.5%	25	13.1%	19
Rushing	-3.0%	21	10.7%	31
First Down	-13.0%	27	15.4%	25
Second Down	-14.3%	24	6.2%	17
Third Down	-16.3%	24	14.4%	24
First Half	-14.6%	25	11.8%	22
Second Half	-13.9%	24	11.9%	26
Red Zone	-2.6%	17	-4.3%	16
Late and Close	-4.2%	20	14.0%	28

Five-Year Performance

Year	W-L	Pyth	Est W	PF	PA	TO	Total	Rk	Off	Rk	Def	Rk	ST	Rk	Off AGL	Rk	Def AGL	Rk
2005	10-6	10.0	11.1	403	325	+8	25.5%	5	22.2%	4	-5.1%	13	-1.9%	24	15.4	16	15.9	16
2006	9-7	8.5	8.4	331	315	+4	6.1%	13	7.3%	11	2.3%	16	1.2%	13	21.5	21	3.6	1
2007	4-12	4.5	5.1	226	335	-11	-18.9%	25	-18.2%	29	-2.5%	13	-3.3%	24	22.8	19	4.2	1
2008	2-14	4.4	4.5	291	440	+5	-27.8%	30	-4.6%	22	17.5%	28	-5.7%	30	30.4	20	16.9	13
2009	4-12	4.7	4.6	294	424	+1	-27.6%	28	-14.2%	25	11.9%	26	-1.5%	26	13.0	9	15.3	6

Strategic Tendencies

Run/Pass	Rank	Offense	Rank	Defense	Rank	Other	Rank				
Runs, all plays	39%	21	3+ WR	52%	13	Rush 3	9.5%	6	2+ RB, Pct Runs	52%	28
Runs, first half	39%	19	4+ WR	7%	9	Rush 4	56.2%	23	1 RB/2 TE, Pct Runs	41%	24
Runs, first down	49%	17	2+ TE	22%	29	Rush 5	29.3%	7	1 RB/3+WR, Pct Runs	29%	4
Runs, second-long	33%	18	Single back	56%	21	Rush 6+	4.9%	30	CB1 on WR1	47%	17
Runs, power sit.	49%	30	Play action	17%	15	Zone Blitz	5.2%	18	Go for it on 4th	1.12	12
Runs, behind 2H	33%	7	Max protect	11%	8	Sacks by LB	52.3%	12	Offensive Pace	28.3	3
Pass, ahead 2H	48%	13	Outside pocket	13%	8	Sacks by DB	13.6%	3	Defensive Pace	30.4	15

Matt Cassel excelled in the shotgun for the 2008 Patriots, Todd Haley called a heavily shotgun offense for the 2008 Cardinals, and the Chiefs already were familiar with playing a lot of shotgun. So of course, we assumed going into 2009 that the Chiefs would play a lot of shotgun and do well with it. Turns out we were half right. The Chiefs ran shotgun on 47 percent of plays (fifth in the NFL) but were *terrible* at it. They had -35.2% DVOA and 4.4 yards per play, compared to 1.2% DVOA and 5.1 yards per play from standard formations. Only the Jets had a larger difference between performance in shotgun versus under center. ☹ Other big offensive changes under Haley: more play-action, more max protect, and surprisingly, more use of two-back sets instead of single-back sets. ☹ Kansas City led the league with the biggest difference in offensive DVOA between play-action passes (58.4%, fifth) and other passes (-23.6%, 29th). The Chiefs also tied the 49ers as the team most likely to use play-action on third down (10 percent of passes). ☹ Chiefs receivers dropped a league-high 47 passes and were second to the Browns in the rate of drops per pass attempt (8.9 percent). ☹ Brandon vs. Brandon: Chiefs opponents threw 25 percent of passes to their number-two receivers, the highest rate in the NFL. ☹ The Chiefs allowed a league-high 10.5 average yards after the catch when opponents threw passes behind the line of scrimmage.

Passing

Player	DYAR	DVOA	Plays	NtYds	Avg	YAC	C%	TD	Int
Matt Cassel	-449	-24.3%	550	2732	5.0	4.2	55.9%	16	15
Brodie Croyle	80	20.4%	43	212	4.9	5.7	57.5%	2	0

Receiving

Player	DYAR	DVOA	Plays	Ctch	Yds	Y/C	YAC	TD	C%
Chris Chambers	161	20.5%	62	36	620	16.9	4.4	4	59%
Dwayne Bowe	57	-4.4%	91	47	641	12.5	3.2	4	54%
Bobby Wade*	-78	-26.7%	76	37	371	9.9	3.1	2	49%
Bobby Engram*	6	-5.3%	11	5	67	12.2	3.4	0	50%
Terrance Cooper	8	3.2%	6	4	68	17.0	5.3	0	67%
Lance Long	-85	-40.4%	40	21	197	8.4	4.0	0	54%
Jerheme Urban	-4	-14.7%	29	18	186	10.3	3.5	0	62%
Leonard Pope	-22	-18.9%	31	20	180	8.7	4.2	1	67%
Sean Ryan	-20	-19.5%	27	14	135	9.6	3.4	2	52%
Brad Cottam	3	-5.0%	15	9	120	13.3	6.1	0	60%
Jake O'Connell	-56	-89.4%	10	2	7	3.5	1.5	0	20%
Jamaal Charles	14	-9.5%	55	40	297	7.4	5.5	1	73%
Larry Johnson*	-3	-16.4%	17	12	76	6.3	6.5	0	71%
Mike Cox	21	12.9%	14	10	89	7.9	5.1	0	77%
Dantrell Savage	7	-3.8%	11	7	51	7.3	8.0	0	64%
Tim Castille	6	4.2%	6	4	37	9.3	2.0	1	67%
Thomas Jones	-24	-36.7%	18	10	58	5.8	7.5	0	56%

Rushing

Player	DYAR	DVOA	Plays	Yds	Avg	TD	Fum	Suc
Jamaal Charles	232	20.2%	191	1117	5.8	7	3	53%
Larry Johnson*	-102	-28.7%	132	377	2.9	0	2	34%
Matt Cassel	-33	-30.0%	38	196	5.2	0	2	-
Tim Castille	-19	-36.8%	14	55	3.9	0	1	36%
Kolby Smith	-21	-50.7%	14	31	2.2	0	0	14%
Dantrell Savage	0	-7.6%	10	45	4.5	0	0	20%
Jackie Battle	6	13.2%	7	21	3.0	0	0	43%
Javarris Williams	-18	-93.1%	6	6	1.0	0	0	0%
Mike Cox	10	41.9%	3	5	1.7	1	0	67%
Thomas Jones	103	-1.2%	331	1402	4.2	14	2	44%

Offensive Line

Year	Yards	ALY	Rank	Power	Rank	Stuff	Rank	2nd Lev	Rank	Open Field	Rank
2007	3.37	3.55	31	61%	20	23%	29	0.86	30	0.39	25
2008	4.46	3.73	28	58%	28	22%	29	1.16	11	1.09	4
2009	4.39	3.63	30	63%	18	21%	20	1.26	9	1.00	7

Year	LE	Rank	LT	Rank	Mid	Rank	RT	Rank	RE	Rank	Sacks	ASR	Rank	F-Start	Cont.
2007	2.27	32	4.21	19	3.94	21	3.36	30	3.28	29	55	9.1%	29	27	33
2008	4.23	16	4.29	13	3.55	30	3.18	31	4.17	14	37	7.0%	21	13	29
2009	4.30	16	5.66	1	3.33	30	2.14	32	4.24	15	46	7.8%	25	22	27

A line that improved as the year went along, particularly in the running game, saw significant investment in the interior this offseason. The unquestioned weak link of last year's line was center Rudy Niswanger, but he will move to a utility role with the return of the prodigal center, Casey Wiegmann. Wiegmann was part of the legendary Roaf-Shields lines that helped Priest Holmes to astronomical touchdown totals a few years ago, but spent the last two years in Denver. His age (36) and size (285 pounds) make him a curious choice in a division that could consist exclusively of 3-4 defenses next season; in fact, the Broncos let him go because he lacked the size needed to compete with larger nose tackles in a power running game. Another ex-Chief making his return is guard Ryan Lilja, originally signed by the Chiefs as an undrafted free agent but lost to the Colts off waivers back in 2004. Lilja is also undersized at 290 pounds, but he's a great option when pulling to the outside, and a good pass blocker for an interior lineman. He replaces journeyman Wade Smith and the aged Mike Goff, who split the right guard duties in 2009. Veteran Brian Waters starts at left guard, with third-round pick Jon Asamoah (Illinois) likely in line to replace him come 2011.

The biggest concern for Kansas City is at tackle. While right tackle Ryan O'Callaghan emerged as an above-average run blocker after being nabbed on waivers from New England, he also had a whopping seven blown blocks that led to sacks, despite starting only 12 games. That ranked fourth amongst right tackles. Meanwhile, left tackle Branden Albert has been decidedly average during his first two years, leading to speculation that the Chiefs would move him to right tackle this offseason and use the fifth overall pick on Russell Okung. They chose not to, but the jury is still out on Albert; he needs to take a step forward this year, or the calls for a new left tackle will become a lot louder. Playing in front of Matt Cassel — who accumulates sacks like he wants to be featured on "Hoarders" — doesn't help very much.

Defensive Front Seven

Defensive Line	Age	Pos	Plays	TmPct	Overall								Pass Rush			vs. Run			vs. Pass		
					Rk	Stop	Dfts	BTKl	St%	Rk	AvYd	Rk	Sack	Hit	Hur	Runs	St%	Yds	Pass	St%	Yds
Glenn Dorsey	25	DE	55	6.8%	14	41	6	3	75%	49	2.7	54	1	2	8	51	75%	2.8	4	75%	1.3
Tyson Jackson	24	DE	38	4.4%	55	22	2	1	58%	78	3.0	67	0	2	4	35	57%	3.0	3	67%	2.3
Ron Edwards	31	DT	32	3.7%	62	24	6	2	75%	35	2.3	1	0	2	6	28	71%	2.5	4	100%	1.0
Wallace Gilberry	26	DE	21	2.5%	--	14	7	2	67%	--	0.9	--	4.5	3	2	15	53%	3.2	6	100%	-5.0

Linebackers	Age	Pos	Plays	TmPct	Overall								Pass Rush			vs. Run			vs. Pass			
					Rk	Stop	Dfts	BTKl	AvYd	Sack	Hit	Hur	Runs	St%	Rk	Yds	Rk	Tgts	Suc%	Rk	AdjYd	Rk
Demorrio Williams	30	ILB	122	14.2%	31	62	7	8	5.4	0	0	3	87	60%	88	3.9	85	27	38%	76	6.5	40
Corey Mays	27	ILB	84	9.8%	59	52	8	13	3.8	0	4	3	67	72%	30	2.5	24	18	46%	57	6.1	35
Tamba Hali	27	OLB	64	7.5%	89	44	16	6	2.5	8.5	7	26	46	65%	55	3.6	71	3	100%	--	0.0	--
Mike Vrabel	35	OLB	58	7.7%	85	40	12	4	3.3	2	1	12	37	68%	45	3.5	65	21	79%	2	2.5	1
Derrick Johnson	28	ILB	37	4.6%	--	24	11	6	5.2	1	0	1	11	82%	--	3.7	--	22	47%	54	5.8	30
Jovan Belcher	23	ILB	36	4.2%	--	15	7	1	7.6	0	2	0	14	64%	--	2.4	--	15	24%	--	9.1	--
Andy Studebaker	25	OLB	21	2.5%	--	13	4	2	3.5	0	2	1	13	62%	--	3.4	--	6	55%	--	4.2	--

Year	Yards	ALY	Rank	Power	Rank	Stuff	Rank	2nd Lev	Rank	Open Field	Rank
2007	4.56	3.98	13	60%	14	21%	10	1.26	30	0.92	29
2008	5.16	4.46	26	81%	32	14%	31	1.26	26	1.35	30
2009	4.93	4.70	32	64%	17	13%	32	1.21	21	1.08	26

Year	LE	Rank	LT	Rank	Mid	Rank	RT	Rank	RE	Rank	Sacks	ASR	Rank
2007	3.60	10	3.49	5	3.91	10	3.84	10	5.13	30	37	7.9%	3
2008	5.05	29	4.26	17	4.37	21	4.86	29	3.94	16	10	2.9%	32
2009	5.42	32	5.24	31	4.63	28	4.27	19	4.13	19	22	3.5%	32

The Chiefs' solution to their square peg, round hole problem appears to be hoping that the hole gets bigger and the pegs just fit in with room to spare. Overmatched nose tackle Ron Edwards is gritty, but he's just not enough; his inability to occupy blockers at the line of scrimmage is one of the main reasons why Kansas City's line was dead last in Adjusted Line Yards a year ago. After striking out on the prominent nose tackles available in free agency, the Chiefs added former Browns defensive tackle Shaun Smith, famed for both punching Brady Quinn and possessing one of the league's most vehemently obnoxious mouths. He barely played in 2009 because of the latter, so the Chiefs are clearly hoping that the 325-pound Smith learned his lesson. He has the body and athleticism required to play the nose, but not much experience.

He'll be surrounded by two top-five picks, each of whom has work to do. 2009 third overall pick Tyson Jackson was considered a bit of an overdraft upon his selection, and while 3-4 ends don't generate the statistics that draw attention as a successful pick, he wasn't exactly a *force majeure* against opposing right tackles, either. Jackson was drafted because of his preternatural abilities against the run; this year, he needs to do a better job of actually applying his size and shedding blocks at the line of scrimmage. 2008 fifth overall pick Glenn Dorsey ... well, he's got a much longer to-do list. His pass rush numbers are better than Jackson's because of his spot on the line (the right end generally gets more opportunities to rush the passer in the 3-4 than the left end) and the fact that Hali was occupying most of the protection on his side. Don't get confused: He wasn't a good pass rusher, or anything close. If Dorsey was even adequate, he and Hali would become a devastating combination on their half of the field. The athleticism he showed in college is still there, but Dorsey struggles for any sort of consistency. Much like Albert, his fellow 2008 first-rounder, this is a make-or-break year for him. Wallace Gilberry and 2009 third-rounder Alex Magee are the primary reserves at end.

Hali's brilliance at outside linebacker was covered earlier. Opposite outside linebacker Mike Vrabel was better than the discard label the Patriots threw on him in 2009, contributing as an average pass rusher while retaining his ability to sift through trash and make plays in the running game. He might actually be a better fit on the inside at this point, where there's certainly not much to compete with. Corey Mays led all linebackers

with 13 broken tackles, a product of the missteps and struggles he has with diagnosing plays. Fellow inside linebacker Demorrio Williams was a surprise starter after being perceived as a free agent bust from the Peterson administration, and while he racked up his usual gaudy tackle total, they're not useful tackles — look at his rank in Rushing Yards per play to see where those plays are coming. Former first-round pick Derrick Johnson struggled with his move to inside linebacker and lost his starting job to Mays, a career special-teamer, but his two-interception performance against the Broncos in Week 17 put him back in the good graces of coaches and fans alike, and he should be one of the starters on the interior in Week 1 this year. Andy Studebaker showed some promise last year in a limited role as a utility linebacker, while former Troy defensive end Cameron Sheffield could carve out a role as a situational pass rusher after being taken in the fifth round.

Defensive Secondary

Secondary	Age	Pos	Overall							vs. Run					vs. Pass								
			Plays	TmPct	Rk	Stop	Dfts	BTkl	Runs	St%	Rk	Yds	Rk	Tgts	Tgt%	Rk	Dist	Suc%	Rk	APaYd	Rk	PD	Int
Mike Brown	32	SS	103	12.0%	18	40	8	11	66	50%	15	8.1	55	28	6.4%	38	12.3	62%	21	6.6	26	3	3
Brandon Flowers	24	CB	88	11.0%	16	48	21	7	25	44%	33	6.1	26	78	19.4%	15	15.9	56%	21	6.9	32	19	5
Brandon Carr	24	CB	80	9.3%	36	36	19	1	18	39%	50	8.2	57	81	18.9%	22	13.2	53%	38	7.2	36	17	1
Jon McGraw	31	FS	42	5.6%	73	16	4	4	26	50%	15	5.2	12	11	2.8%	76	19.0	65%	17	11.4	73	3	1
Jarrad Page	26	FS	21	7.8%	--	7	2	1	11	36%	--	8.5	--	13	9.3%	--	12.3	72%	--	7.3	--	3	0

Year	Pass D Rank	vs. #1 WR	Rk	vs. #2 WR	Rk	vs. Other WR	Rk	vs. TE	Rk	vs. RB	Rk
2007	10	14.3%	23	-3.7%	12	-33.0%	4	11.8%	23	-14.8%	7
2008	28	7.7%	19	-3.3%	12	-53.0%	1	15.7%	23	22.5%	30
2009	19	-18.0%	9	26.3%	30	-17.5%	7	-1.1%	12	5.4%	18

Safety was the disaster spot for the Chiefs last year. Veteran strong safety Mike Brown finally stayed healthy, something he couldn't manage in Chicago, but he was overmatched against backs and tight ends in man coverage, didn't have the speed to provide reliable help over the top, and he didn't contribute anywhere near enough as a run defender to justify his roster spot. His above-average charting figures are a product of being so far away from deep passes that our charters could hardly attribute him with "coverage." Meanwhile, after free safety Jarrad Page went down with a calf injury and went on IR, the team gave most of his playing time to Jon McGraw, a try-really-hard special-teams player who doesn't have the athletic ability or the instincts to play centerfield — that 11.4 yards per attempt figure is no accident. The ensuing fiasco undoubtedly drove the team into the arms of Eric Berry, who can play either spot, but will likely start at strong safety. Page should be healthy, but he requested a trade during the offseason, and even if Page doesn't get dealt before camp, the team may choose to move on. Replacing Page with McGraw would be tantamount to disaster; the team will hope that 2008 third-round pick DaJuan Morgan can serve as Page's replacement.

On the other hand, cornerback was actually a position of strength for Kansas City a year ago. Of the two Brandons, Carr is more consistent, but Flowers has more upside as a potential No. 1 corner. While their 2009 charting stats were similar, Flowers' statistics were far better in 2008. Behind those guys was a group of problematic players, namely Maurice Leggett, another special-teamer who was embarrassed when placed out in the secondary. (Leggett allowed 12.5 adjusted yards per pass, the highest figure of any cornerback with at least 20 charted targets.) The team recognized this as a problem and added Alabama's Javier Arenas in the second round; he's well-suited to be a slot corner, with great fluidity in and out of his cuts. He probably doesn't have the size to play on the outside, but with Carr and Flowers around, that shouldn't be a problem. Beyond the top three, depth is again an issue, with only marginal players like Leggett and Travis Flowers around. That's the difference between a good organization and the one that Carl Peterson was running during his final years in Kansas City.

Special Teams

Year	DVOA	Rank	FG/XP	Rank	Net Kick	Rank	Kick Ret	Rank	Net Punt	Rank	Punt Ret	Rank	Hidden	Rank
2007	-3.3%	24	-10.2	30	6.2	6	-14.9	32	5.9	8	-6.3	28	-15.9	31
2008	-5.7%	30	-8.4	30	-15.9	32	-6.8	25	0.7	19	-3.4	25	-15.7	31
2009	-1.5%	26	3.9	9	-3.9	25	-7.1	26	4.8	10	-6.7	27	3.9	7

For a Mr. Irrelevant, merely getting on the roster is an accomplishment. Ryan Succop did well better than that, as he was effective on field goals and ranked 12th in the league on kickoffs. Dustin Colquitt was even better, ranking fifth in gross punt value. Unfortunately for their specialists, Kansas City had the sixth-worst punt coverage in football, and only the Colts and Steelers did a worse job of covering kickoffs. The Chiefs place a lot of emphasis on having players with special teams experience at the bottom of the roster, but those players need to step up as gunners and coverage guys in 2010. The team will turn over both return spots, with effective kick returner Jamaal Charles likely vacating the role because of his expanded offensive duties, and ineffective punt returner Bobby Wade off the roster. Arenas will have the first crack at both gigs, with Quinten Lawrence also a candidate for kick return duties. Of course, last year Lawrence was one of the many Chiefs who cost the team value when Charles wasn't returning kicks. The Chiefs gained 3.2 points worth of field position on Charles' returns, but lost -3.7 points on Lawrence's returns and -6.6 points on returns by five other players.

Coaching Staff

After one year as an NFL head coach, Todd Haley has four wins and five coordinators, including himself. Offensive coordinator Chan Gailey was demoted from his position during preseason and quietly exited the organization afterwards, with Haley taking over the duties for the 2009 season. Former Cardinals cohort Clancy Pendergast lasted the season on the defensive side, but he was let go in February. Coming in for duty are former Patriots coordinators Charlie Weis and Romeo Crennel. Both are coming off of failed head coaching gigs that they earned through their work under Bill Belichick, and as a result they will demand and wield more power than the average coordinator normally does. While Weis is known for the short passing scheme that a matured Tom Brady ran in 2003 and 2004, he was also effective at implementing a risk-averse, conservative scheme on the fly in 2001, when Brady was the nail and not the hammer. Crennel's more of a wild card; his Browns defenses weren't much, and while he was the defensive coordinator of those Patriots teams, he also had Belichick doing a fair amount of the heavy lifting. His last work as a defensive coordinator without Belichick was for the 2000 Browns, a team that was 25th in defensive DVOA. On the other hand, the Browns were 31st in 1999, so maybe 25th wasn't all that bad.