

# Bills owner feels team hit 'proverbial playoff wall'

BY JOHN WAWROW  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Buffalo Bills owner Terry Pegula felt his team hit what he called "the proverbial playoff wall" in leading to his decision to abruptly fire coach Sean McDermott this week.

Speaking at a season-ending news conference on Wednesday, Pegula said he made up his mind immediately following a 33-30 overtime loss at Denver in a divisional playoff on Saturday.

He based his decision in part on seeing how distraught many Bills players, including quarterback Josh Allen, appeared in the locker room in the aftermath of the loss.

"I saw the pain in Josh's face at his (news conference). And I felt his pain," Pegula said. "I know we can do better. And I know we will get better."

Pegula then listed many of Buffalo's more memorable playoff defeats over the nine seasons under McDermott.

"It was where does the leadership of the team on the field and in the locker room, where do we go from that moment — another playoff failure," Pegula said. "That's why I decided Sean had to leave."

Pegula spoke alongside general manager Brandon Beane, who was promoted in adding the title of president of football operations.

And it's now on Beane to lead Buffalo's first coaching search since McDermott took over in 2017 after two seasons under Rex Ryan.

The coaching search process has already started, with the Bills already set to interview several candidates including former Giants coach and former Buffalo's offensive coordinator Brian Daboll; Com-



Buffalo Bills owner Terry Pegula left, and General Manager Brandon Beane speak at a NFL football news conference in Orchard Park, N.Y. on Wednesday.

manders running backs coach Anthony Lynn, who finished the 2016 season as Buffalo's interim coach; and Bills current offensive coordinator Joe Brady.

Pegula said Allen had no input in McDermott's firing, but added the quarterback will play a role in the coaching search.

Pegula credited McDermott for transforming a franchise that had endured a 17-season playoff drought into a perennial winner.

"We all remember the playoff drought before Sean got here," Pegula said. "Sean has definitely left the Buffalo Bills in a better place than when he arrived in 2017. He gave his heart and soul trying to win a championship."

Ultimately, it was the lack of a Super Bowl appearance that wore on Pegula.

"It was one year after another. I just couldn't see us doing that with Sean," he said. "It's not an easy decision trust me with that success. But what is success? Is it being in the playoffs seven years in a row with no Super Bowl."

Despite a 98-50 regular-season record, and seven straight double-digit-win seasons, McDermott was 8-8 in the playoffs. Each of Buffalo's past three postseason losses were

decided by three points.

Buffalo ended the drought in 2017 and reached the playoffs in eight of nine seasons, but only advanced to the AFC title game twice, losing both times to Kansas City. The Bills became the NFL's first team to win a playoff round in six straight years but not reach the Super Bowl.

Pegula's appearance was rare as he's not taken questions from Bills reporters since at least 2019. He said one major reason he's taken a more behind-the-scenes role is due to dedicating time to his wife, Kim, who continues her lengthy recovery from a debilitating cardiac arrest in June 2022.

Pegula otherwise backed Beane, and disputed there being any sort of a rift that grew between the coach and GM.

"Our roster is a direct reflection of the hard work that Brandon and our scouting staff has done through the years," Pegula said, particularly noting it was Beane's decision to draft Allen in 2018. "One may complain over a deal, over a player, over a result. But the bottom line is, success over a long period of time means we're doing something right."

# Johnson, Bears look ahead after breakthrough season

BY ANDREW SELIGMAN  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LAKE FOREST, Ill. — The Chicago Bears thrilled the city in coach Ben Johnson's first season.

They pulled out one comeback win after another on their way to capturing the NFC North championship after finishing last in the division. They advanced in the playoffs for the first time in 15 years by rallying to beat Green Bay in a wild-card game before losing an overtime thriller to Matthew Stafford and the Los Angeles Rams in the divisional round.

Now, it's time to start building on everything they accomplished. Then again, maybe building isn't the right word.

"There is no building off of this," Johnson said on Wednesday. "We go back to square one. We're back at the bottom again. That's really all 32 teams. If you feel otherwise, you're probably missing the big picture."

The Bears are obviously starting from a stronger position, with Caleb Williams on his way to becoming a franchise quarterback after setting the team's single-season passing record in his second year and Johnson looking like the coach to lead him to that next level. It's a big change from last January, when the team was reeling after finishing 5-12 and firing former coach Matt Eberflus along the way.

Now, for the first time since he was hired in 2022, general manager Ryan Poles heads into the offseason with a contender rather than a rebuilding project.

"You just have more constraints," he said. "At the same time, I don't think the process changes. You're gonna identify the guys that fit what we want in our football team, which coach hit, and you just keep trying."



Chicago Bears head coach Ben Johnson talks to media at a news conference in Lake Forest, Ill. on Wednesday.

ing to acquire those players. We know what they look like, we know how they act, we know how they talk, and we'll continue to do that."

Poles had a big offseason a year ago.

He transformed a struggling offensive line by trading for guards Joe Thuney and Jonah Jackson and signing center Drew Dalman. He also drafted Ozzy Trapilo in the second round.

The Boston College product emerged as the starting left tackle, only to tear the patellar tendon in his left knee in the wild-card game against Green Bay.

Poles didn't have a specific timeline for his return, though he figures to be out long term after having surgery.

"I'm sure it'll be deep into next (season), with the injury," Poles said. "So, we've had a conversation with him. He knows this is part of his journey that he has to overcome. I have a lot of faith in him and our staff to get him back ready to go whenever that is."

Trapilo was one of four major contributors drafted by Poles this past year.

The Bears also hit big with tight end Colston Loveland in the first round, receiver Luther Burden in the second and running back Kyle Monangai in the

seventh. Loveland, the No. 10 pick out of Michigan, led Chicago in receptions (58) and yards (713) and tied for the team lead in touchdown catches (six). The speedy and elusive Burden had 652 yards receiving. And the hard-running Monangai rushed for 783 yards as part of a productive tandem with D'Andre Swift.

The Bears have some decisions to make at safety with All-Pro Kevin Byard and Jaquan Brisker set to become free agents. The 32-year-old Byard, who led the league with seven interceptions, said this week he'd like to return. And Poles would like to have him back.

"I have no problem saying that's a player that we would like to have back," Poles said. "But, again, when you add the other safeties into that mix and all the other decisions we have across the roster, with cap restraints and things like that, it'll be a challenge. But that's part of what we do."

Poles also acknowledged a need to improve the line on a defense that ranked 29th overall and 27th against the run. Chicago tied for 22nd in sacks with 35. But the Bears appear to have the two most important pieces in place — the coach and the quarterback.

## Mixon faces uncertain future after missing season with injury

BY KRISTIE RIEKEN  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON — Joe Mixon's status for next season remains uncertain after the Houston Texans running back missed all season with what general manager Nick Caserio called a "freak" foot injury Wednesday.

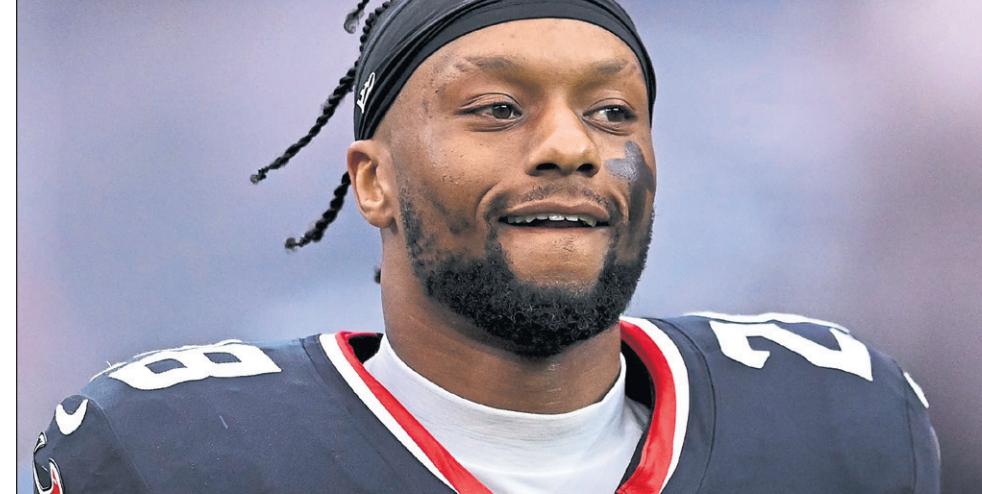
"We haven't seen Joe in a little bit, so I think at some point we'll see him and then we'll be able to evaluate kind of where he is and then based on information, we'll see where his status is," Caserio said.

The Texans provided few details on the 29-year-old Mixon's recovery throughout the season after announcing in training camp that he sustained a foot injury away from the facility in the offseason.

Asked for details about his injury Wednesday, Caserio gave a bit more information but still didn't specify exactly what the injury was.

"It wasn't like he was riding a snowmobile or anything like that," Caserio said. "It was more of a medical condition or situation that never... really didn't improve maybe as much as everybody would have hoped. I'm not trying to evade the question, that's the reality of the situation. He didn't jump off a building. He wasn't cliff diving or anything. He wasn't doing anything irresponsible. It was just a freak thing."

The Texans reached the divisional round of the playoffs for a third straight season, but their offense took a major hit with Mixon out all season with the injury. It came after he ran for 1,016



Houston Texans running back Joe Mixon (28) jogs onto the field before an NFL football game against the Miami Dolphins on Dec 15, 2024, in Houston.

Maria Lysaker | Associated Press

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The U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) is considering a request for Federal assistance from The City of Owensboro to construct a Water Main Expansion in Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), EDA is conducting an assessment of the potential of the proposed project to affect the environment and/or historic properties. Notice is hereby given that the project is proposed to be located in, or may affect, a floodplain and/or wetland as defined by Executive Order (EO) 11988 and/or EO 11990.

The project includes construction of a new 2,200 linear foot twenty-inch ductile iron water main. The project will be located at 1901 Ragu Drive, Owensboro, KY. Project information is available for review at the Green River Area Development District, 300 GRADD Way, Owensboro, KY.

If you have any information regarding potential impacts to historic properties or environmental resources including wetlands or floodplains associated with this proposed project, please provide any comments by email to ATRO-REO@eda.gov.

Comments received by 5:00 pm eastern on February 23, 2026 will be considered. A copy of the NEPA/NHPA decisional document will be available upon request from ATRO-REO@eda.gov.

This home is filled with many well-cared for items. Items include cherry dining room suite, walnut drop leaf table, daybed w/pullout trundle, twin iron, Lazy Boy recliner, oak kitchen table w/chairs, red vintage cabinet, sofa, occasional tables and chairs, bookshelves, area rugs, loveseat, cherry dresser, prints, mirrors, lamps, kitchenware, small kitchen island, bachelor's chest, vintage china cabinet, Victorian dresser and washstand, china, crystal, kitchenware, linens, bedding, throw pillows (indoor & outdoor), holiday decor, nice patio table with chairs, wicker gliders, early local yearbooks, miscellaneous Free Mason books, Bose radio, Keurig, dorm fridge, garage refrigerator, smart tv, lots of yard tools and outdoor decor, extension ladder, appliance dolly, scaffold, air compressor, golf clubs, spreaders, power washers, tool chest, lots of hand and power tools, ventless natural gas wall heater, ice cream freezer, cast iron horse head hitching post, numerous decorative accessories, luggage, fire place heater, Soleus air conditioner/heater 115 volt, fire box safe, throw rugs, stacking washer & dryer set, garage refrigerator, small kitchen appliances, bedding, linens, drapes and so much more. Photos are available for viewing on Estatesales.org.

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YOU MUST bring help to move large items as we DO NOT have staff to assist. All items must be removed by 3pm on Saturday. Please bring boxes and paper to pack your items. Call Donna at 270-903-7859 with questions.

yards and 11 touchdowns in his first season with the team in 2024. He has one year remaining on a three-year, \$27 million contract extension he signed after joining the Texans following seven years with the Bengals.

Caserio said they weren't sure of his status throughout the season but held out hope that he could return at some point.

"It was a very unique situation," he said. "I don't think anybody really had any clarity, honestly, from the start of the year until now. I'd say Joe worked very, very hard to try to get himself ready to play football, it just

never manifested itself, came to fruition. So probably have an opportunity to kind of see where he is in the offseason relative to next year."

When asked specifically if they believe Mixon's condition will

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improve enough for him to be ready for the start of training camp, Caserio said it's too soon to tell.

"We'll see. Believe me, I'm not smart enough to be a doctor so I'm going to leave that up to the medical experts," he said. "Once we... get a little bit more clarity, more information, we'll kind of see where we are."

SALE - Clearance Used Business Items

ALL SALES FINAL - ALL CASH SALES - no checks or credit cards

TIME- Saturday, January 24th, 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM

LOCATION: Former Nation's Medicines building located at 3030 Burlew Blvd

ITEMS: Business Equipment

File cabinets, Printers,

Scanners, Fax Machine,

Furniture- Chairs (ladderback),

Oak Dry Sink, Book Shelves,

Rex Rocker, Oak Tables

MISC: Office Supplies (free

stuff), Dinner Bell ( 1880 C.S.

Bell Company) ( cast iron)