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Top 10 Free Agents

Courtesy: Nathan Boudreaux

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By Nathan Boudreaux - With the free agency period officially underway, many teams are in the market for marquee players. Here's a list of the top 10 available free agents:

1- QB **Shane Stafford** (6-3, 210, Connecticut) – *Is the most sought after free agent...Coming off his best season as a pro, passing for 4,795 yards with 86 TDs and 18 INTs for Tampa Bay...Also rushed for an additional 10 scores...Has 15,672 career passing yards with 289 TDs and 54 INTs in five AFL*

seasons.



Courtesy: E.L. Bakke/AFL/WireImage.com
OS Marcus Nash

2- QB **Mark Grieb** (6-3, 208, California – Davis) – *Has been the model of passing consistency over the last eight seasons in San Jose...Has thrown for more than 4,000 yards in three straight seasons, including a career-high 4,834 yards last year (83 TDs and 10 INTs)...Averaged 302.6 passing yards per game in '06, but will have to adjust to life without offensive coordinator Terry Malley.*

3- OS **Marcus Nash** (6-4, 220, Tennessee) – *Former AFL Offensive Player of the Year with the Las Vegas Gladiators...Spent his last three AFL seasons with the Gladiators and caught 123 passes for 1,317 yards and 28 TDs last year...Had his best season as a pro in '04 with LV, catching 154 passes for 1,771 yards and 46 scores.*

4- OL/DL **E.J. Burt** (6-2, 275, West Liberty State) – *One of the League's premier pass rushers...Has 25.5 sacks in four seasons with Orlando and Philadelphia...Totaled 4.5 sacks last year with the Soul – the lowest sack total of his four-year AFL career.*

5- WR/LB **Aaron Boone** (6-2, 200, Kentucky) – *Burst onto the scene for Kansas City during the second half of last season after being traded from Philadelphia...Caught 66 passes for 748 yards and 19 TDs in just seven games...Has potential to be a solid two-way AFL player.*

6- WR/LB **Anthony Hines** (5-11, 185, Winston-Salem State) – *Coming off a career season in Grand Rapids last year where he caught 124 passes for 1,329 yards and 25 TDs...Is a three-year AFL veteran, having played with Indiana and Grand Rapids.*

7- OS **Terrill Shaw** (6-0, 190, Southern Mississippi) – *Led Dallas in receiving with 111 catches for 1,498 yards and 37 TDs in '06 and finished fourth in the League in scoring with 234 points...Former ArenaBowl MVP with Grand Rapids...Has 435 career catches for 5,811 yards and 126 TDs.*

8- DS **Nate Coggins** (6-0, 205, West Georgia) – *Tied for sixth in the League with 91.5 tackles for Georgia in '06...In two seasons with the Force has compiled 159.5 stops.*

9- WR/LB **Jason Shelley** (6-2, 192, Central State (Ohio)) – *Got caught up on the numbers game in Dallas and missed most of '06 with an injury...Played in just seven games with 14 catches for 159 yards and two TDs...Had back-to-back 1,200-yard and 23-plus TD catch seasons in 2004-05.*

10- OL/DL **Henry Taylor** (6-3, 290, South Carolina) – *Led the AFL with 8.5 sacks last season for Orlando...Spent his first four seasons in the League with Dallas, Nashville and Orlando...Has 17.5 career sacks, including 12.5 the last two seasons with the Kats and Predators.*

Best of the Rest (top 10 available free agents at each position):

Quarterback

The two most coveted free agents in the League are **Shane Stafford** and **Mark Grieb**. Everyone knows you

need a solid quarterback to win a championship – just ask the Chicago Rush, they picked up QB **Matt D’Orazio** via free agency last year.

- 1- QB Shane Stafford (6-3, 210, Connecticut)
- 2- QB Mark Grieb (6-3, 208, California – Davis)
- 3- QB Leon Murray (6-3, 230, Tennessee State)
- 4- QB Nick Browder (6-2, 215, Valparaiso)
- 5- QB Jose Davis (6-1, 195, Kent State)
- 6- QB Chris Greisen (6-3, 220, Northwest Missouri State)
- 7- QB Travis Cole (6-2, 200, Minnesota)
- 8- QB Scott Dreisbach (6-2, 215, Michigan)
- 9- QB Ryan Van Dyke (6-5, 230, Michigan State)
- 10- QB Brian Mann (6-2, 205, Dartmouth)

Offensive-Defensive Line

The men up front are the unsung heroes. But, the nature of the position will change this year with the implementation of free substitution. Even so, pass rushers like **E.J. Burt** and **Henry Taylor** are big commodities.

- 1- OL/DL E.J. Burt (6-2, 275, West Liberty State)
- 2- OL/DL Henry Taylor (6-3, 290, South Carolina)
- 3- OL/DL Delbert Cowsette (6-1, 290, Maryland)
- 4- OL/DL Tim Martin (6-5, 270, Tulsa)
- 5- OL/DL Hugh Hunter (6-2, 265, Hampton)
- 6- OL/DL Steve Konopka (6-5, 295, Central Connecticut State)
- 7- OL/DL Karl Bates (6-4, 275, Kentucky Wesleyan)
- 8- OL/DL Teto Simpson (6-5, 285, North Carolina)
- 9- OL/DL Tom Briggs (6-3, 270, West Virginia)
- 10- OL/DL John Sikora (6-3, 303, Slippery Rock)

Fullback-Linebacker

Lots of veterans available in this group with guys like **Chris Avery**, **Leroy Thompson** and **Bob McMillen**. But, keep an eye on defensive minded **Chris Demaree** – he had 4.0 sacks last season as a backup in Georgia.

- 1- FB/LB Chris Avery (6-0, 238, Kentucky State)
- 2- FB/LB Robert Thomas (6-1, 252, Henderson State)
- 3- FB/LB Chris Demaree (6-3, 265, Kentucky)
- 4- FB/LB Idris Price (6-2, 265, New Haven)
- 5- FB/LB Henry Bryant (6-0, 250, Kansas State)
- 6- FB/LB Leroy Thompson (6-2, 270, Delaware State)
- 7- FB/LB Steve Warren (6-1, 305, Nebraska)
- 8- FB/LB Bob McMillen (6-3, 260, Illinois Benedictine)
- 9- FB/LB Matt Kinsinger (6-2, 260, Slippery Rock)
- 10- FB/LB Frank Trentadue (6-1, 260, Elmhurst College)

Defensive Specialist

Nate Coggins and **Jonathan Ordway** pace a solid group of defensive specialists. Lots of experience is available with guys like **Jeroid Johnson**, **Kevin Gaines** and **Clarence Lawson**.

- 1- DS Nate Coggins (6-0, 205, West Georgia)
- 2- DS Jonathan Ordway (5-11, 190, Boston College)
- 3- DS T.J. Hill (5-10, 195, Northeastern)
- 4- DS Jeroid Johnson (5-9, 180, Oklahoma State)
- 5- DS Kevin Gaines (6-2, 210, Louisville)
- 6- DS Hamin Milligan (6-2, 195, Houston)
- 7- DS Denario Smalls (5-9, 190, East Tennessee State)
- 8- DS Reggie Doster (5-10, 185, Central Florida)
- 9- DS Tramain Jones (6-3, 200, Angelo State)
- 10- DS Clarence Lawson (5-8, 180, Utah)

Offensive Specialist (only 7 available)

Former Offensive Player of the Year **Marcus Nash** leads this group. Nash still has some gas left in the tank and with the new substitution rules could be on the field at the same time as potentially two other top notch receivers – his size is his biggest strength. **Damien Groce** showed flashes last season but needs to be more consistent.

- 1- OS Marcus Nash (6-4, 220, Tennessee)
- 2- OS Terrill Shaw (6-0, 190, Southern Mississippi)
- 3- OS Damien Groce (5-10, 190, Iowa State)
- 4- OS Steve Smith (5-10, 170, Utah State)
- 5- OS Freddie Solomon (5-11, 180, South Carolina State)
- 6- OS Atnaf Harris (6-1, 185, Cal State – Northridge)
- 7- OS Mutsumi Takahashi (5-7, 165, Nihon (Japan))

Wide Receiver-Defensive Back

With the new substitution rules, don't expect a lot of these two-way guys to see action on both sides of the ball next year. **Josh Bush** is a shifty receiver but struggled as a defensive back – his stock is stronger this year only having to play one-way. **DaShane Dennis** and **Corey Johnson** are natural defenders but can also play receiver.

- 1- WR/DB Josh Bush (5-9, 170, Western Michigan)
- 2- WR/DB Jarrick Hillery (5-11, 200, Tennessee State)
- 3- WR/DB DaShane Dennis (5-10, 175, Delaware State)
- 4- WR/DB Cornelius Bonner (6-0, 190, Cincinnati)
- 5- WR/DB Carl Bond (5-11, 200, Connecticut)
- 6- WR/DB Corey Johnson (5-9, 190, Georgia)
- 7- WR/DB Rob Milanese (5-9, 180, Pennsylvania)
- 8- WR/DB Jerome Riley (6-2, 195, Washington State)
- 9- WR/DB Clif Dell (5-10, 180, South Florida)
- 10- WR/DB Lynarise Elpheage (5-10, 180, Tulane)

Wide Receiver-Linebacker

Anthony Hines leads a strong group of WR/LB free agents. **Aaron Boone** showed promise over the second half of the season last year in Kansas City and has great size for the position. **Greg Hopkins**, **Darrin Chiaverini** and **Cornelius White** are solid two-way guys but aren't getting any younger.

- 1- WR/LB Anthony Hines (5-11, 185, Winston-Salem State)
- 2- WR/LB Aaron Boone (6-2, 200, Kentucky)
- 3- WR/LB Jason Shelley (6-2, 192, Central State (Ohio))
- 4- WR/LB Kevin McKenzie (5-11, 185, Washington State)
- 5- WR/LB Greg Hopkins (6-2, 205, Slippery Rock)
- 6- WR/LB Darrin Chiaverini (6-2, 220, Colorado)
- 7- WR/LB Joe Douglass (5-11, 190, Montana)
- 8- WR/LB Cornelius White (6-1, 205, Virginia Tech)
- 9- WR/LB Jamaine Blalock (5-9, 185, Western Illinois)
- 10- WR/LB Jermaine Lewis (6-4, 210, Western Michigan)

Kicker

Kickers in the AFL – just like the NFL – seem to recycle themselves each year. Expect to see most everyone on this list in the League somewhere next season. For some reason it's hard to find rookie kickers who can squeeze the ball between those 9-foot goalposts.

- 1- K Clay Rush (6-3, 220, Missouri Western)
- 2- K Peter Martinez (6-3, 185, Western Kentucky)
- 3- K Mark Lewis (6-0, 200, Florida International)
- 4- K Nelson Garner (6-1, 180, James Madison)
- 5- K Gary Kral (6-0, 175, Pittsburg State (KS))
- 6- K Bill Gramatica (5-11, 195, South Florida)
- 7- K Jason Ball (5-9, 180, North Texas)

Nathan Boudreaux has been working for arenafootball.com since 2002. He has been associated with the AFL since 1999 and has worked as media relations director for both the AFL's Florida Bobcats (1999) and Carolina Cobras (2000-02). He also spent four years (2002-05) in the media relations department of the NFL's Cleveland Browns before moving to his current post as manager of communications for USA Football - a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping to grow and support the game of football at the youth level.

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