

2018 All-NFC North team

Bob McGinn ,

The following is the All-NFC North Division team (defense, special teams) selected by four NFL executives in personnel for BobMcGinnFootball.com during interviews this week. At each position, scouts were asked to rank players. They were not permitted to vote for their own players or comment about their own players.

A first-place vote was worth 3 points, a second-place vote was worth 2 points and a third-place vote was worth 1 point. There were 24 points per position. The maximum total per player was 9 points; the minimum total was 3 points. Unanimous choices were denoted by asterisk (*).

DEFENSE

LEFT END: tie, Akiem Hicks (Chi) and Danielle Hunter (MN), 8. Others: Da'Shawn Hand (Det), 5; Dean Lowry (GB), 3.

For the second straight year voters found it difficult to separate Hicks and Hunter and so they tied for the slot. "The top two are really hard," said one scout. "Those two guys are playing at a Pro Bowl level. Akiem Hicks is a difference-maker. He gives it his all. Very disruptive. Danielle Hunter is one of the finer pass rushers in the league. Self-made guy. He's really ascended since he's been there. Hicks is just a better all-around player, run and pass." Another voter went for Hunter. "I love Hicks but there's less consistency in his play than Hunter," that scout said. "When Hicks wants to go he can dominate. Other times he just does what he has to do. Hunter has really developed. Really gifted athletically and has finally put it together and become a productive overall player." Hand, a fourth-round draft choice, had a respectable first-year showing. "Strong at the point," one scout said. "He still needs to work on his pass rush but he does have some power. Flashes some twitch. For a rookie he played OK." Lowry played a career-high 633 snaps after injuries decimated Green Bay's defensive line. "Meat and potatoes, tough, strong, motor," one scout said. "All that stuff. Big. Can't have enough of those guys."

NOSE TACKLE: Kenny Clark (GB), 8. Others: Damon "Snacks" Harrison (Det), 7; Eddie Goldman (Chi), 5; Linval Joseph (MN), 4.

This is the best position in the division. "It's very, very close," said one scout. "You could almost flip a coin as close as they are. All four are very dominant against the run. They've done a phenomenal job taking up blocks and being disruptive." As gossamer-thin as the margin was, Clark probably got the nod on the basis of pass rush. "He has more pass rush than Joseph so that's why I give him the edge," one scout said. "Really came on as a complete player." A third-year player, Clark tied for second at No. 2 DT in 2016 and was second at NT in '17. The last NT from Green Bay to make first team was B.J. Raji in 2011. The Lions made a great move Oct. 25, acquiring Harrison from the Giants for a fifth-round draft choice. "They were a porous run defense and after he got there they improved like 10 spots (actually 15) against the run," another scout said. "When he's playing hard he's playing with an edge. He can push the pocket in pass rush. You need to double him. Otherwise, he's going to dominate." Goldman came on in his fourth season. "Exactly what you want in a 34 nose," one scout said. Joseph displaced Raji as the division's leading NT after arriving from the Giants in 2014. He made first team the past four years, twice as a unanimous pick. Not one scout even hinted at slippage by Joseph, 30, but somebody had to finish last. "He's been very consistent throughout his career," one scout said. "He's still a premier run stuffer."

3-TECHNIQUE: Mike Daniels (GB), 8. Others: A'Shawn Robinson (Det), 7; Sheldon Richardson (MN), 6; Bilal Nichols (Chi), 3.

Daniels missed the last five games with a foot injury but had to settle for two sacks and 26 tackles. "I've always loved Daniels," said one scout. "He's a hell of a player. I respect him." Others wonder where his career might be headed. "This could be just an abnormal year," another scout said. "But he didn't play very well compared to how he did in the past." Daniels, 29, was a unanimous selection the past three years. Robinson, a third-year player, bounced back from a slow start. "He's probably the most talented of anybody we talked about in the middle," another scout said. "He can play the run and the pass really well. He just needs to develop a consistency." Richardson is a former Jet-Seahawk. "Good scheme fit up there," another scout said. "When you watch the film you say, 'This guy's got everything.' Then his numbers (4 ½ sacks, 56 hurries) don't reflect his play. I do think he disrupts the game with his quickness." Nichols, a fifth-round pick in April, moved ahead of Jonathan Bullard in the rotation. Said one scout: "Good young player."

RIGHT END: Khalil Mack* (Chi), 9. Others: Everson Griffen (MN), 7; Clay Matthews (GB) and Romeo Okwara (Det), 4. Griffen, a unanimous pick in three of the past four years, and everyone else was surpassed by Mack, the ex-Raider. "He was a difference-maker," said one scout. "Just a godsend for the Bears." Griffen missed five games early because of mental issues. "Danielle Hunter has kind of surpassed him from a production standpoint," another scout said. "It's helped him (getting) more one-on-one matchups." Matthews made the first team in 2010, '11, '12, '13, '14 and '15 before tying for second in '16 and tying for third in '17. "Obviously, he's on the downside but he's still a solid player," one scout said. "Not nearly as productive. Doesn't have quite the juice. He's going to be 33. He's declining. That's what they missed: an edge presence." Okwara, a former Giant, led the Lions with 7 ½ sacks. "He sure did (get better)," one scout said. "He improved during the season. At the end, you'd probably take him over Matthews. Pretty good leverage in the run game. Wiry, long. Little bit of a one-trick pony as a rusher. He's an effort guy."

STRONG-SIDE LINEBACKER: Anthony Barr (MN), 8. Others: Leonard Floyd (Chi), 7; Kyler Fackrell (GB), 6; Devon Kennard (Det), 3. Barr finished first for the fourth year in a row. "More of an inside linebacker than anything," one scout said. "He's a rangy, sideline-to-sideline type. He's just not stout when you have to take stuff on. That would be something to be desired." Floyd made strides in his third season. "He's come on," another scout said. "Playing better and he's singled up a lot, too. He still doesn't have a great (pass-rushing) arsenal but he's so long and got a really good motor. He's fast." Fackrell posted career-high totals of 9 ½ sacks and 565 snaps. "He's had a really nice year," one scout said. "He's had sacks in bunches. I don't think he's been as consistent. He's less physically talented than Barr." Kennard, another former Giant, had 7 sacks. "Good, solid football player," another scout said. "He's a journeyman you keep on a team-friendly deal."

MIDDLE LINEBACKER: Eric Kendricks (MN), 8. Others: Danny Trevathan (Chi), 7; Jarrad Davis (Det), 6; Antonio Morrison (GB), 3. The top three players elicited a strong positive response from evaluators. "Very, very close among the top three," said one. A second-round pick in 2015, Kendricks was third as a rookie before making it to the top three years in a row. "Kendricks has always been a good player," one scout said. "He's one of the best. They re-signed and paid him, which was a good move on their part." Trevathan was a unanimous choice on the weak side in 2016. "Kendricks is active as a playmaker where Davis and Trevathan are a little more physical and stout," another scout said. Another scout said Trevathan was more instinctive than Davis, a second-year man. "I like Davis' physicality and take-charge leadership that he has," one scout said. "I like the fiery part about him." Said another scout: "Davis can run and hit but he doesn't always know what he's hitting. Not the most instinctive guy. Struggles in coverage." Morrison, a Colt reject, replaced injured Jake Ryan. "He's just kind of playing because he has to," said another scout. "He comes downhill. Just limited skill set."

WEAK-SIDE LINEBACKER: Roquan Smith (Chi), 9. Others: Blake Martinez (GB), 7; Ben Gedeon (MN) and Christian Jones (Det), 4. Smith, the eighth pick in April, wasn't under contract until Aug. 14 but by late September was beginning to turn heads. "He struggled in coverage early but he started to get it," said one scout. "Relentless to the ball. Good blitzer. Explosive." Said another scout: "The guy can do it all. He's going to be a really, really good player, which sucks for us." Martinez played virtually every snap for Green Bay and had 136 tackles and 5 sacks. He made first team in 2017. "He's below Roquan and near Trevathan," one scout said. "Davis is more physical but not as talented or as active as Martinez." Said another scout: "Coverage isn't great. It's functional. Really instinctive in the run game. Not a (big hitter), but as long as he gets them down. Lot of lateral plays, lot of uncovered. Not the most physical, not heavy-handed." Gedeon didn't have to play much (290 snaps). Jones, a former Bear, was OK. "Jones isn't the athlete that you want," one scout said. "Straight-line, average athlete. Physical in the run game. Heavy-footed. He can take on."

LEFT CORNERBACK: Kyle Fuller* (Chi), 9. Others: Darius Slay (Det), 7; Jaire Alexander (GB), 5; Trae Waynes (MN), 3. Fuller tied for the NFL lead in interceptions with seven and broke up 21 passes. "He's put together two really good years back-to-back after having a slow start to his career," one scout said. "He's a legit No. 1 corner." Fuller tied for first at RC as a rookie in 2014. He is Chicago's first outright first-teamer at LC since Donnell Woolford in 1995. Slay had dominated the position as a unanimous choice the past four years. "I don't think he had his best year," another scout said. "New staff, a lot of things that are new. Slow transition. Talented, he can run. I'd take him." Alexander, the 18th pick in April, outpolled Waynes, the 11th pick in '15. "I think Alexander has talent but he was kind of up and down," one scout said. "He can cover, he can run. Not very big, not real disciplined. Really inconsistent as a tackler, which he was in college. Little feast or famine with him, but he's talented." Added another scout: "Impressive guy. Really good up side to being a No. 1 (corner) ... Waynes has been a good player. He's a No. 2 to me."

RIGHT CORNERBACK: Xavier Rhodes* (MN), 9. Others: Prince Amukamara (Chi), 7; Nevin Lawson (Det), 5; Josh Jackson (GB), 3. Injuries limited Rhodes to 769 snaps but weren't enough to prevent him from claiming his fourth first-team berth in five years. This was his third straight unanimous selection. "Maybe not an elite guy but a really good, physical corner," said one scout. "You can match him up. He can travel. He does it all." Added another scout: "I don't think he was ever great. He benefited by being able to drape all over receivers. I think he's good. He's kind of scheme-reliant." Amukamara, a former Giant, has provided stability at a problematic position in Chicago. "He's about the same way he was in New York," one scout said. "He competes hard. He can cover guys. He tracks it well. He's just not a very fluid, fast type corner." Lawson, a 3 ½-starter, is ever feisty. Jackson played more than expected (673 snaps) because Kevin King was injured again. "You wonder if (Jackson) can ever match up outside," another scout said. "They played him all over. Right, left, slot. Long in press. Really good ball skills and anticipation. The thing for him is quicks, acceleration and speed. Can he match with top receivers? He doesn't have the recovery speed you want in a front-line corner. But the game wasn't too big for him."

STRONG SAFETY: Adrian Amos* (Chi), 9. Others: Quandre Diggs (Det) and Anthony Harris (MN), 6; Josh Jones (GB), 3. The departure of the Packers' Morgan Burnett to Pittsburgh opened the door for Amos, who finished last at FS in 2015, last at SS in '16 and tied for second at SS in '17. He's the Bears' first unanimous pick at SS since Danieal Manning in 2010. "Nothing spectacular but you know what you're getting," said one scout. "Good, solid player." Diggs, a converted nickel back, and Harris, a first-year starter as the replacement for injured Andrew Sendejo, were comparable players. Of Diggs, one scout said: "I like Diggs. He plays hard. He's a pesky competitor. He can cover." Of Harris, another scout said: "He's coming into his own. He can run, he can hit. He can play the back end and the box." Jones played both safety and inside linebacker in his second season as a former second-round pick. "Still has some of the same deficiencies," one scout said. "Big, physical, good-looking safety who can play in the box. Still learning to be more comfortable outside the box."

FREE SAFETY: tie, Eddie Jackson (Chi) and Harrison Smith (MN), 8. Others: Glover Quin (Det), 5; Tramon Williams (GB), 3. This was Smith's sixth first-team berth in a seven-year career. He was unanimous in 2015 and '17. "Just a really good player," one scout said. "His cover ability over the top is good. His ability to be that eighth defender sneaking down into the box is good. He can play strong safety or free safety." Jackson, a fourth-round pick in 2017, registered nine takeaway plays. "Good instincts and ball skills," one scout said. "Kind of finds his way to the ball. Not quite the run defender that Smith is but a really good, ascending young player." Quin, who turns 33 in mid-January, made the first team in 2013 and was unanimous in '14. "He's on the decline," another scout said. "I know he's mulling retirement. I think he still has some good years left but just not at the level he once was." When the Packers brought back Williams after a three-year hiatus the plan was to keep him at CB. However, when Kentrell Brice and others kept giving up long passes the 35-year-old moved to safety. "(Mike) Pettine just tried to play somebody smart," said one scout. "He's not comfortable-looking back there but at least he's smart enough to line up." Williams is a four-time first-teamer (2010-'13) at CB, twice as a unanimous choice.

NO. 3 DEFENSIVE END: Aaron Lynch (Chi), 8. Others: Reggie Gilbert (GB) and Stephen Weatherly (MN), 6; Eli Harold (Det), 4. "They're all solid guys," one scout said. "They can provide some twitch off the edge." The snap counts were 353 for Lynch, 445 for Gilbert, 499 for Weatherly and 166 for Harold. "Gilbert flashed some pass rush," one scout said. "He was probably their best edge guy, believe it or not. His lack of length (32 ¼-inch arms) and power show up at times. You just wish he was more productive." Weatherly, a seventh-round pick in 2016, started when Griffen was unavailable. "He's really improved over his time," another scout said. "Really fits that style of defensive end. Can really run."

NO. 3 DT: Jonathan Bullard* (Chi), 9. Others: Ricky Jean Francois (Det) and Jaleel Johnson (MN), 6; Tyler Lancaster (GB), 3. Bullard tied for first last year. "He's OK," said one scout. "Not great. More of a run guy. Doesn't have much pass rush. Plays hard." Jean Francois, 32, didn't join the Lions until July 26. He played six games for the Packers in 2017. "He's a smart, aware player on the interior," one scout said. "Doesn't have elite movement or elite power or anything. He just knows how to play the game." Johnson, a fourth-round pick in 2017, replaced departed Shamar Stephen in the Vikings' rotation. "Good player," one scout said. "He has power and short-area quickness." Lancaster came off the practice squad Oct. 6 and played extensively (233 snaps) down the stretch. "Big, square guy that can take up blockers at the point," another scout said.

UTILITY DEFENSIVE LINEMAN: tie, Tom Johnson (MN) and Roy Robertson-Harris (Chi), 7. Others: Montravius Adams (GB) and Kerry Hyder (Det), 5. Johnson, 34, rejoined the Vikings in Week 3 after a brief stint in Seattle. Playing 314 snaps, he contributed 4 ½ sacks and 17 hurries. "He can rush," one scout said. "He has his deficiencies but he knows his role: getting to the quarterback." Robertson-Harris opened his second season with a big night in Green Bay. He had 2 ½ sacks and nine pressures. "He can rush inside or play on the end," another scout said. "Growing into the position. Always kind of liked him." Adams, a third-round pick in 2017, was a non-factor. "The second-year jump is not as evident with him as some other guys," said one scout. Hyder, in 116 snaps, failed to produce two years after an eight-sack season. The Achilles' injury he suffered in 2017 really set him back.

NO. 4 LINEBACKER: tie, Nick Kwiatkoski (Chi) and Eric Wilson (MN), 8. Others: Oren Burks (GB) and Jalen Reeves-Maybin (Det), 4. Kwiatkoski has been a serviceable substitute for three seasons. "Solid guy," one scout said. "He's not a great athlete as far as speed but he's tough, instinctive and has a good feel for making plays." Wilson, an undrafted rookie in 2017, got a chance to play (269 snaps) for an injured Anthony Barr. "Pretty active and lateral to the ball," another scout said. "Not a very good take-on guy." Burks, a third-round pick in April, didn't play much (117 snaps) despite the loss of Jake Ryan. "Not the most instinctive guy," said one scout. "Looks pretty. But that's kind of how he was in college."

NO. 3 CORNERBACK: Bryce Callahan* (Chi), 9. Others: Mackensie Alexander (MN), 7; Bashaud Breeland (GB), 5; Mike Ford (Det), 3. Persistence paid off for Callahan. As the nickel back he finished last in 2015, last in '16 and third in '17 before gaining unanimous status this year. "He's the best of those guys," one scout said. "He got hurt but he had a really solid year. They play a lot of zone. A good, solid nickel." Alexander, a second-round pick in 2016, moved up to play 524 snaps after Mike Hughes, who was having a strong rookie season, suffered a season-ending knee injury in Game 6. "He has gotten better," another scout said. "He still is a little bit inconsistent in his coverage reads." Green Bay had just seven interceptions for 100 return yards and Breeland, in 259 snaps, had two for 48. "He doesn't run real well," one scout said. "Pretty instinctive. Little bit leggy. He has to be really precise with his technique. Better zone than man."

NO. 3 SAFETY: Kentrell Brice (GB), 7. Others: Deon Bush (Chi) and Jayron Kears (MN), 6; Tavon Wilson (Det), 5. Brice was given every chance to become a starter but came up short. "You don't trust him," said one scout. "You can't trust him, really, in either phase. Little bit slow to process. He's aggressive but misses tackles. Not a great player." Added another scout: "He's just an undersized, feisty competitor. Had some injuries this year that set him back. He still plays hard." Of Bush, one scout said: "Nothing special about him." Kears contributed at times in the slot. "Kind of a utility guy," said one scout. "Big run and hit guy." Wilson, a 23-game starter in 2016-'17, lost his starting job to Quandre Diggs and his No. 3 job late in the season to rookie Tracy Walker. "He's just a run guy," said another scout.

SPECIAL TEAMS

KICKER: Matt Prater* (Det), 9. Others: Cody Parkey (Chi), 6; Dan Bailey (MN), 5; Mason Crosby (GB), 4. Prater has been a unanimous pick since 2016. "He's still got a big leg," one scout said. Prater made 87.1% of his field-goal attempts compared to 81.1% for Crosby, 75.9% for Parkey and 74.1% for Bailey. Prater was the only kicker to make all of his extra points. Of Parkey, one scout said: "I wouldn't say he's a choker. But he's not had his best stuff this year." Bailey relieved rookie Daniel Carlson after the opener and didn't kick up to his elite years in Dallas. Crosby missed seven field goals (four were at Detroit) and two extra points (one was at Detroit). "The Detroit game is what you keep thinking about with him," another scout said. "If he didn't have that game you'd still be OK with him. Was that really him?" In 12 seasons Crosby has been first team twice, second team four times, third team once and last five times.

PUNTER: Sam Martin (Det), 8. Others: Pat O'Donnell (Chi) and JK Scott (GB), 6; Matt Wile (MN), 4. This was Martin's fourth first-team berth in a six-year career. "You don't get very many return balls on him," one scout said. "He's a solid kicker." In terms of net average, Wile tied for 12th (40.7), O'Donnell tied for 18th (39.5), Martin tied for 21st (39.1) and Scott tied for 26th (38.7). Justin Vogel, the Packers' rookie punter last year, was the first-team pick. "Scott's been a little bit up and down," another scout said. "They tried to upgrade over last year and it seems like he's had the same numbers of the guy they had."

PUNT RETURNER: Tarik Cohen* (Chi), 9. Others: Jamal Agnew (Det) and Marcus Sherels (MN), 6; Tramon Williams (GB), 3. Cohen tied for first last year with Agnew. "He's a threat to score every time he has it," one scout said. "He had a return against Buffalo (Nov. 4). Like, unbelievable. Made like 10 guys miss." Sherels averaged 12.0, the third best mark of his eight-year career as the Vikings' primary returner. Agnew's average dipped from 15.4 as a first-team pick in 2017 to 4.8. Williams was pressed into service because Trevor Davis was injured. He lost two of three fumbles and averaged 6.9. "Tramon isn't even a punt returner," one scout said.

KICKOFF RETURNER: Jamal Agnew* (Det), 9. Others: Ameer Abdullah (MN), 7; Benny Cunningham (Chi), 5; J'Mon Moore (GB), 3. Tarik Cohen, a first-team pick as a rookie, had just two returns. With Agnew limited to only eight returns (27.0) by injury, the longest kickoff return in the division was 46 yards by Minnesota's Mike Hughes. "They all suck, to be honest with you," one scout said.

SPECIAL TEAMS ACE: tie, LB Oren Burks (GB) and S Jayron Kears (MN), 7. Others: S Charles Washington (Det), 4; WR Joshua Bellamy (Chi) and FB Nick Bellore (Det), 2; S DeAndre Houston-Carson (Chi) and LB Nick Kwiatkoski (Chi), 1. Burks' seven points were the most by a special teamer in Green Bay since Jarrett Bush garnered seven in 2012. "He's long and can run," said one scout. Kears had two points last year. "Big guy that can run," another scout said. "You've really got to take note of him." None of the snap leaders for the four teams received a vote. The leaders were S Miles Killebrew (322) in Detroit, LB Ben Gedeon (314) in Minnesota, LB James Crawford (310) in Green Bay and LB Joel Iyiegbuniwe (299) in Chicago.

OFFENSE

NO. 1 WIDE RECEIVER: Davante Adams* (GB), 9. Others: Adam Thielen (MN), 7; Kenny Golladay (Det), 5; Allen Robinson (Chi), 3. Adams is the fourth different first-place finisher in four years following Alshon Jeffery in 2015, Jordy Nelson in '16 and Thielen in '17. "It's really close between him and Thielen," one scout said. "I feel like Adams' production has been quiet. It really amazed me how much he had. He's a more explosive, physically gifted guy than Thielen. I just think he's more of a pure No. 1 type player." Adams finished first at No. 3 WR as a rookie in 2014 and was first at No. 2 WR in '16. "He's very, very good off the line of scrimmage and dangerous with the ball," another scout said. "He just continues to make strides every year." Thielen, a unanimous choice in 2017, probably had an even better year. "The amount Thielen has improved has been incredible," said one scout. "A lot of that goes to hard work but he does have talent. A lot of that gets overlooked." After Golden Tate was traded after seven games and Jones suffered a season-ending knee injury after nine the No. 1 job in Detroit fell to Golladay, a second-year player from Northern Illinois. "He shows really, really good flashes of some big-play ability," said one scout. Robinson missed time due to injury but still was a valuable addition in free agency. "He gives them an outside vertical threat," one scout. "He's been good for them."

LEFT TACKLE: David Bakhtiari* (GB), 9. Others: Charles Leno (Chi), 7; Taylor Decker (Det), 5; Riley Reiff (MN), 3. A six-year starter, Bakhtiari finished fourth as a rookie, tied for first in '14, finished first in '15 and now is a unanimous pick for the third straight year. Three scouts said his level of performance wasn't quite up to his previous standards. "I'd say he was good," one scout said. "Looked like he broke down a little bit. He's still a really good pass protector. He obviously had some issues with (Khalil) Mack and some of the other good pass rushers. He's still a really good player." The second-place berth was a personal best for Leno, who was last in 2015, third in '16 and last in '17. "He's improved," one scout said. "Not an elite player but a good, solid starter." Decker slipped to third after finishing second in his first two seasons. "He had an off year," said one scout. "Talented, but he really struggled early. Has some anchor issues. Broke down a little more in pass pro." Reiff, 30, tied for first as a Lion in '14. "He's a large man but he gets pressed back with power," said one scout. "Just not an overly powerful guy. He's not a long-term answer. The athletes he's going against are getting better and better, and he's hit his climax."

LEFT GUARD: James Daniels (Chi), 7. Others: Frank Ragnow (Det) and Lane Taylor (GB), 6; Tom Compton (MN), 5. An opening was created for Daniels in his rookie season when the Bears elected not to re-sign Josh Sitton, a unanimous selection as a Packer and Bear for the previous eight seasons. "He did a really nice job of seamlessly integrating himself," said one scout. "He quieted down a position that was one of concern to one of strength." Ragnow, another rookie, followed Daniels' lead as a college center that moved to guard. "He just plays hard," said another scout. "He has enough ability in his body to be good. He still has a ways to go." Taylor, a three-year starter at Sitton's old spot in Green Bay, drew mixed reviews. "Big kid who can anchor," said one scout who gave him a first-place vote. "He doesn't look pretty but pretty steady in both phases (run and pass)." Others viewed him as a liability. "Statistically, he was one of the worst guards in the NFL," said another scout. "He's just a big body. I wouldn't say mauler. Just a big body that can absorb a lot of contact." Compton is the Vikings' fifth starter at LG in five years following Nick Easton (2017), Alex Boone ('16), Brandon Fusco ('15) and Charlie Johnson ('14).

CENTER: tie, Pat Elflein (MN), Corey Linsley (GB) and Cody Whitehair (Chi), 7. Others: Graham Glasgow (Det), 3. Center was regarded by scouts as the strongest O-line position in the division. "They're all tough," said one scout. "There's very little separating these guys. They're all different but similar level of players." In a five-year career Linsley has never been a unanimous pick but still has made the first team four times. "Competitive, tough," one scout said. "Covers you up more so than drives you out. Plays beyond his physical capabilities. Good, solid player." Elflein, who was Linsley's successor at Ohio State, is fast and violent blocking at the second level. Whitehair was a unanimous pick in 2017. "He plays with a little more power than the others," said one scout. "Pretty good athlete." Glasgow (6-6, 310), a three-year starter, is the biggest. "But he doesn't always play strong," another scout said. "He has a hard time against bigger nose tackles. He's solid, steady."

RIGHT GUARD: Kyle Long* (Chi), 9. Others: Mike Remmers (MN), 7; Kenny Wiggins (Det), 5; Byron Bell (GB), 3.

Long might come back Sunday after missing eight games with injury. This is his fourth first-place finish in a six-year career that has been riddled by injury. "He's not great anymore," said one scout. "He's big and strong and moves OK, but he's out of control. Feast or famine. He's broken down. He's not the athlete he was." Wiggins, a former Charger, had to play 723 snaps when T.J. Lang, the former Packer and a first-teamer from 2014-'16, played just 282 snaps because of injury. Remmers tied for first last year at RT before moving inside. Bell supplanted Justin McCray and made nine starts. "That's ridiculous," one scout said. "That's a bad group. Wiggins is not very good. Bell isn't, either."

RIGHT TACKLE: tie, Bobby Massie (Chi) and Rick Wagner (Det), 7. Others: Bryan Bulaga (GB), 6; Brian O'Neill (MN), 4.

Massie, an unrestricted free-agent signing from Arizona in 2016, gained a share of the top spot after coming in third the past two years. "He's done a really nice job," one scout said. "He's so long and wide. He's just a hard man to get around." Wagner, a former Raven, also tied for first in 2017. He's the Lions' first first-teamer at the position since Gosder Cherilus in '10. Bulaga was knocked out of four games and missed two starts because of injury. "I've always liked Bryan," said one scout. "But it seems like he's always hurt and he's maybe on the decline physically." Bulaga made the first team in 2011, '12, '14 and '16. O'Neill, a second-round pick in April, took over for Rashod Hill in Game 6. "He has to get stronger," another scout said. "But he plays hard and has good movement."

TIGHT END: Kyle Rudolph* (MN), 9. Others: Trey Burton (Chi) and Jimmy Graham (GB), 6; Levine Toilolo (Det), 3.

Rudolph was first team for the third straight year, including the last two as a unanimous choice. "He's not a dominant blocker and he's not very fast," said one scout. "But he gets open and catches the ball. Solid, dependable player." Burton caught six touchdown passes after arriving from the Eagles in March. "Had a nice year," one scout said. "More of a receiver, really, than a tight end. He's a good player but he's smaller and just doesn't have any blocking ability." Graham was attempting to become the Packers' first first-team TE since Jermichael Finley in 2012. "He doesn't have much left," another scout said. "He's still a big target who moves OK and can catch the ball, but he's getting older (32). I would say he's more of a role guy now. He's not a big mismatch guy although I still think he could be in the red zone because he's big and such a big target and he's still athletic."

NO. 2 WIDE RECEIVER: Stefon Diggs* (MN), 9. Others: Marvin Jones (Det), 6; Taylor Gabriel (Chi), 5; Randall Cobb (GB), 4.

One scout regards Diggs as the No. 1 WR in Minnesota. "Productive guy after the catch," another scout said. "Not the fastest guy but very, very strong with his hands. Has a good amount of swagger. Big-time player." Jones was a deep threat before a knee injury cut short his season after 538 snaps. "He's still young (28) and provides a vertical threat," another scout said. "I just didn't see quite the speed that he had. Still has good ball skills ... still dangerous, certainly." Gabriel came from Atlanta in March. "He's a gadget-type guy that has big plays in him but doesn't produce consistently," one scout said. Injuries reduced Cobb's season to 420 snaps. "He doesn't have much of a future for what he's been paid," one scout said. "I think he's a pretty good player but he just can't stay healthy and he's not getting any younger (28). Didn't separate quite like he has in the past. The arrow is going down."

NO. 3 WIDE RECEIVER: Anthony Miller* (Chi), 9; Marquez Valdes-Scantling (GB), 7; TJ Jones (Det) and Laquon Treadwell (MN), 4.

Miller, a second-round pick in April from Memphis, was impressive. "He brings speed to the slot," one scout said. "He's got up side. He's got a chance to become their No. 2 next year." Valdes-Scantling became a frequently-used player when injuries struck down Randall Cobb, Geronimo Allison and Jake Kumerow. "Big, fast and straight line," one scout said. "Caught the ball pretty well. Good catching radius. He can really run. Seems like he's fallen a little bit out of favor down the stretch. He's got up side. He has to develop chemistry with the quarterback." Treadwell, the 23rd pick in 2016, held the No. 3 job all season (529 snaps) but scored just one TD and had too many drops. "The hands are very inconsistent and he can't run," said another scout. "What is his strong point? There really isn't one."

QUARTERBACK: Aaron Rodgers (GB) 9; Others: Kirk Cousins (MN), Matthew Stafford (Det) and Mitchell Trubisky (Chi), 5. This was the ninth time in 11 seasons as the starter that Rodgers was unanimous. He tied with Brett Favre in 2009 and with Case Keenum and Stafford last year. "He's head and shoulders above," said one scout. "He hasn't had the greatest year from his standpoint but it was still pretty damn good. You always fear when you have to play him." Added another scout: "He hasn't done enough to get his team to win. A lot of times he could have helped his offense do some things and was more cautious than productive." Cousins, a first-year Viking, ranked eighth in passer rating compared to 13th for Rodgers, 15th for Trubisky and 25th for Stafford. "I think his stats look better than he actually played," one scout said. "He may not win you the game but he could lose you games. He has three or four plays a game where he gives the opponent opportunities to make a play. It's just a matter if they do or not ... He is a better player than Case Keenum. But the level Keenum played at last year was probably as good or maybe a little bit better than Cousins played at. I didn't think Case could replicate that this year. I think they (the Vikings) would have got worse had they stayed with Keenum." A year ago, Stafford became the first Lion QB in the 25-year history of the team to make first team. This was his seventh second-place finish. "He's a high-end talent but he has a lot of inconsistency," one scout said. "He's streaky. He can be really, really good or he can be bad at times." Trubisky, who was last on all three ballots as a rookie, drew one first this time. "He's done things to get his team to win," another scout said. "He's not the best arm but he does a combination of things, run and pass, that got the team where they are." Added another scout: "He elevated his game. The coach (Matt Nagy) really helped him. He's more comfortable in the pocket and made a lot of plays with his feet. They still help him with a lot of quick rhythm throws and putting him on the move. He's had a good year."

RUNNING BACK: Aaron Jones (GB), 7. Others: Dalvin Cook (MN) and Jordan Howard (Chi), 6; Kerryon Johnson (Det), 5. Jones edged three other solid contenders to become the Packers' first first-team RB since Ahman Green claimed the last of four straight berths in 2004. He was last at No. 2 RB last year. "He's really impressive," one scout said. "The more they use him, the smarter they look." Injuries limited Cook to 437 snaps, Johnson to 346. "Injuries have held Cook back," another scout said. "But he's a dual threat runner-receiver. Really, really good player." Johnson is trying to become the Lions' first first-team RB since Barry Sanders called it quits in 1998. "Talented, talented young man," one scout said. "He has to round out his game. He runs a little bit taller. He takes some hits and got hurt." Howard played 583 snaps compared to Tarik Cohen's 476. "Howard's numbers may not reflect it but he can control a game," said one scout.

NO. 4 WIDE RECEIVER: tie, Joshua Bellamy (Chi), Aldrick Robinson (MN) and E. St. Brown (GB), 7. Other: Andy Jones (Det), 3. Bellamy, described by one scout as "he's not horrible, no," and Jones are better known for their work on special teams. Robinson was dubbed a "touchdown-maker" after he played 217 snaps, caught 17 passes and scored five TDs. St. Brown came on with increased playing time in the second half of the season. "He got better, believe it or not," said one scout. "He played in the slot a little bit, which was surprising. I think he struggles vs. press so they put him inside. He can run OK. I think he does have a ceiling but he does have some redeeming traits."

FULLBACK: Michael Burton (Chi), 8. Others: C.J. Ham (MN) and Lance Kendricks (GB), 6; Nick Bellore (Det), 4. Burton became the Bears' first first-team FB since Jason McKie in 2009. Green Bay's John Kuhn and Aaron Ripkowski had controlled the position since 2014. "He's not bad," one scout said, referring to Burton. "He doesn't play much so it's hard to say. He played 12%. He's not a hammer but he's pretty athletic and can locate (blocking) targets." When the Packers didn't add a true FB (Danny Vitale) to the roster until Dec. 1 it was Kendricks who had to line up in the backfield in two-back sets. "More your H-back type, little bit of a wing tight end, little bit of the backfield stuff," one scout said. "Not a great blocker but can catch the ball a little bit. His value is starting to descend but he's a good role player." Ham, a three-year veteran, has value. "Nice young player," said another scout. "He was a running back who has a little bit of run skill and receiving skill. They did a good job converting him. Really a good special-teams player as well."

NO. 2 TIGHT END: Adam Shaheen (Chi), 8. Others: David Morgan (MN), 6; Mercedes Lewis (GB) and Luke Willson (Det), 5. Shaheen, a second-round pick in 2017, came off injured reserve and played 121 snaps in Games 10-15. "He's got the most up side but he just hasn't played much because he's been hurt," one scout said. "He has receiving up side." Morgan and Lewis were employed almost exclusively as blockers. "Morgan is just a solid blocking guy," said one scout. "Nothing special. He blocked better than Lewis. Lewis is kind of at the end. His blocking isn't as good as it used to be. It's hard to find blocking tight ends. It's a position that's gone the way of the dinosaur." Willson, who caught 11 TD passes for Seattle from 2013-'17, had just 13 receptions and no TDs in 424 snaps. "Hasn't been used the way he was used in Seattle," one scout said. "He has some talent in the passing game. Not a great blocker."

NO. 6 OFFENSIVE LINEMAN: tie, J. McCray (GB) and Bryan Witzmann (Chi), 7. Others: Tyrell Crosby (Det) and Rashod Hill (MN), 5. Justin McCray played 425 snaps at RG. "You know what you're getting, good and bad, when you put him in there," said one scout. "He's consistent. Not overly talented. You give him credit because he's bounced around and played different positions." Witzmann, a 13-game starter for the Chiefs last year, spent Weeks 2-4 on the Vikings' 53-man roster before surfacing in Chicago, where he started the last seven games for the injured Kyle Long. "He's been playing pretty good," another scout said. "Not a great run blocker but he can cover you up with his size. Hard to get around in pass pro. Smart." He played in high school at Somerset, Wis. This was the fifth straight year the Bears had the first-team backup in the offensive line. The others were Brian de la Puente in 2014, Jermon Bushrod in '15, Ted Larsen in '16 and Tom Compton in '17. Hill started the first five games at RT. "He did an OK job," one scout said.

NO. 2 QUARTERBACK: Chase Daniel* (Chi), 9. Others: Matt Cassel (Det), DeShone Kizer (GB) and Trevor Siemian (MN), 5. On March 14, Daniel was paid \$7 million guaranteed to leave New Orleans and rejoin Matt Nagy, his former coach in Kansas City. It turned out to be money well-spent when Daniel played effectively (90.6 passer rating) in 148 snaps for the injured Trubisky. "He's a good backup," one scout said. "He can come in and run your offense and manage it. The more he plays, the more he'll get exposed. But he's good for a two- or three-game stretch." Cassel played 22 snaps, Kizer played 15 and Siemian, a 24-game starter in Denver from 2015-'17, didn't play any. "Siemian is a good player," another scout said. "He could probably start for some teams."

NO. 2 RUNNING BACK: Tarik Cohen* (Chi), 9. Others: Latavius Murray (MN) and Theo Riddick (Det), 6; Jamaal Williams (GB), 3. The only reason Cohen wasn't grouped with the No. 1 RBs was the fact he played fewer snaps than Jordan Howard. All scouts appear to like him. "He's so versatile and dynamic," one personnel man said. "He can beat you in so many ways. Obviously, he's best in space and on the perimeter, but he's good in the pass game. He's a matchup nightmare." Murray and Williams were effective pile-drivers. Of Murray, one scout said: "Big. Pounder type." Of Williams, another scout said: "He got better. He's really good in pass pro. He's an inside power runner. I think there's a role." Riddick had a reduced role with merely 36 rushes in 396 snaps. He did catch 61 passes but for a career-low average of 6.1. He didn't score a touchdown. "I don't think he was featured like he has been in the past," one scout said. "There was a whole change of culture. You saw (Ameer) Abdullah get phased out. He might get phased out as well."