

# SPORTS



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## 2026 NFL DRAFT



# Where could Clemson QB Cade Klubnik go?

Derrian Carter | Greenville News | USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

Cade Klubnik looks to be Clemson football's first quarterback taken in the NFL draft since Trevor Lawrence in 2021. • Klubnik spent four seasons with the Tigers and became an end-of-season starter in 2022. He helped Clemson win two ACC championships and make the College Football Playoff for the first time in three seasons in 2024. • He entered the 2025 season as a Heisman Trophy candidate and a projected first-round pick in the 2026 NFL Draft but underperformed. Klubnik threw for 2,943 yards, 16 touchdowns, six interceptions and rushed for 94 yards and four scores in 12 games. • Still, he carries strong traits, including having a quick release, solid accuracy and mobility, that mock drafts project him to be taken on Day 3 of the draft. Here's where Klubnik could be selected in the 2026 NFL Draft, which runs from April 23-25.

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Mock drafts project Clemson quarterback Cade Klubnik (2) will be taken on Day 3 of the NFL draft.

KEN RUINARD/USA TODAY NETWORK SOUTH CAROLINA

# South Carolina only SEC women's team that didn't lose a player to transfer portal

Lulu Kesin  
Greenville News  
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COLUMBIA — One year ago arguably the biggest women's basketball transfer portal news came out of South Carolina.

Dawn Staley lost star guard MiLaysia Fulwiley, who transferred to LSU, right after bringing in Ta'Niya Latson, who led the nation in scoring at Florida State the season before.

A year later, it's a whole different story.

The Gamecocks are the only women's SEC team to not lose a player to the portal and per On3, one of 14 NCAA women's basketball teams with no players in the portal.

Staley is vocal about how she approaches recruiting. She said she doesn't overpromise financially and doesn't promise a starting role.

Her methods have fared fine thus far, as South Carolina won its 10th SEC regular-season title this season and advanced to a sixth straight Final Four and third straight national championship game. During the Sweet 16, she was asked about being the "standard" in the SEC for so long.

"(The success in the SEC) is hard to sustain. We've done a really good job of bringing players in that really understand that. It really is somewhat of a sacrifice coming to South Carolina because you're going to play basketball for all the right reasons," Staley said. "It doesn't mean that it's 'My way or the highway.' It's not. It's a collaborative thing. Our players are very comfortable with communicating the things that they like and don't like."

South Carolina added Texas transfer Jordan Lee, the No. 2 player in ESPN's portal rankings, on April 17. Losing nobody and adding Lee was enough to call it a successful portal cycle for Staley, but her work might not be done.

The portal closing means athletes can't enter anymore and be eligible next

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South Carolina celebrates after defeating TCU in the Elite Eight on March 30 in Sacramento, California.

HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

# How Brownell remade Clemson's basketball staff with five hires

Derrian Carter  
Greenville News  
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

CLEMSON — Clemson basketball coach Brad Brownell dealt with the largest roster overhaul of his tenure last year and faced similar change with his staff this offseason.

Brownell had to make five staff hires, including replacing his three primary assistant coaches, after the Tigers made the NCAA Tournament for the third straight season.

The Tigers lost Billy Donlon after he took the Eastern Michigan head coaching job after four seasons with Clemson. Dick Bender retired after spending 14 years on Brownell's staff in multiple roles, including the last 10 as an assistant, and Sean Dixon joined ACC foe Louisville's staff despite receiving an offseason pay raise.

The Tigers added Minnesota assistant Chad Warner, College of Charleston assistant Chris Harriman and longtime assistant Chris Hollender to replace the trio.



Clemson coach Brad Brownell made five hires to his basketball staff.

KEN RUINARD/USA TODAY NETWORK SOUTH CAROLINA

What Clemson basketball's new assistants will bring in 2026-27

Warner was on Minnesota's staff in 2025-26 after spending three seasons at Furman, the first two as an assistant before being promoted to associate head coach prior to 2024-25. He will be critical in developing Clemson's offensive identity next season.

Harriman, who has over 20 years of coaching experience in the Big Ten, Pac-12, Mountain West, Atlantic 10 and CAA, will be helpful in high-school and transfer-portal recruiting.

Hollender spent the last three years working for Just Play Solutions, a company developing interactive teaching solutions for coaches in various sports, but he carries two decades of coaching experience. Brownell believes Hollender will be huge for Clemson in terms of analytics.

"I'm excited to finally be working with Chris, who brings a great deal of experience at the high major level

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# Klubnik

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## Detroit Lions

USA Today's Jacob Camenker predicts Klubnik will be selected in the fifth round by the Detroit Lions. He would join a quarterback room that features 31-year-old Jared Goff and 34-year-old Teddy Bridgewater.

Klubnik would add youth and mobility to the position group and could develop into a successor for Goff with talented position players, including running back Jahmyr Gibbs and wide receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown.

## Tampa Bay Buccaneers

ESPN's Jordan Reid and CBS Sports' John Breech both have the Tampa Bay Buccaneers using a late-round pick to select Klubnik. Reid has Klubnik going in the sixth round, and Breech has the Clemson quarterback going in the fifth.

The Buccaneers have Baker Mayfield as their starter, but he is entering the final year of his contract. If Tampa Bay resigns him or lets him go and brings in a veteran, Klubnik can develop in the group.

## New York Giants

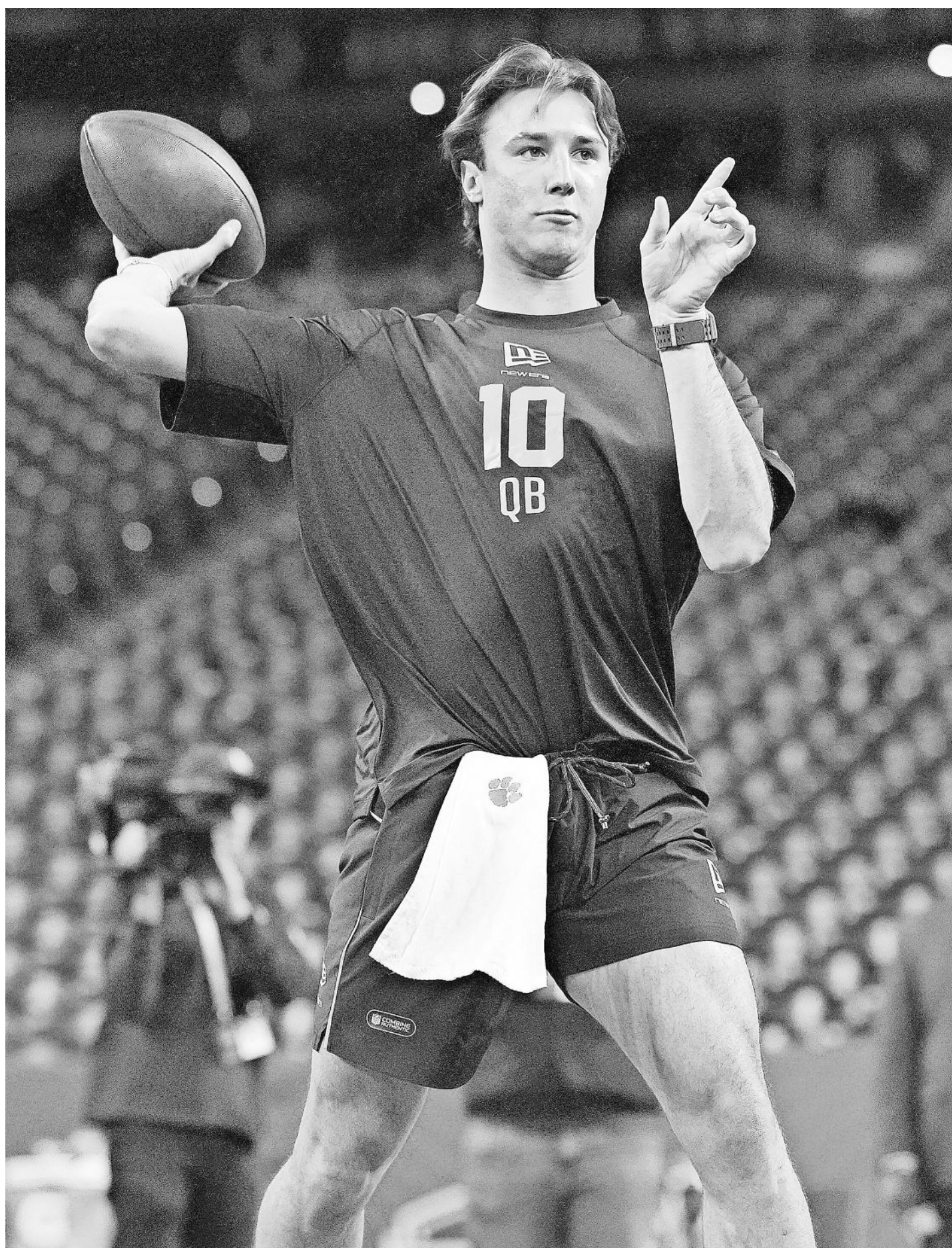
Klubnik's final game at Clemson was played in Yankee Stadium, and NFL.com's Chad Reuter has him returning to New York to play for the Giants. Reuter predicts Klubnik will go in the sixth round.

The Giants selected Jaxson Dart in the first round of last year's draft with optimism that he could be the team's franchise quarterback. Still, he suffered injuries that limited his rookie season. New York signed Brandon Allen and still has Jameis Winston, but Klubnik can add youth and athleticism under new coach John Harbaugh.

## Carolina Panthers

The Carolina Panthers is the only NFL team to never draft a Clemson player, but ESPN's Ben Solak predicts that streak will end this year. He predicts the Panthers will take Klubnik in the sixth round.

The Panthers traded veteran backup Andy Dalton, leaving starter Bryce Young and Kenny Pickett. This move would add depth to the room, where Klubnik can compete to be No. 2. It would also allow him to work with Panthers coach Dave Canales, who has maximized quarterbacks' talents including Young, Mayfield and Geno Smith.



Clemson quarterback Cade Klubnik throws during the NFL Scouting Combine on Feb. 28 in Indianapolis.

KIRBY LEE/IMAGN IMAGES

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# Brownell

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from his time at both Mississippi State and Missouri," Brownell said in a school release. "... I am anxious to see how Chris can help us take a deeper dive analytically having worked with Just Play Solutions over the last several seasons."

Brownell also added former Samford associate coach Tyler Murray to replace Lucas McKay as the team's general manager after he departed for Oklahoma to work in the same role.

Brownell brought in Andre Morgan from Cincinnati to replace special assistant to the head coach Jeff Reynolds, who stepped away citing family issues after five seasons.

Murray replaces McKay, who was key in identifying and landing immediate contributors in the portal, including guards Joseph Girard III (Syracuse) and Jaeden Zackery (Boston College) and centers Viktor Lakhin (Cincinnati) and Carter Welling (Utah Valley).

Morgan will be critical in player development.

"(Murray) is a young talent in the business who is a creative thinker and

will really excel in this role," Brownell said in a school release. "... He's a really bright guy and an outstanding recruiter who is excited to attack this new challenge as general manager."

Murray spent one season at Samford after being at Lipscomb for five seasons and Furman for two. He has already impacted Clemson in the portal with the addition of Samford forward Dylan Faulkner on April 17. Faulkner will be a key big for Clemson after losing RJ Godfrey and Davidson and Carter Welling recovering from a torn ACL.

The Tigers have made March Madness in three straight seasons, includ-

ing an Elite Eight appearance in 2024. They have won at least 23 games in four consecutive seasons for the first time and have won 98 games since the start of the 2022-23 season, a program record for a four-year period and second most in the ACC behind Duke.

The new staff will work with seven returning players, three freshman signees and three transfer-portal additions in 2026-27.

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# USC

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season, but they don't have to find a new school by April 20.

Staley's work in the transfer portal likely hinges on Oliviyah Edwards, a 6-foot-3 forward and the No. 3 recruit in

the 2026 cycle who took a visit to Columbia April 14.

If the Gamecocks add her, they really won't need to add another player to their frontcourt. But if they don't land her, Staley might bring in a late add since she lost a true center in Madina Okot to the WNBA.

After the season ended, South Carolina was without four players as Latson,

Okot and Raven Johnson went to the WNBA and Maryam Dauda is out eligibility. Staley will return a core of seven players, six of whom played in the national championship loss to UCLA.

And she knew she was bringing in three freshmen in addition to returning star forwards Chloe Kitts and Ashlyn Watkins, who missed the past season.

The portal opened and South Caroli-

na had 12 on its roster already. With the portal closed, none of the approximately 1,545 players in the portal (per On3) are from the Gamecocks.

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## SPORTS ON TV THURSDAY, APRIL 23 (ALL TIMES EASTERN)

### COLLEGE BASEBALL

**7 p.m.**  
ACCN — North Carolina at Duke  
ESPN2 — Alabama at Tennessee

**8 p.m.**  
SECN — Arkansas at Missouri

**GOLF**  
**11 a.m.**  
GOLF — LPGA Tour, Chevron Championship, First Round, Houston  
**3 p.m.**  
GOLF — PGA Tour, Zurich Classic of New Orleans, First Round, Avondale, La.  
**6 p.m.**  
GOLF — LPGA Tour, Chevron Championship, First Round, Houston  
**12:30 a.m. (Friday)**  
GOLF — DP World Tour, Volvo China Open, Second Round, Shanghai, China

### HOCKEY

**8 a.m.**  
NHLN — IIHF U-18 World Championship, Canada vs. Latvia, Trenčín, Slovakia

**HORSE RACING**

**1 p.m.**  
FS2 — America's Day at the Races  
**MLB BASEBALL**  
**1:10 p.m.**  
ESPN UNLIMITED — Milwaukee at Detroit  
**2:20 p.m.**  
MLBN — Philadelphia at Chicago Cubs  
**3:10 p.m.**  
PEACOCK — San Diego at Colorado  
**5:30 p.m.**  
MLBN — MLB Big Inning  
**6:10 p.m.**  
FS1 — N.Y. Yankees at Boston

### NBA BASKETBALL

**7 p.m.**  
AMAZON PRIME — Playoffs, Eastern Conference, First Round, New York at Atlanta, Game 3  
**8 p.m.**  
AMAZON PRIME — Playoffs, Eastern Conference, First Round, Cleveland at Toronto, Game 3  
**9:30 p.m.**  
AMAZON PRIME — Playoffs, Western Conference, First Round, Denver at Minnesota, Game 3  
**NFL FOOTBALL**  
**8 p.m.**  
ABC/ESPN/HULU/NFLN — 2026 NFL Draft, Round 1, Pittsburgh  
**NHL HOCKEY**  
**7 p.m.**

TNT/TRU TV — Playoffs, Eastern Conference, First Round, Buffalo at Boston, Game 3  
**7:30 p.m.**  
TBS — Playoffs, Eastern Conference, First Round, Carolina at Ottawa, Game 3  
**10 p.m.**  
TNT/TRU TV — Playoffs, Western Conference, First Round, Colorado at Los Angeles, Game 3  
**SOCCER (MEN'S)**  
**2:30 p.m.**  
ESPNU — DFB Pokal, German Cup, Semi-final, Freiburg at VfB Stuttgart  
**TENNIS**  
**5 a.m.**  
TENNIS — Madrid Open, ATP 1st Round; WTA 2nd Round