

Why K-State running back Joe Jackson expects ‘way bigger’ year with Collin Klein

BY KELLIS ROBINETT
krobinett@wichitaeagle.com

MANHATTAN

Kansas State running back Joe Jackson didn’t have to make a pros-and-cons list when it came time to decide on his college football future. He knew he wanted to return for another season almost immediately after K-State’s 2025 campaign came to an end. “It was pretty easy with what I knew about Kansas State, having been in the program already and being familiar with the people here,” Jackson said after a spring practice Thursday. “We still had a lot of unfinished business, so it wasn’t that tough of a decision, especially when we knew Coach Klein was coming back.” Playing for new K-State head coach Collin Klein was a major selling point for Jackson, even though he put up stats like an all-conference rusher at



Kansas State’s Joe Jackson gets tripped up by Kansas’ DJ Graham II during the fourth quarter of their game against Kansas at David Booth Kansas Memorial Stadium on Saturday, Oct. 25, 2025.

the end of his sophomore season while playing for Chris Klieman. Jackson rushed for 911 yards and eight touchdowns last year, but the bulk of that production came in K-State’s final two games. He sprinted for a

program-record 293 yards and three scores against Utah and then followed that up with 142 yards and three more scores against Colorado. A coaching change may have caused some running backs to enter the transfer portal. Not Jackson. He played for Klein as a freshman when Klein was the offensive coordinator at K-State. Reuniting with him was a huge reason for Jackson to stay. “The first thing I told him was, ‘Let’s finish what we started,’” Jackson said. “He recruited me and most of the 2023 class on the offensive side of the ball. He recruited all of us. He was here our freshmen year. Once we knew he was coming back, I just thought we have got a lot of unfinished business.” It will be fascinating to see what Jackson can do in Klein’s offense. Last week, Klein said he is trying to create a system that will bring out the best version of every running back on the K-State roster. “It’s probably as good an offense to play running back as there is in the country,” Klein said. “We’re going to be able to threaten people at the point of attack and run the ball effectively, and we’re going to get them in one-on-one matchups in the secondary. They are going to have a lot of space to do something with when they get the ball in their hands.” Jackson is hopeful to pick up where he left off last season. The 6-foot and 212-pound running back from Haines City, Florida, got off to a quiet start as a sophomore, but he was a big reason why the Wildcats were able to win four of their final six games and finish with a 6-6 record. “I feel like I can build off of it,” Jackson said. He already knows how he can be a more complete player. “People may not see the little small things in there that I have got to fix,” Jackson said. “It was a lot of small things that could have made things go way bigger, like me being more patient with things, me seeing things different ways, me trusting myself, me trusting the guys up front, me not trying to rush different things like that, making different guys miss and understanding the scheme more.” Jackson is also trying to become a vocal leader, even though he describes himself as an introvert. Now that he is back for his fourth straight season at K-State, he is willing to do whatever it takes to finish strong.



Left: Tammy Ljunblad/KC Star; right: Spain Office of Tourism
The Kansas City Chiefs are hoping to play a game overseas during the NFL’s 2026 season this fall. Pictured at left is Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes; at right, the city of Madrid in Spain.

The Chiefs want to play in Spain this season. They’re making ‘aggressive’ push

BY SAM MCDOWELL
smcdowell@kcstar.com

The Chiefs’ full schedule of games for the 2026 NFL season will be revealed in about six weeks. But team officials are lobbying the league for one game in particular: A trip to Spain. The Falcons were announced last month as one of the teams that will head to Madrid, Spain, this fall for a game at Bernabéu, home to soccer giant Real Madrid C.F. Atlanta’s opponent? To be determined. The Chiefs, though, have determined they want to be that opponent. “We’ve been very open and aggressive with the league — as we have been since the beginning — that we want to play in Spain this year,” Chiefs team president Mark Donovan told The Star. “We think it would be a great market, game (and) matchup.” It’s not yet clear when the NFL will make a decision. But in announcing last month that the Falcons would be one participant in the game, the league said the matchup would be revealed when the full schedule is released in May. The Chiefs are ready, if called — as they always are for international opportunities. They added Spain as one of their international rights markets last year through the NFL’s global markets program (GMP). The Chicago Bears and Miami

Dolphins were also awarded branding and commercial rights in Spain. “It’s perfect timing for us,” Donovan told The Star. “And to play in Real Madrid, and for our fans to experience that stadium and city, I think it’d be amazing for our fans. “So we’re all in.” Will the league be all-in? That’s not exactly a lock. The Chiefs have been a TV cash cow for the past few seasons. That’s what sent them to São Paulo, Brazil, for their season opener last fall. The game in Spain is expected to be scheduled for November — as it was a year ago, when the Dolphins and Washington Commanders met in the NFL’s first game there. And mid-season overseas contests have been less likely to draw prime-time windows than international matchups played in the league’s opening week. The league is almost certainly considering the Chiefs for other prime-time windows, too, with games scheduled for Thanksgiving, Black Friday and Christmas Day. The NFL has also floated the possibility of Thanksgiving Eve and Christmas Eve games. The Chiefs have been a regular feature over the holidays. Games played in the later weeks of the season — such as the game in Spain — optimize the chances that Patrick Mahomes will take part. Chiefs chairman and CEO Clark Hunt told

reporters at the NFL’s annual league meeting that the Chiefs aren’t expecting to play the Seahawks in the NFL’s season opener, set for Wednesday, Sept. 9, in Seattle. Donovan said the same. The Chiefs do travel to Seattle this year. Mahomes is progressing in his rehab from knee surgery, but it’s not exactly a foregone conclusion that he will be ready and able to play in Week 1. That’s one standalone game likely gone. The others? They’re in play. The Chiefs have long raised their hand for international games — but an overseas date with the Falcons would have a unique backstory. The two teams from opposite conferences played just two years ago, but the Falcons are on Kansas City’s schedule (as a road opponent) because each finished third in its respective division — the criteria for the 17th game added in 2021. The Falcons’ home opponents this season are the Chiefs, Carolina Panthers, New Orleans Saints, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Bears, Detroit Lions, Baltimore Ravens, Cincinnati Bengals and San Francisco 49ers. The Lions and 49ers are already scheduled to play overseas this season, and the Panthers, Saints and Buccaneers are division opponents. That leaves the Bears, Ravens and Bengals as more likely competition. It’s certainly worth noting again that the Bears, like the Chiefs, have secured marketing rights in Spain. In the Mahomes era alone, the Chiefs have played in Brazil (2024), Germany (2023) and Mexico City (2019). In São Paulo last September, they were greeted with an ovation when they stepped off the plane. “We landed late, so it’s really cool to see that the Chiefs are known here in Brazil and known well,” Mahomes said then. “We want to take American football worldwide.” In what’s essentially a tagline now, Donovan has often said the Chiefs want to become the “world’s team.” They have GMP rights in a league-high seven countries or territories: Austria, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, Spain, Switzerland and United Kingdom. No NFL team has more. The Los Angeles Rams also have seven.

‘Wouldn’t bet against him’: Chiefs’ Reid lauds Patrick Mahomes’ rehab approach

BY PETE SWEENEY
psweeney@kcstar.com

NFL owners and head coaches are gathering this week in Phoenix for the league’s annual meeting. That includes Kansas City Chiefs owner Clark Hunt and head coach Andy Reid. On Tuesday, Reid spoke to reporters at the AFC coaches breakfast in Arizona, offering an update of sorts on the rehab of Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes. Mahomes tore his ACL and LCL on Dec. 14 during a 16-13 loss to the Los Angeles Chargers and had surgery to repair damage from the injury 24 hours later. The team has since estimated a 7- to 11-month recovery timeline for Mahomes. “Every player’s different,” Reid said, via NFL Network’s Mike Garafolo. “I will tell you, though — I would never bet against him. He’s always going to put in the time and effort and always push it, but within reason, so he doesn’t take steps back. So far, it’s all been positive.” In mid-January, Mahomes told reporters that he was driven to be ready

Raiders strike deal with veteran QB Cousins

Field Level Media
Veteran quarterback Kirk Cousins agreed to a contract with the Raiders, his agent confirmed Thursday. ESPN reported that Cousins, 37, will sign a five-year, \$172 million contract, but only the first \$20 million is guaranteed. The Falcons will pay Cousins \$8.7 million this season, with the Raiders adding \$1.3 million. Las Vegas also will pay him a guaranteed \$10 million roster bonus next March. Cousins, 37, reunites with new Raiders head coach Klint Kubiak, his position coach and offensive coordinator with the Vikings from 2019-21. Cousins could serve as a mentor for Fernando Mendoza, widely expected to be the No. 1 overall pick by the Raiders in the April 23-25 NFL Draft.

for the start of the NFL season in early September. “The long-term goal (is) I want to be ready for Week 1,” Mahomes said. “The doctor said that I could be, but I can’t predict what’s going to happen throughout the process. But that’s my goal, and I’ll try to prepare myself to be ready to play in Week 1 and have no restrictions. “You want to be out there healthy and giving

us the best chance to win. Hopefully I’ll be able to do some stuff in OTAs and get to training camp and hopefully be able to do a lot there. I’m excited for the process. It’s a long process, but I’m excited for it.” Last week, the quarterback shared a video of himself dropping back to throw on his official Instagram account.

Classified

classifieds.kansas.com

316.268.6000

FIND. BUY. SELL.

VISA Mastercard DISCOVER AMERICAN EXPRESS

Legals

Legals & Public Notices

NOTICE

AUCTION - U-Haul STORAGE if lien is not satisfied, the following units will be released for sale on April 16th @ 9am.

1000 E 13th St - Units 1349 1607 1549 1664

600 Holland St - Units 1204 1215 2281 2339 2336 1095

5213 E Pawnee - Units 231 IPL0325941 Apr 5 2026

BREACH NOTIFICATION

VisionCare4Life was the victim of a cybercriminal attack. We have no evidence that any information has been used to harm patients. We are taking every step possible to ensure the security of our patients' information. Contact our Privacy Officer, Dr. Wendy Foster, at dr.foster@visioncare4life.com if you have any questions or concerns.

IPL0318616 Mar 3-May 31 2026

Animals

Dogs

Purebred Border Collie pups

Sire is a long-haired, dam is a short haired. Both purebreds without papers. Four males three females. \$500. All shots and first warming completed. Emporia ks. 8168825174

Announcements

Announcements

For the 2 girls I love, one on the farm and 1 in town. Please contact Art at my office number, 587-501-5908 My girl on the farm, do you remember Rob? Tell my finance to call me.

Recruitment

Employment

Manufacturing Engineering Manager

– positions offered by NetApp, Inc. (Wichita, KS). Oversee all production activities and manufacturing processes for NetApp. Must be willing to travel up to 10% of the time domestically and internationally. Please submit resume to hropsj@netapp.com. Reference Job ID: 9858119.

Employment

Hospitalists (multiple openings)

CarePoint, P.C. seeks FT Hospitalists in Wichita, KS to examine and treat patients in hospital; discuss treatment and recovery options; prescribe and administer medications. Req: MD degree or equiv.; 3-yr residency in Internal / Family Medicine; must be board certified or board eligible; and must have Kansas state medical license or be immediately eligible for licensure. Please go online for more details, information on benefits and to apply at https://carepointhc.com/careers or email hduncan@carepointhc.com.

Missions Director (Wichita, KS)

Coord the Restoration Network Churches & plan trainings for new church planters. \$65,000.00/yr. HS dipl. Foreign edu &/or work equivalency acceptable. 1 yr of work exp as a Missions Director, Missions Pastor, or rtdt occupation. Send via mail cvr lettr, resume, & list of refs to Restoration Church Wichita, 1408 W 34th St S, Wichita, KS 67217. Refer to Job No. MD-1 on all docs.

ENGINEERING

Viega LLC seeks a Quality Engineer in McPherson, KS: Develop and conduct testing, inspection, statistical analysis and reporting to support new product and process development. Email resume to Viega.Recruiting@viega.us. Must reference Ref# SS-QE.

KANSAS.COM

NEED HELP STAFFING?

Let Classifieds Help The Wichita Eagle

Keeping you connected | jobs.kansas.com