**Houston Texans**

The Texans headed into the 2023 season with huge question marks, with many predicting them to be one of the worst teams in football. The Texans had won just eleven games in the last three seasons and were on their third head coach in three years. This marked a turning point from the downslide of the Texans. DeMeco Ryans and Nick Caserio landed both Offensive and Defensive Rookie of the Year in the draft, turning a franchise on the decline into one of the most feared in the NFL. The Texans finished the season 10-7 and also took a playoff win against the Browns in the wildcard round, winning as many games in one year as they had in the previous three combined. They came up against a hugely impressive Ravens team in the divisional round.

The Texans head into the 2024 season with Offensive Rookie of the Year C.J. Stroud leading the squad. Stroud looked hugely impressive in his rookie season with the Texans finishing with 4108 passing yards. Stroud is only the fifth quarterback to do this in a rookie season, it was also the third highest in a rookie season. He broke the record for most passing attempts without an interception to start a career previously set by Dak Prescott. If that wasn’t enough he also had the best touchdown to interception ratio in the NFL. The Texans will be hoping to continue his development heading into year two. He will be backed up once again by Davis Mills, who helped in the development of C.J. Stroud last season, as well as by very impressive first-time coordinator Bobby Slowik, who had head coaching interviews at the end of last season. Case Keenum goes to IR and is likely out for the season.

The first major change for the Texans comes at running back. The Texans will be hoping that new addition Joe Mixon can get the run game going better than last year. Mixon joins via a trade from the Bengals coming off another 1000 yards rushing season. Mixon will lead this running back room alongside Dameon Pierce, who struggled in the system last season. Should Pierce struggle again, this may open a spot for rookie British Brooks or newly acquired Cam Akers to step into a backup role. Dare Ogunbowale also makes the roster who adds to the roster on special teams.

There were other major moves in the roster at wide receiver. The Texans traded back with the Vikings to get an additional second pick and used this to trade for Stefon Diggs. Diggs comes in and will partner with Nico Collins, who had a huge breakout season last year. Collins led the Texans in receiving yards with 1297 and 8 touchdowns, which was better than his previous two seasons combined. Tank Dell will return from injury to take the wide receiver three spot who also had an impressive rookie season. The wide receiver four spot seems to be up for grabs, with John Metchie hoping to make that jump. Robert Woods and Xavier Hutchinson will also be battling it out for a spot at receiver with the group as well. Steven Sims gets a roster spot, he will likely be the kick off and punt returner for the side.

The Texans re-signed Dalton Schultz at tight end. Schultz had become a reliable target for C.J. Stroud last season when called upon. Brevin Jordan had a few moments as well, especially in the wildcard game against the Browns where he scored a huge touchdown. C.J. Stroud also ends up with his college tight end, as the Texans selected Cade Stover in the draft. These three all have different qualities and can be a huge use for CJ Stroud.

The offensive line will be hoping they can stay healthy this year. The line was plagued by injuries last season, which meant players had to play out of position. However, if they can all stay healthy, it could be a solid unit led by left tackle Laremy Tunsil. Left guard Kenyon Green looks set to start after sitting out last season with injury, with Kendrick Green backing him up. Juice Scruggs will be at centre after he and backup Jared Patterson impressed in their rookie years and stepped up in other positions when required. Shaq Mason will once again start at right guard, and Titus Howard will return to right tackle after playing at left guard due to injuries. Second-rounder Blake Fisher will back up both Howard and Tunsil this season. Nick Broker will be the back up guard

The defensive line gets a few new faces. The Texans lose Sheldon Rankins to the Bengals and Maliek Collins to the 49ers. They also lose edge rusher and sack leader Jonathan Greenard who leaves for the Vikings. They replaced Greenard with outstanding edge Danielle Hunter. Hunter finished 2023 with 16.5 sacks for the Vikings. Hunter will partner Defensive Rookie of the Year Will Anderson in what could be a scary duo this year. Jerry Hughes and Derek Barnett are back in the rotation. The Texans will hope Dylan Horton can play some part after losing him last season to Hodgkin lymphoma. The tackle room was empty, but free agency signings Denico Autry who is suspended for the first six games, Foley Fatukasi, Tim Settle, and Mario Edwards look like they will battle it out for the starters role. Rookie Marcus Harris will also want to try and get reps in there when called up from practise squad. Kurt Hinish and Khalil Davis stay in what is going to be an interesting rotation and depth across the defensive line.

Azeez Al-Shaair joins the linebackers in a switch from the Titans, replacing Blake Cashman who joins Greenard in Minnesota. Al-Shaair is well-known to DeMeco Ryans, who coached him during his time as defensive coordinator in San Francisco. He will be the leader of this defence and will play alongside Christian Harris, who had a breakout season last time out. Henry To’oTo’o will back these two up, along with rookie Jamal Hill. Jake Hanson and Neville Hewitt also make the roster to DD some much needed depth with Christian Harris starting the season on IR.

The Texans keep much of their secondary, only losing Steven Nelson from the starting group. The outstanding Derek Stingley will look to continue his good form from last season, paired with the Texans' first pick of the draft, Kamari Lassiter. They will be backed up by former first round picks, Jeff Okudah and Kris Boyd who joins from the Cardinals. The safety room remains the same with starters Jimmie Ward and Jalen Pitre, who are aiming to stay healthy and improve on last season. They are joined by Calen Bullock via the draft. Eric Murray and M.J Stewart add some depth and continuation as well. Last season's nickel corner, Desmond King did not make the roster, Myles Bryant joins and will take the starting role.

The Texans did lose their punter in the off-season but picked up Pro Bowl punter Tommy Townsend. Ka’imi Fairbairn and the Texans will be hoping he stays fit all season this time around, as he is a reliable boot when called upon.

The Texans lost a lot of players this off-season but have replaced them with some great talents. The team is set up for a run at the playoffs. The big additions on offence, Stefon Diggs and Joe Mixon, will be utilised by Bobby Slowik and C.J. Stroud, potentially helping the offence make the required jump. The defence looks mighty impressive with Hunter, Autry, and Al-Shaair added, who could be huge influences on the young players in the squad. Will Anderson Jr. will look to make a huge leap with the improvements around him. Overall, this could be a really good season for the Texans. Although the schedule is not easy, this team is well set up to make a push and improve on last season's divisional round loss.

**Jacksonville Jaguars**

Jacksonville seemed destined for the playoffs last season before an injury to Trevor Lawrence and a devastating final game loss to the Titans cost them a playoff spot and the AFC South title, which landed in Houston as a result. They finished 9-8 with five losses in the final six games. The Jaguars will be hoping to have a fully fit Trevor Lawrence all season and finally get a full season of the best of him.

Lawrence will continue to lead the Jaguars as he heads into year four and a contract year. He will be hoping to show his best form all season and make a huge jump. Lawrence finished 2023 with 4016 passing yards and 21 touchdowns. Lawrence did have 14 interceptions last season and will hope to turn that around next season. If something were to happen to Lawrence, the Jags picked up Mac Jones as backup, who could offer a better option and be a positive influence on Lawrence, ensuring he doesn’t play through injuries as he has done in the last couple of seasons.

The running back room remains unchanged after the emergence of Travis Etienne last year. Etienne had a huge season in 2023 with his second 1000 yard season and also nearly 500 yards in receptions, cementing himself as the running back one. He is likely to be the lead back with the occasional rotation of Tank Bigsby, who will look to improve on a slightly underwhelming rookie campaign. If Bigsby makes the jump, the running back room could take a lot of pressure off Lawrence and the wide receivers. If not, the Jags may rely more on D’Ernest Johnson this year. Keilan Robinson also makes the roster.

At wide receiver, the Jaguars lose top receiver Calvin Ridley to division rivals the Titans via free agency. Ridley reached 1,000 yards last season, making his loss potentially significant. Christian Kirk will likely take over as the primary receiver, joined by Gabe Davis from the Bills and Devin Duvernay from the Ravens, who could also be vital under the new kickoff rules. First-round draft pick Brian Thomas Jr. out of LSU will also be expected to step up in Ridley's absence. Parker Washington, Tim Jones and David White Jr all keep roster spots leaving nice depth to the wide receiver group.

Evan Engram finished just short of 1,000 yards at tight end last year and was a significant problem for many defences, especially towards the end of the season. He will look to continue his impressive form and relationship with Lawrence in 2024. The Jags will hope for more support from Brenton Strange, who will look to make a year-two jump at tight end, as many others have done before. Luke Farrell and Patrick Murtagh are also on the roster.

The Jags look likely to keep the same offensive line from last year, with the only change at centre as Mitch Morse joins from the Bills to take the centre spot. Cam Robinson will continue at left tackle, with depth support from rookie Javon Foster, Cole Van Lanen and swing tackle Walker Little. They could be used to back up Anton Harrison at right tackle as well. Ezra Cleveland and Brandon Scherff will take the left and right guard spots, respectively, with Cooper Hodges and Luke Fortner for depth. Fortner can also play centre so his versatility could be key.

The defensive line of the Jaguars got two huge boosts. Sack leader Josh Hines-Allen re-signed to a long-term contract and will continue his fantastic partnership with Trevor Walker on the other side. Between them they had 27.5 sacks with Hines-Allen getting 17.5 of those. They also signed outstanding tackle Arik Armstead from the 49ers, who will join DaVon Hamilton and Roy Robertson-Harris. The Jags did lose starter Foley Fatukasi and Dawuane Smoot but drafted LSU teammates Maason Smith and Jordan Jefferson for depth. This defensive line could bring back the "Sacksonville" era. De’Shaan Dixon and Myles Cole add depth to the edge. Jeremiah Ledbetter, Tyler Lacy and Esezi Otomewo also make the roster at tackle depth.

There is continuity in the linebacker room as Devin Lloyd, Foyesade Oluokun, Chad Muma, and Ventrell Miller all stay with Jacksonville. Lloyd and Oluokun are likely to be the starters in 2024. Miller will be hoping to step onto the field after losing his rookie season to injury. Caleb Johnson also re-signed with the team adding depth alongside Yasir Abdulla.

The secondary sees a new face with Ronald Darby joining from the Ravens, likely pairing with Tyson Campbell at corner. The Jags also brought in Jarrian Jones and De’Antre Prince via the draft for depth with Montaric Brown also on the roster. Darnell Savage is likely to get the starting nickel role after joining in the off-season from Green Bay. The safeties will remain the same, with Antonio Johnson and Andre Cisco starting, backed up by Daniel Thomas with Andrew Wingard and Tashaun Gibson SR also making the roster adding great depth to the position..

There is a change in kicker for the Jags as they picked up Cam Little via the draft out of Arkansas, hoping to have found a reliable placekicker.

The Jaguars will need their wide receivers to step up this year. They are in a tough division, and the AFC South was so close to their grasp last year, but the falloff once Lawrence got injured was catastrophic. They will hope that if it happens again, there will be more depth with Mac Jones joining. The defence looks like a strong unit that the offence can rely on in tough games. The loss of Ridley is a concern, but with exciting prospect Brian Thomas Jr. and Gabe Davis joining, both could be the receivers Lawrence needs to elevate the offence.

**Indianapolis Colts**

The Colts' 2023 season was not as they expected. They thought they were being led by Anthony Richardson, however, a season-ending injury meant that Gardner Minshew took over to lead them to a 9-8 season. It was heartbreak for the Colts, who not only missed out on the playoffs on the last game of the season, but also missed out on winning the AFC South title with a loss to the Texans in Week 18 of the season. It was a terrific effort by the Colts without their quarterback of the future after they selected Richardson fourth in the 2023 draft. Head coach Shane Steichen got the best out of those players, and he got the offence cooking. The Colts looked great at times and will be hoping Anthony Richardson will be able to stay on the field to lead the team to the playoffs in 2024.

Anthony Richardson will lead the Colts at quarterback and look to develop a relationship with Steichen to make sure the Colts can press on after last season's success. If Richardson cannot stay healthy during the season, they can trust backup Joe Flacco, who comes off a terrific season with the Browns and ended up with Comeback Player of the Year. Flacco’s experience could also be vital to the growth and development of Richardson heading into year two. Sam Ehlinger is also added to the roster.

The Colts will be hoping they get the 2021 version of Jonathan Taylor. Towards the end of last season, he showed signs of his old self and took over the backfield from Zack Moss, who left for the Bengals in free agency. Taylor finished with 741 yards in 10 games and was second to Moss in rushing yards. Third-choice running back Trey Sermon becomes the backup running back, which means Taylor will likely be the main threat and not part of a running back by committee like last year. Tyler Goodson stay will the side and will be the depth to the roster.

Michael Pittman Jr. comes back to the Colts as he signs a new deal and avoids free agency. Pittman was the biggest threat for the Colts in the air last year and finished with 1152 receiving yards. It wasn't the only addition, Texas standout Adonai Mitchell joins via the draft after somehow falling to 52 in the draft, and they also add Anthony Gould via the draft. These two will once again be joined by Josh Downs and Alec Pierce in what looks like a good wide receiver room. Ashton Dublin and Juwann Win free also makes the roster to add some nice depth to the position.

The tight end room isn’t one of the most impressive in the NFL. Jelani Woods was likely to lead the group until a season ending injury. Kylen Granson and Mo Alie-Cox are now in line to start. Drew Ogletree and Will Mallory will back them up when called upon.

The offensive line is likely to feature the same starters as last year. Left tackle Bernhard Raimann, star left guard Quenton Nelson, centre Ryan Kelly, right guard Will Fries, and right tackle Braden Smith are joined by Matt Goncalves (tackle) and Tanor Bortolini (centre and guard) via the draft. They also have Danny Pinter, Dalton Tucker for the guard spots, Blake Freeland will back the tackle spot as well. The same group of offensive line will be vital for the Colts who having been consistently good for a number of seasons now.

The Colts' defensive line remains really strong as well. Re-signing Grover Stewart was a key part of this; his partnership with DeForest Buckner will be crucial to the defence's success with Raekwon Davis, Adetomiwa Adebawore and Tavern Bryan rotating in. They will allow pressure from the inside, which will be led by the first defensive player taken in the 2024 draft, Laiatu Latu to be able to attack the outside. The other side will be used by Tyquan Lewis and Kwity Paye, who will also take reps on the edge. The Colts will hope Samson Ebukam can return from IR if not Dayo Odeyingbo and Isaiah Land will be the rotation.

The linebackers will once again be led by E.J. Speed and Zaire Franklin. Jaylon Carlies joins via the draft to add some depth with Segun Olubi, Cameron McGrone and Grant Stuard The linebacker room looks strong, providing another great positional depth for the Colts.

The Colts will be hoping for a year two jump from JuJu Brents at cornerback. He will be paired alongside Jaylon Jones, with standout Kenny Moore II playing in the nickel cornerback slot. Dallis Flowers and Samuel Womack III will be backing these up. The safeties remain the same with Julian Blackmon re-signing. Nick Cross is also a part of the group and likely to start over Rodney Thomas likely to come in when called upon. Daniel Scott and Trevor Denbow also make the roster.

Matt Gay will continue to be the placekicker for the Colts. He will be needed in big moments throughout the 2024 season and could be vital for the Colts' success.

The Colts are all set up for a strong 2024 season. If Anthony Richardson can stay fit, this team can make a real run for the playoffs. The addition of Joe Flacco’s experience could be huge for the team in developing Richardson. They are in a tough division with the Texans and Jaguars looking to claim the AFC South title as well as battling against a better Titans side this coming season. Shane Steichen will be the offensive mastermind behind the team's success, and the defence looks strong. With no significant losses on defence, the Colts could be the team to watch out for in the AFC.

**Tennessee Titans**

The Titans ended the 2023 season with a disappointing 6-11 record, which led to significant changes within the organisation. Head coach Mike Vrabel was sacked during the offseason, and Bengals offensive coordinator Brian Callahan was brought in to take over. Despite the overall poor performance, there were some bright spots for the Titans. Rookie quarterback Will Levis showed potential as a future NFL star, and rookie running back Tyjae Spears also impressed, hinting at a promising future for the franchise.

In 2024, Will Levis will start as the Titans' QB1, after sitting out the beginning of the 2023 season behind free agent Ryan Tannehill. Levis took over in Week 8, leading the team to three wins before an injury sidelined him for the final three games. During his nine-game stint, he passed for 1,808 yards, showing flashes of brilliance that the Titans hope to build on in his first full season as the starting quarterback. With Tannehill departing in free agency and Malik Willis traded away, the Titans brought in Mason Rudolph, a capable backup who proved his worth with the Steelers last season.

The Titans also face a significant change in the backfield with the departure of Derrick Henry, who has been a cornerstone of their offence for years. Free agent signing Tony Pollard, who tallied 1,005 rushing yards and 311 receiving yards with Dallas last season, will step in to fill the void. Pollard's versatility, combined with the promising Tyjae Spears, who finished his rookie season with 453 rushing yards and 385 receiving yards despite limited opportunities, should give the Titans a strong running game. Julius Chestnut will be on hand as a backup if needed.

DeAndre Hopkins, the Titans' leading receiver from 2023 with 1,057 yards, will once again anchor the receiving corps. However, this season, he will have more support. The Titans added Calvin Ridley from the Jaguars and Tyler Boyd from the Bengals in free agency, both of whom have the potential to surpass 1,000 receiving yards. Ridley, eager to prove himself after a year with a divisional rival, and Boyd, familiar with Callahan's offence, should create a dynamic receiving unit. Treylon Burks, Nick Westbrook-Ikhine, and Jha’Quan Jackson will provide depth, with Jackson also contributing on special teams.

At tight end, Chigoziem Okonkwo will continue to lead the group after posting 528 receiving yards in 2023. Okonkwo has become a reliable target for the Titans and will be backed up by second-year player Josh Whyle, as well as veterans Nick Vannett and Thomas Odukoya. This solid group of tight ends should complement the Titans' offensive strategy well under Callahan.

The Titans prioritised strengthening their offensive line in the draft, using their first-round pick on JC Latham, who will start at left tackle. Latham will be joined by Peter Skoronski at left guard, Lloyd Cushenberry at centre, Dillon Radunz at right guard, and Nicholas Petit-Frere at right tackle. These additions significantly bolster a line that struggled last season. With Daniel Brunskill, Andrew Rupcich, John Ojukwu, and Jaelan Duncan providing depth, the Titans' offensive line appears much improved, which is crucial for protecting Levis and supporting the run game.

Defensively, the Titans made several key moves, particularly on the defensive line. They drafted T’Vondre Sweat in the second round to start at nose tackle alongside Jeffery Simmons and Sebastian Joseph-Day in their 3-4 defence. Although the departure of Denico Autry, who led the team in sacks, could be a setback, the Titans have solid depth with Keondre Coburn, TK McLendon, and Marlon Davidson. On the outside, Harold Landry, who recorded 10.5 sacks last season, will team up with Arden Key, with Caleb Murphy, Ali Gaye, and Jaylen Harrell rotating in.

The Titans' linebacker unit saw some changes as well, with leading tackler Azeez Al-Shaair leaving for the Texans. However, the Titans brought in Kenneth Murray via free agency, traded for Ernest Jones IV, and drafted Cedric Gray, creating a solid group heading into 2024. Otis Reese IV and Jack Gibbens will serve as backups, ensuring depth and stability in this crucial area.

The Titans' secondary may be the most improved unit in the NFL. They traded for L’Jarius Sneed from the Chiefs and added Chidobe Awuzie in free agency, significantly upgrading the cornerback positions. Rookie Jarvis Brown Lee will rotate with Darrell Baker Jr., while Roger McCreary will start as the nickelback. At safety, the Titans added former Pro Bowlers Quandre Diggs and Jamal Adams, joining Amani Hooker, Mike Brown, and Julius Wood to form a formidable secondary that should cause problems for opposing offences.

Nick Folk returns as the Titans' kicker after re-signing with the team. Folk had a strong 2023 season, missing just one field goal and two extra points, and he will continue to be a reliable option for the Titans in 2024.

The Titans have made significant improvements through free agency and the draft, particularly in the secondary and offensive line, addressing key areas of need from their disappointing 2023 season. While the team faces a tough schedule, the upgrades should lead to a more competitive performance this season. The offence, under new head coach Brian Callahan, will be particularly intriguing to watch. While a playoff run might be ambitious, the Titans are likely to be a much-improved team in 2024, and fans should expect a stronger showing from the franchise this time around.

**Outlook and Predictions**

The Texans head into the year as favourites for the division after impressing hugely last time out and being the shock team of the NFL. Facing fierce competition from the Colts who narrowly missed out on the playoffs last time round, they will hope Anthony Richardson can stay healthy to give them a shot at the division title and playoffs. The Jags looked good last year and should have won the division however a poor run of results with Lawrence playing through pain derailed their season and they will want to find that early season form again. The Titans have made some huge off-season moves, they improved areas of needs and could make a greater challenge this team around. The division is stronger than it has been in recent years and it is difficult to predict.

**Prediction:**

1. Texans
2. Colts
3. Jaguars
4. Titans