

Another season. Another playoff loss and another playoff loss with a likely asterisk attached to it. Getting very old at writing these at the end of every year, almost the same as every other year.

## —And so, it begins again...

We left off with yet another season in heartbreaking fashion, falling to the Denver Broncos in the divisional round. Injuries, replacing injured player concerns, and trying to coach around personnel looms this spring as the team enters the 2026 offseason, looking to retool and make another push for a championship. Only this time we have a new coach. Last year was supposed to be our rebuild or a retooling year but this year felt more like a retool and over-achieving season than last year. No Lamar Jackson, no Patrick Mahomes, no Joe Burrow in the playoffs this year and the Bills still couldn't overcome the adversity of a defense plagued with injuries since week two and a wide receiver core that found it difficult to get open all year. The Bills need to find ways to improve in crucial areas—particularly depth on defense, wide receiver, situational football, and a more balanced offensive attack. Before we even get to the firing of Coach Sean McDermott and the promoting of Bills Offensive Coordinator to head coach, Joe Brady, we need to summarize how we got to this point with our loss at Denver. One or two more plays and it's likely we are not having this conversation about a new head coach.

### **The Divisional Playoff Game at Denver:**

No one is really arguing about the winner. Most knowledgeable football fans knew that in order for the Buffalo Bills to go into Denver and win they had to play a near flawless football game. That did not happen. The Bills turned the ball over five times. Four of them from Josh Allen and one from the rushing champion James Cook who also led the NFL in fumbles by a running back. Even with that, Allen and Cook still put us in a situation to win. They still bailed out. Allen still threw really well and if one play was called as the rule dictates it, we all would be singing a different tune right now and be gearing up for another AFC Championship Game, possible Super Bowl appearance. While a lot of what went wrong can be pointed at Josh Allen's play, we had other things happen in the game that also put us in this position. There isn't one play, or series or even decision that dictated this loss. **It's all of it**, but if you want to say it's the Refs and the game is rigged, that is fine. There might actually be some solid points there, but I cannot control any of that. All I am going to do is judge what I see on the field, how the organization handles adversity and negativity and how the organization and team respond.

**I am not at all going to mince words.** It's heartbreaking to see Josh Allen this upset. You can hear his voice crack. This reminds me of, shit, myself and others I have dealt with in sports when I was a kid and teenager. It hurts like that. How much of ourselves we put into this. I can only imagine what it's like for a player like Josh that works so hard, gives so much and absorbs so much punishment. Be it on the field or from the national media, which sucks the life out of everything they report nowadays, be it sports, politics and just all-round social commentary in general. In 2026 I want to watch less National News, ESPN, NFL network, FOX. I no longer trust them as a valid information source. Buffalo PLUS, a small localized YouTube podcast for the Buffalo Bills had done a great job at giving us real valuable data and commentary on the team and their takes about other teams are very fair. Be neat if they covered some Buffalo Sabres hockey though. The team is looking very good this year and it might be a nice change of pace from talking Buffalo Bills football. On their podcast they said, "*we all need a break.*" And I feel like that is very true at this moment. This is super tough. So much to unpack with all this. The season, the injuries, the circumstances, the surprise firing of Sean

McDermott and promoting of offensive coordinator Joe Brady to head coach, the resolve, and the goddamn Refs...

The ref's always trying to be "*in the game*" for reasons, we all wished we knew better. **Let the player's play.** Why when the game is on the line the referees want to put their stamp on it either way and the Buffalo Bills have been on the opposite side of this for a few years now. The double standard of how they come to decisions on a play earlier in the game and then all of the sudden the rule seems different at a different point of the game. Coach McDermott is part of the competition committee and to me it always seems like he is the one who gets " **Fucked.**" Play the game nice, play by the rules, and yeah, get screwed from a subjective decision of where the ball actually is on a tush push the year before where the opposite official is dictating where the ball actually is when the official on the other side had a better view. This year it is, 'what is' and 'what isn't a catch?' To this day I still do not get what a catch is, going all the way back to when the Bucs got screwed in the NFC Championship game vs the Rams in the 1999-2000 season. 27 years later we have made no significant improvements to the game of football that definitively says a player on the field, touched by the opposing team with the ball in their hands is considered a catch and down by contact. That is what I learned about the three playoff losses with asterisks attached to them from 2021-2026. An underdog and very much injured team cannot turn the ball over in the playoffs and give a number one seed a 13-point lead and expect to win. Even though we very much had a chance to win this game. I felt like we left them off the hook with 6-minutes to go, we score a touchdown there and the game is likely over. Instead, we get conservative again, a penalty later and we are kicking a field goal and asking our thrown-together defense to go out there and win the game. **I didn't like it.** Our strength is Allen and the offense and we are putting it on the Defense to go out there and win the game. Denver literally only had two plays on offense. The touchdown at the end of the half and the touchdown at the end of regulation. That's it. They lost their quarterback. Lost some of their key offensive playmakers on top of that. Absolutely needed that call for pass interference to win the game and now are likely going to be pushovers for whoever comes into town next. Denver were not pushovers against the New England Patriots but could not win at home with a backup quarterback, 10 to 7 to go to another Super Bowl.

Buffalo's defense did play well. It isn't solely on them. They held up but when it really counted Denver saw we had a guy or more on the field that would normally not be on the field in this situation or even dressed to play but due to injuries we had no choice and they exposed that, twice, and it cost us. There isn't one element of this game to point at and say "**that lost us the game.**" There are too many things that led up to this, but sadly, the national media will solely focus on Allen and the Ref's decision. Everything else will likely be ignored. I hope the **BILLS** don't forget this and use this as motivation.

Our best players turned the ball over but even with that, we still had a chance. I watched a lot of replays. So many little things that could have happened that didn't happen. I don't know how many balls got tipped that should have been incomplete, were caught. The catch, non-catch, interception, the end of the half fumble. The short ball to Shakir that could have been a touchdown to seal the game, settle for a field goal. Asking our defense to do too much. Another ball Cook caught but was said to be incomplete. The pass interference call at the end of overtime that was suspect at best and earlier in the game wasn't called, now all of the sudden is a penalty and called. It's just insane how many things happened that went against us and this goes back to the Kansas City game last year where I felt the Bills needed to go into Kansas City and make a statement, played tight and allowed Kansas City to stay in the game. I felt like that was happening in this game too. Before the Cook fumble the Bills were driving at will and about to go up 14-3. The fumble changed that and the Bills were sort of scrambling all game for the rest of the game. We had our chances and if you do not go for the double-tap headshot to kill off your enemy you are tempting fate and when the Buffalo Bills tempt fate we usually get

railed very hard for our faith that everything will work out just fine in the end. Don't let faith come to play. If you have a chance to bury your opponent, you do it. You can play nice when there are four zeroes on the scoreboard. If we ever get chances to run up the score against good teams we should be doing that because look what happens when you play with your food? You lose your chance to eat later.

For all these reasons I believe this is why Buffalo Bills ownership decided to move on from Sean McDermott as our head coach. I do not support how we did this and when we did it, but I get why we did it, and it does make sense, but I feel like the move should have come after the 13-second meltdown a few years ago at Kansas City, and one could even argue after the loss last year in the AFC title game, would have also been a good time to make a change. After this year though, I feel like coach did everything right. It was the players that failed. Sure, it's the coach's responsibility, but I feel like it was more on him against Kansas City, both times than the players, and this time it was the players, but I still feel like the aggression meter was still tuned too low. Now after a few weeks we have a new coach, a new direction, but with the same culture.

So, let's see how this all plays out.

I am only writing about the Buffalo Bills once or twice a season the last two years. Because mainly it is been the same thing over and over again. We do pretty well during the regular season and fall short in the playoffs. We really haven't had that dominate year that I thought we would have during this span of playoff appearances. We score 30 points a game in nine games in the 2025 season, twelve games in 2024, well enough but the consistency factor has been an issue. The injury bug hits us hard on defense with little to no recoup after that. The defense the last 4 or 5 seasons now has been bandaged together using toothpicks and fishing line. Enough to get us to the playoffs but not get us past the upper tier teams.

Last year we got a chair to the back from the Fuckening and almost like clockwork, we were cheap shotted again by the Fuckening Part 2. Josh Allen still had a great year. He is in the finals for another potential MVP award. Played through a foot injury the last half of the season and had little help at the wide receiver position. This year we were able to add a consistent running game, but even in that it was not good enough. It comes down to consistency and we just did not have the depth in the roster to do this game in and game out. Now with new coaches, a new defensive philosophy and different scientists in the lab we will have to see who goes, who stays, who gets drafted and who is picked up in free agency.

I thought Joe Brady has been solid. Doing the best he can with what he had to work with on offense. Sometimes there were lolls in our gameplan and that is where we go full circle with the Wide Receiver problems. I like our guys but because none of them are real field stretchers we have to run misdirection and play action plays to get them open when they are they are the ones that know where they are going and the defense is playing reactionary to them. They should be able to get open on their own. Even if it is some of the time on the passing downs. A lot of the time this year that wasn't happening and Josh would have to play without thinking. That can be amazing and it could also be not. Brady might want to try something else with the guys we got. Perhaps the draft will shed some more light on what the Bills intend to do.

I hope Brady is even more active, during the game, calling his guy out and/or take charge. Our coaches, dating back to even 2019, have a hard time adapting to their own football philosophy, situationally, as it happens in the game. We are still in the absolute worst stretch of situationally bad football I have ever seen by any football team. This is right up there with the Raiders ability to always lead the NFL in penalties. The Buffalo Bills are the worst situational team I have ever remember seeing in the stretch that McDermott coached this team. Take all you have seen in the nine seasons. All those losses at the very end of a game. Pretty much most

of the playoff losses. Apply this. That in the situation, we don't always make the right or even best decision possible. That is what bad situational football means to me.

I feel like this is a broken record with injuries. I know it is never “*if*” a player gets hurt, but rather “*when*” he gets hurt. Some teams are heavily affected by this. The San Francisco 49ers have had major injuries the past six seasons now. This has literally ruined their chances to make another Super Bowl run. They seem to have it the worse over that span, but the Buffalo Bills are right behind them. I can remember 2022, 2023, 2024 and now 2025 for the Bills on defense having so many injuries it cost us games that cost us home field advantage in the playoffs to where, who knows how that would have transpired. We can't use injuries as an excuse, but the Buffalo Bills have not done well with back up players that can literally replace a starter. Most teams can't do this, but it seems even worse for the Bills. The drop off from number one, to number three, to number five, to guy off the couch is drastic in my opinion. We should get drastically bigger. We had way too many soft tissue injuries this year. I am not saying guys should be crushing it in the weightroom all off season. They should be. But get healthy first. Take health, fitness, recovery seriously and be better. Not saying guys don't do this, but maybe it needs to be addressed more.

So, while compiling this blog or essay, whatever you want to call these things I do, it occurred to me that much of the issues with the team last season that were mentioned in that writing are exactly the same as they are now. If I were the owner of the Buffalo Bills and that data was presented to me, I would have pushed the red button too. I really like our coach. I think what he has done for Buffalo, both the city and the team cannot be measured like this. He didn't do it all by himself but he did have a huge part in all this. I can appreciate and still criticize his decision making. I would have fired Sean McDermott after the Kansas City loss. The 13-second game. In my opinion he never really broke down the decision-making process about how the team handled that situationally. He never did. That to me was enough. Accountability aside, he never really owned that one and as the coach he also never really learned that lesson. This stuff at the end of big games has chased him down every year. I think the timing is really bad, but I also get it. It's a gamble but so is everything else.

If I always complain about something its clichés. I hate clichés. I have always said this crazy stuff happens to this team because it is something I like. Anything I like, turns to trash. Kidding but sort of not kidding. It's been like that my whole life. I will find something that I think I can just love and be into, whatever the thing, it, them is, it doesn't matter. Whatever the thing I am into is, I can love it, it can be so great and then nose dive or a nuke goes off. An anvil falls on it. Murphy's Law happens. So, we close this chapter of the Buffalo Bills. We start again in about two months and the crazy circus starts all over again with the combine then the draft. New coaches, new toys, new players, new stadium. I am ready to see the resolve...

Fight on, my men,” Sir Andrew Said “A little I'm hurt but not yet slain. “I'll just lie down and bleed a while, “And then I'll rise and Fight again.

Still my team.  
We will heal.  
We will plan.  
We will build.  
We will fight again...  
Go BILLS...

...(*a phrase now adapted to mean whatever you want it to mean, in the moment*)...

Buffalo Bills 2025-2026 Season

by David-Angelo Mineo

2/3/2026

3,118 Words