
Subject: Pundit power rankings for Week 2: Chiefs break the top 10

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The Chiefs made big strides in the Week 2 Pundit Power Rankings -- but before we get to that Womens Cameron Erving Jersey , a quick note about last week.As you may recall, the MMQB Power Rankings weren't yet available when we published the pundit rankings last Tuesday.We expected them to favor the Chiefs a bit more than some of the others since we knew that two MMQB writers had predicted the Chiefs will win the Super Bowl this season.Well... we were right.And wrong.When it came out on Wednesday, the MMQB poll ranked the Chiefs at number 12 going into Week 1 -- which was indeed a bit higher than most other pundit polls.But here's where it gets interesting: the MMQB poll listed the highest and lowest rankings submitted for each team, which revealed that the Chiefs received no first-place votes.Did Robert Klemko and Mitch Goldich -- the two writers who picked the Chiefs to win the Super Bowl -- decide to opt for an edgy pick in the season preview but dial that back when they made their secret votes in the poll?Or do they think the Chiefs won't be the best NFL team at the end of the season but will win the Super Bowl anyway?It's hard to say.But we thought it was interesting.So here's the Week 2 roundup and aggregation of our selected Pundit Power Rankings.Across the board, the Chiefs rose five spots from last week, landing in seventh place.That's tops in the AFC West, and second only to the Jacksonville Jaguars and New England Patriots in the AFC.Pundit Power Rankings for Week 2Chiefs AFC West Teams Other AFC TeamsNote: When the MMQB rankings were added into the calculations after last week's publication, the Chiefs went from number 14 to number 12 in last week's rankings.Among the pundits, CBS Sports' Pete Prisco was the most impressed by the Chiefs win in Los Angeles, bumping them up nine spots in his rankings.The MMQB writers and Yahoo's Frank Schwab gave the least credit -- but then again, both had rated the Chiefs higher than most others going into Week 1.So we end up with a general consensus among the pundits that the Chiefs deserve to be in the top 10 -- and the Chargers do not.Here's what the pundits had to say about the Kansas City Chiefs this week:ESPN (6th from 14th)NFL.com (Elliot Harrison - 11th from 17th)SBNation (Rebecca Toback - 7th from 14th)Sporting News (Vinnie Iyer - 8th from 16th)Yahoo! Sports (Frank Schwab - 7th from 12th)CBS Sports (Pete Prisco - 8th from 17th)So now the Chiefs head to Pittsburgh to face the Steelers on Sunday.What will the pundits say if the Chiefs beat the Steelers?What will they say if they lose?We'll lay it all out for you next Tuesday.And remember... starting next Wednesday on Arrowhead Pride, we'll start combining what the pundits say with what the number-crunchers say -- to give you True Power Rankings!Three offensive players that need to step up for the Chiefs in 2018 The Kansas City Chiefs have a tall order before them.In 2017, quarterback Alex Smith had what was -- by most metrics -- his finest season as a pro Authentic Kareem Hunt Jersey , finally realizing the potential he had carried with him since being selected with the first overall pick in the 2005 NFL draft.With Smith at the helm -- and Kareem Hunt unexpectedly emerging as the top rusher in the league -- the Chiefs gained more than 6,000 yards and scored 415 points.This was arguably the team's best offensive performance since Dick Vermeil was Chiefs head coach in the mid-2000s.In normal circumstances, an NFL team would reward Smith with a long-term contract, and hope they could keep the lightning in the bottle for a few more seasons.But hardly any of the circumstances of Smith's long career -- now entering its 14th season -- can reasonably be described as normal.And waiting in the wings was quarterback Patrick Mahomes, the Chiefs' 2017 first-round pick.So now, Smith is with the Washington Redskins, and the Chiefs hope that they can repeat 2017's offensive performance with a quarterback who has exactly one regular-season start under his belt, and a running back whom many pundits are already declaring a likely candidate for a sophomore slump

in 2018. Normally, we wouldn't worry much about matching 2017's offensive production. The Chiefs, after all, have been to the playoffs in four of their five seasons under head coach Andy Reid -- and in two of those seasons, the Chiefs offense could only have been described as average. Under defensive coordinator Bob Sutton -- not to mention special teams coordinator Dave Toub -- the Chiefs offense has tended to face shorter fields and fewer opponent points to overcome than most NFL teams, which has enabled Reid to do more with less on the offensive side of the ball. But in 2017 Authentic Mitch Morse Jersey , it was the defense's turn to be average. The unit gave up 339 points, which ranked just 15th in the league. Coupled with what could be charitably be described as lackluster performances by the Chiefs defensive starters in three preseason games -- and uncertainty in the defensive secondary -- this has resulted in what could uncharitably be described as sheer sky-is-falling panic among some Chiefs fans. It's possible, of course, that these fans are right: the defense has lost its way, and the offense is just going to have to take up the slack. Only the season will tell, of course, but I don't share their pessimism. With veterans like Kendall Fuller, Reggie Ragland, Anthony Hitchens, Xavier Williams now on the roster -- on paper, at least -- this defensive unit isn't likely to be worse than it was in 2017. And there's decent chance it could get itself back on the right track. But let's give these fans their due. Assuming the offense has to carry the load in 2018, which offensive players need to step up in order to maintain the Chiefs record of success? Running back Kareem Hunt Jay Biggerstaff-USA TODAY Sports Unfortunately, another big year from second-year pro Kareem Hunt isn't assured. I found five different articles claiming that Hunt could easily suffer a sophomore slump in 2018. But I'm not so sure. In the modern era -- that is <http://www.kansascitychiefsteamonline.com/laurent-duvernay-tardif-jersey> , since the 1970 merger -- there have been 21 running backs who, like Hunt, gained 1,300 yards or more in their NFL rookie seasons. And 13 of them -- almost two thirds -- rushed for at least 1,000 yards in their second season. One of them -- Edgerrin James -- won the NFL rushing title in each of his first two seasons. So it's not really that unreasonable to expect more big things from Hunt in 2018. And it's unquestionably true that the Chiefs will have to have a credible rushing threat to maximize Mahomes' effectiveness during his debut season as the starting quarterback. But Hunt -- despite his considerable skills -- won't be able to do it all himself, so... Left guard... uhhh... we don't know. Left guard has been a problem for the Chiefs during the Reid era. Players like Zach Fulton, Ben Grubbs and Mike McGlynn couldn't lock the position down. Last year's starter -- Bryan Witzmann -- while still on the roster at the time of this writing, does not seem to figure in as the starter for 2018. Going into training camp, left guard was seen as a position battle between third-year player Parker Ehinger and Cam Erving. Ehinger -- once thought the heir apparent at the position -- has seemed to fade away. But as our own Matt Stagner recently noted, Erving's play provides more questions than answers at the position. As Matt pointed out, Erving does appear to have the trust of the coaching staff -- which would, in theory, give him the inside track. But during the preseason Authentic Chris Conley Jersey , more than a few eyebrows have been raised by the play of Andrew Wylie, who entered the league as an undrafted free agent in 2017, and came to the Chiefs after stints with the Indianapolis Colts, Cleveland Browns and San Diego Chargers. In the preseason, Wylie has started at right guard while Laurent Duvernay-Tardif was recovering from a concussion. While our own Matt Lane sees potential in Wylie in 2019 and beyond, whether he ready to take on a starting role now remains in question. Stability at left guard -- which would allow Eric Fisher to concentrate more on his own left tackle position and remove the only substantial weakness left on the offensive front -- has been an elusive goal for the Chiefs. Solidifying the position would improve the effectiveness of the running game and allow Mahomes to develop into a true pocket passer more quickly -- helping protect the franchise from calamity. In short... we know the Chiefs left guard needs to step up in 2018. The Chiefs just need to

figure out who that is going to be. Wide receiver Sammy Watkins Photo by Brett Carlsen/Getty Images The fifth-year receiver -- who arrived in Kansas City after three years with the Buffalo Bills and a season with the Los Angeles Rams -- has made some impressive catches in public practices but has achieved very little in his preseason appearances. In fact, I wanted to include a photo of Watkins catching a pass during a Chiefs preseason game, but no such photo was available. Much has been written about Watkins in these pages. We've discussed his new hairstyle and his work ethic, We've written about how he is still learning the expanded role he will play in the Chiefs offense. We've prepared statistical analyses to determine how much he will contribute to the Chiefs in 2018. We've endeavored to keep Chiefs fans from panicking over his lack of production. Seriously... we've done all we can. None of it has worked. So now it's up to Watkins himself. It's not just that having a legitimate second wide receiver threat will open up the Chiefs passing game in ways we have never seen before. Nor is it just that Watkins is a talented, exciting receiver who will be fun to watch. It's that the Chiefs devoted a significant portion of their salary cap over the next few years to bring Watkins to Kansas City -- to the tune of a three year, \$48 million contract. Watkins needs to step up -- simply because that's what he's being paid to do.
