HOW SHOULD THE GIANTS HANDLE THE DEXTER LAWRENCE SITUATION?

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Dexter Lawrence wants out of New York.

The Giants' franchise defensive tackle and longest-tenured player, Lawrence requested a trade on Monday after two seasons of unsuccessful contract negotiations, per ESPN's Adam Schefter.

Schefter also reported that Lawrence would not participate in the beginning of the Giants offseason program, which began Tuesday.

The first question new head coach John Harbaugh was asked on Tuesday during a press conference before the start of the team's offseason program related to where things stand with Lawrence.

"We want Dexter here, and I believe Dexter wants to be here," Harbaugh said. "That's a good formula, but there's business involved."

There's no reason the Giants shouldn't want Lawrence back. It's true that the nose tackle is coming off of a down year by his standards, recording just a half-sack and setting a career-low in both combined and solo tackles. Still, Lawrence was the best interior defensive lineman on the Giants roster.

That became even more true when the Giants allowed rotational piece Rakeem Nuñez-Roches to walk in free agency, further weakening what was already one of the thinnest interior linemen rooms in the league.

Still, as Harbaugh alluded to, business is the main barrier between Lawrence suiting up in the middle of the Big Blue defense for another year.

Lawrence is currently the 12th highest paid tackle per year in the NFL at $22.5 million, according to Over The Cap. The highest paid tackle is Kansas City Chiefs tackle Chris Jones at $31,750,000. That's over $9 million more than Lawrence. The $90 million contract that Lawrence signed in 2023 had $60 million guaranteed, all of which has run out.

Lawrence remains one of the best interior pass rushers in the league. The Clemson product came in second on PFF's preseason list last season and came in 19th in pass rush win rate among interior linemen.

Lawrence may also have still been dealing with the residual effects of the left elbow injury that ended his 2024 season.

All that being considered, it makes sense that Lawrence is seeking to be paid as one of the top tackles in the league. However, for the Giants, the timing couldn't be worse.

The Giants are stuck between a rock and a hard place.

They essentially have two options: pay Lawrence, coming off a down year, or trade him with his value at its lowest point in four years.

The first option is the simplest, but it will require the Giants giving in to Lawrence's demands. The team would prefer Lawrence to instead play out the final two years, per Paul Schwartz of the New York Post.

The Giants do have the money for the top-of-the-market contract Lawrence is searching for. Though money for the current season is running low, the team will have $64 million in cap space for 2027 and over $200 million in 2028, according to Over The Cap. A new, backloaded contract with new guaranteed money would put two years of turmoil to rest.

The second option is a bit more complicated.

First, the acquiring team would have to give up both draft assets to the Giants and then give Lawrence a new deal. The free agency class at defensive tackle was light this year, meaning teams may be more willing to do so than in other years, but it's still a big ask.

Second, the makeup of the actual package is tough to project. While the Giants would likely require a first round draft pick plus more in any trade, teams may not be willing to bet that much on Lawrence rebounding to his pre-2025 production.

The package would likely fall somewhere between a pair of recent Dallas Cowboys moves. After the Cowboys gave up a 2026 first-round pick, a future second and Mazi Smith for Quinnen Williams at the 2025 trade deadline, they recouped some draft capital this offseason by shipping Osa Odighizuwa to San Francisco for a third-round pick.

Even if the Giants landed a first-round pick in a potential deal, they would be drafting a player with the hopes they can reach Lawrence's level. Despite the upcoming 2026-2027 season representing his eighth NFL campaign, Lawrence is still just 28 years old. The Giants would be hard pressed to find a player that will eventually match Lawrence's blend of age and production.

If the Giants did move from Lawrence, the best interior lineman left on the roster would be second-year player Darius Alexander. Alexander, who will be 26 this season, was a healthy scratch multiple times early last season.

Simply put, the Giants don't have the depth to move Lawrence, but do have the money to pay him. While it's likely the stalemate will last a while longer, the Giants would be wise to pay Lawrence before the relationship between the two parties becomes irreconcilable.



Dexter Lawrence of the New York Giants comes out of the tunnel before a game. Lawrence has requested a trade from the Giants, despite his impact for them. PHOTO COURTESY OF @BROBIBLE ON PINTEREST.