

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

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INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS TO COMPETE FOR A SPOT IN THE NFL INTERNATIONAL PLAYER PATHWAY PROGRAM

Nine athletes from eight countries will compete for a spot in the 2020 International Player Pathway Program, the NFL announced today.

Instituted in 2017, the program aims to provide elite international athletes the opportunity to compete at the NFL level, improve their skills, and ultimately earn a spot on an NFL roster.

The league has identified top athletes from eight countries that will compete for a place in the program. Given the program's success to date, the NFL widened its search for international talent, hosting a Combine in Germany this past October with players from 18 countries participating.

Isaac Alarcon (Mexico), Otavio Amorim (Brazil), David Bada (Germany), Leo Krafft (Norway), Boqiao Li (China), Chris Mulumba (Finland), Sandro Platzgummer (Austria), Antoni Podgorski (Poland) and Bernhard Seikovits (Austria) will begin training in the United States next month and will have the opportunity to showcase their talents to NFL club scouts in March in hopes of being signed as a free agent or being selected for a practice squad position for next season through the International Player Pathway Program.

One of the NFL's eight divisions, to be chosen at random, will receive the international players selected for the 2020 program should they not be signed to free agent contracts. At the conclusion of training camp, each player will be eligible for an international player practice squad exemption with his assigned team. This provides the assigned team an eleventh practice squad member who is ineligible to be activated during the season.

Players will train alongside NFL veterans and draft hopefuls in Florida.

"The International Player Pathway program is an important part of our ongoing efforts to grow the game globally and provide pathways for international players to make it to the NFL," said Damani Leech, NFL Chief Operating Officer of International. "We are excited to have players from around the world competing for a spot in the 2020 program, including eight players who were selected after participating in the International Combine in Germany this past October."

Players taking part in the program:

Player	Country	Current Team
Isaac Alarcon	Mexico	Tec Monterrey Borregos
Otavio Amorim	Brazil	Timbo-Rex
David Bada	Germany	Schwabisch Hall Unicorns
Leo Krafft	Norway	Eidsvoll 1814s
Boqiao Li	China	n/a
Chris Mulumba	Finland	n/a
Sandro Platzgummer	Austria	Swarco Raiders Tirol
Antoni Podgorski	Poland	Warsaw Mets
Bernhard Seikovits	Austria	Dacia Vienna Vikings

Notable International Player Pathway Program Participants Currently on NFL Rosters:

Moritz Böhringer, Tight End (Germany), Cincinnati Bengals

Currently in his second season as a member of the Cincinnati Bengals practice squad. In 2016, Böhringer was selected in the sixth round of the NFL Draft by the Minnesota Vikings, becoming the first player to be drafted directly from European football. He spent the 2016 season on the Vikings practice squad.

Jakob Johnson, Fullback (Germany), New England Patriots

Johnson began his football career during his youth in his hometown of Stuttgart, Germany. It was there where Johnson played for the Stuttgart Scorpions of the German Football League before moving to Jacksonville, Florida. He played one season of high school football in the United States and was recruited to continue his career at the University of Tennessee. Johnson returned to the Scorpions in 2018. He then assigned to the New England Patriots through the International Player Pathway Program. The Patriots signed Jakob Johnson to their active roster on September 21. During the season, teams can carry an International Pathway Program player as an extra 11th member of the practice squad, but because of the roster exemption, clubs cannot promote the player to the active roster during the season. In the case of Johnson, the Patriots elected to forgo that option and make him a regular member of their 10-man practice squad, which gave them the option of promoting him. Johnson's NFL debut came in a Week 3 win against the New York Jets. His first NFL start came the following week in Buffalo where he contributed as a lead blocker. In Week 5 he made his first career reception for five yards against the Washington Redskins.

Jordan Mailata, Tackle (Australia), Philadelphia Eagles

In 2017, Mailata participated in the International Player Pathway program and trained at IMG Academy. The Samoan-born Australian former professional rugby league player for the South Sydney Rabbitohs was then drafted in the seventh round of the 2018 NFL Draft by the Philadelphia Eagles (thereby making him ineligible for the International Player Pathway Program). Converted to football full-time early in 2018, he impressed NFL scouts at various workouts with his strength, footwork and athleticism, and continued his football journey with the Eagles during the 2018 season as the youngest player on their roster. He is currently on injured reserve.

Efe Obada, Defensive End (UK), Carolina Panthers

Obada was raised in London after arriving from the Netherlands at age 10. He signed as a free agent for the Dallas Cowboys in 2015 after playing only five games of amateur football with the London Warriors. He played in the preseason for the Cowboys and spent part of the 2015 season on the club's practice squad. He has since had spells on the rosters of the Kansas City Chiefs and Atlanta Falcons before joining the Carolina Panthers practice squad as part of the 2017 International Player Pathway Program. In 2018, Obada became the first player from the NFL International Pathway program to make a 53-man roster. In Week 3 against the Cincinnati Bengals, Obada played his first regular season game, earning NFC Defensive Player of the Week honors for his one-sack, one-interception performance. Obada has continued to make an impact with the Panthers. After recording eight total tackles (solo + assisted) in 2018, he has surpassed the mark with a total of 16 tackles through Week 13 in 2019.

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