

NFL NOTEBOOK

Manning, Giants agree to \$97 million deal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Eli Manning has agreed to a new six-year, \$97 million contract extension with the New York Giants that will make him the highest paid player in the NFL with an average salary of roughly \$15.3 million.

A person close to the talks who asked not to be identified said Manning is guaranteed \$35 million under the deal that will keep him with the Giants through the 2015 season. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal was not signed and had not

been announced.

There was a chance the deal could have been signed yesterday, but both sides wanted to review the contract, the person said.

Tom Condon, Manning's agent, was not immediately available for comment. Giants general manager Jerry Reese said he was hopeful that Manning's contract would be completed, adding it's always important to get the quarterback signed.

The deal would give Manning an average salary that is roughly \$200,000 higher than the one earned by cornerback Nnamdi

Asomugha of the Oakland Raiders, who agreed to a three-year, \$45.3 Manning's older brother, Peyton, earns an average of \$14.17 million annually with Indianapolis.

Goodell says no cuts for retirees

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell reassured retired players that their pensions and disability benefits would not be reduced in a labor dispute next year, refuting statements made by the NFL Players Association.

In a letter to the NFL Alumni Board of Directors yesterday,

Goodell wrote that claims made by the union, including NFLPA executive director DeMaurice Smith, that retired players have the potential to be affected next year "have no basis in fact."

Ex-Bengal signs with Arizona

Free-agent fullback Reagan Maui'a has signed a one-year contract with the Arizona Cardinals.

Financial terms of the agreement, announced yesterday, were not disclosed.

Maui'a started two games last season for the Cincinnati Bengals and was inactive for three others

after being claimed on waivers from Miami on Sept. 3.

Eagle arrested on drug charge

Philadelphia Eagles defensive end Juqua Parker was arrested on a marijuana possession charge early yesterday near the team's training camp in northeastern Pennsylvania. Police said Parker was a passenger in a vehicle stopped for a traffic violation at 12:33 a.m. Parker was carrying "a small amount of marijuana" and was taken to jail, police said. Parker was released after posting \$1,000 bail, a jail official said.

BENGALS TRAINING CAMP

- ▶ **Today's practice schedule:** One session, 3-5 p.m.
- ▶ **First exhibition game:** Aug. 14, at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
- ▶ **Season opener:** Sept. 13, vs. Denver, 1 p.m.

Spate of injuries leaving Bengals thin at tight end

By Joe Reedy
THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

GEORGETOWN, Ky. — Going into practice Monday morning, the Cincinnati Bengals had a wealth of depth at tight end.

Not anymore. First, Reggie Kelly, who suffered a ruptured left Achilles' tendon on Monday, had season-ending surgery yesterday. Then, Daniel Coats and Ben Utecht were injured during practice at Georgetown College.

Coats, in his third year, suffered a sprained ankle during the morning practice, but the scariest moment of camp so far came in the evening session.

During a full-speed drill, Utecht took an awkward shot from linebacker Darryl Blackstock and went down. Blackstock's helmet appeared to hit Utecht right above his facemask.

He was unconscious on the field for more than 10 minutes before being taken to a hospital in an ambulance. While Utecht was down, guard Andrew Whitworth and receiver Chad Ochocinco knelt and prayed.

"It's been a tough couple days," Whitworth said. "That position's getting picked on right now because we're doing a lot. You can't pick where the injuries are. They just happen."

Bengals public-relations director Jack Brennan said Utecht suffered a concussion, was conscious and had movement in his upper and lower body as he was taken to the hospital, where he was being kept for observation.

When the team comes out to practice at 3 p.m. today, the only healthy tight ends available will be two rookies, third-round pick Chase Coffman and undrafted free agent Darius Hill. Coats was on crutches and looks to be out for

awhile.

Coffman knows the challenge ahead of him.

"It does leave an opportunity for me to step up, make more plays and get more reps in practice and do the things that I need to be doing to be a great player," Coffman said after Kelly was injured. "I have to step up now a lot more, learn quicker and do a lot better."

Coffman has already made strides during the first week of camp and has impressed offensive coordinator Bob Bratkowski, but there remains a steep learning curve for someone not used to playing a traditional tight end role.

He has rarely lined up in formations with a hand on the ground. Coffman played receiver in high school and played tight end in a spread offense at Missouri, which mainly had him standing as a receiver.

"The offensive coaches comment that every day you see improvement," coach Marvin Lewis said. "It's kind of like riding a bike; the more you do it, the quicker it's going to come back to you. I thought (Coffman) did a good job of both hanging in there physically and being one of two guys for an entire practice."

With the Bengals thin at tight end, they'll look at bringing someone in the next few days. One possibility is 10-year veteran Bubba Franks, whom the Jets released last month.

"He was a very, very good player for a matter of time," Lewis said of Franks.

"That's something you may take a look at. The older guy and the workout situation and do your research and go from there."

After his surgery, Kelly was placed on injured reserve. Last year, the Bengals had 23 players go on IR.

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Many NFL refs earned stripes in arena league

By Jimmy Golen
ASSOCIATED PRESS

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — It's not just players such as Kurt Warner who used the Arena Football League as a steppingstone to the NFL. The indoor circuit also was a training ground for many referees on their way up, and a place for them to keep their skills sharp in the offseason after they got there.

The Arena League shut down this week, giving up after a year on the sidelines when it couldn't figure out a way to make money.

Players and executives throughout football lamented the demise of the 8-on-8 NFL offshoot that propelled Warner to the Super Bowl.

But the AFL also will be missed by referees, who used their time indoors to hone their skills and get discovered by NFL scouts.

"It's a shame," said Ed Camp, a lineman in his 10th year in the NFL. "They always say the more snaps you see, the better you're going to be. That was another opportunity."

Although football has never had a formal minor league for players, the NFL took over the Arena League's officiating program in 2001 so that referees, at least, would have a clearer path to the top.

An NFL spokesman could not immediately say how many of the league's officials had worked in the Arena League. But of the five officials in Foxborough yesterday for the New England Patriots' training camp, three had worked in the AFL or its offshoot, af2.

Umpire Paul King said the indoor league's shorter and narrower field, designed to fit into basketball and hockey arenas, made things move quickly — and the officials had to react.

"The speed of the game was beneficial for those quick reflexes you need on the field," said King, who was part of the crew at the Patriots' camp. "It was a great opportunity for officials."

NFL officiating is considered part-time work, and many of the men who wear stripes on Sundays are wearing pinstripes during the week as teachers, businessmen or priests. Some also

AFL suspends operations indefinitely

The Arena Football League has shut down, this time indefinitely.

The league, which previously called off play for the 2009 season but had said it planned to return in 2010, sent a terse, one-paragraph statement to its teams late Tuesday announcing that it had suspended operations.

The statement said the AFL's board had been "unable to reach any consensus on restructuring the league over the past eight months."

The 22-year-old indoor league, which includes the Columbus Destroyers, had lost its commissioner and two teams since the end of last season. It reached a new agreement with its players this year, but that wasn't sufficient to convince enough AFL owners that the league could return to profitability.

The AFL's board said "there are no other viable options available to the league right now."

The league is likely to file for Chapter 7 bankruptcy.

— Associated Press

keep busy by working college games or minor pro leagues such as NFL Europe, the AFL or af2.

King had worked in both the Arena League and NFL Europe, which closed its doors in 2007 after 16 years. He said he hadn't been on a field since December and it felt odd to have the spring off for the first time in a long time. On the other hand: "I got to see my family in the spring," he said.

The NFL officials at training camp yesterday noted that referees will still be able to come up through the ranks in college, though fewer games will mean fewer chances. King also said that college conferences have different expectations from officials than the NFL in terms of where to stand and what to watch for — not to mention the different rules they have to adjust to at each level.

BROWNS TRAINING CAMP

Edwards back; injury still a mystery Stallworth, commissioner meet, report says

Receiver Braylon Edwards was back on the field yesterday, after missing the first four days of practice because of an injury.

Edwards and coach Eric Mangini again declined to give details of the injury.

"Basically, I had already passed the physical with the exception of whatever that was," Edwards said. "I was trying to get that back to 100 percent. ... They gave me the green light, I passed the running test no problems, and now I'm here today."

In morning practice, Edwards ran deep routes multiple times, topping it off with a leaping grab that was picked off the helmet of cornerback Gerard Lawson in the end zone. In the afternoon session, he played little but had no dropped passes. In one-on-one drills, he beat Lawson again for a 60-yard touchdown catch.

Meanwhile, suspended receiver Donte Stallworth reportedly met in New York with NFL commissioner Roger Goodell.

Stallworth recently finished serving 24 days in jail for a manslaughter DUI conviction. He also reached an undisclosed settlement with family of the victim, 59-year-old Mario Reyes of Miami.

An NFL spokesman refused to confirm that the meeting took place or say when Goodell might reach a decision.

— From staff and wire reports

- ▶ **Today's practice schedule:** One session, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
- ▶ **First exhibition game:** Aug. 15, at Green Bay, 8 p.m.
- ▶ **Season opener:** Sept. 13, vs. Minnesota, 1 p.m.

RECEIVER

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to catch more than 95 passes after having none the previous season (in 2005 with the Rams, he played safety and made four interceptions). But over the past two seasons, he had just 79 receptions and one touchdown. Last year, he caught 18 passes.

"I haven't been banged up," Furrey said. "Last year was just an odd year for myself. I feel good and I feel like I have had a very blessed career, and I'm excited for this opportunity ... to help the Browns."

The Browns could use the help. Since last season, receiver Joe Jurevicius has retired, Donte Stallworth was suspended indefinitely for killing a pedestrian while driving drunk, and tight end Kellen Winslow was traded to Tampa Bay. With Braylon Edwards, the top returning receiver, not even practicing until yesterday, it left the Browns thin.

The Browns drafted two receivers in the second

round to help fill the ranks.

Coach Eric Mangini said Furrey, entering his seventh NFL season, can be a role model for rookies Brian Robiskie and Mohamed Massaquoi, as well as undrafted free agent Jordan Norwood.

"The group (of receivers) has worked well together since the time we've been together," Mangini said. "When you have guys like Mike Furrey in there who have quite a bit of experience and can help out, it's a nice fusion."

Mangini said Furrey is competing to start, but he has practiced mostly with the second and third teams.

"I'm just excited to be in Cleveland," Furrey said. "I'm excited to be in the NFL, and I'm excited to be in a training camp. A lot of people would love to be in this spot. Being home, it adds a little more excitement, but it's just an honor to be here."

"My role is to come to work every day and practice. There is no other better way to help guys out than to do it by example."

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Making plans for the weekend? Thursday's **Weekender** serves as a handy guide to what's going on around town.

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Local Clinic Opens
Columbus Doctors Treat Erectile Dysfunction

BY JEFF GOESTLER
Men's Health Consultant

Columbus • A team of local physicians are part of a new medical clinic that opened recently in Columbus, specializing in only one unique, niche area — men's sexual performance.

Erectile dysfunction and premature ejaculation have long been a problem for millions of men nationwide. In spite of recent medications such as Viagra, Levitra and Cialis, many men either are not helped by these medications or cannot take them due to medical conditions and adverse side effects.

The Ohio Male Performance Clinic employs several local physicians including Dr. Michael Kirwin, MD, and Dr. David Rath, MD. "We successfully help almost every patient we see here," according to Steven Zak, Clinic Director, "and we've treated men from as young as twenty-one to as old as eighty-nine. Men with diabetes, heart conditions, bypass surgery, high blood pressure, prostate problems and surgery, you name it and we've treated them. Regardless of age or medical condition, our results everyday are amazing."

All medications are FDA approved and no surgery is involved. "Our doctors can adjust the dosage for a man's performance to 45-minutes, an hour, 90-minutes or longer," according to Zak, "and we offer a simple guarantee: If you don't respond to our medication on the first visit, it's free."

With that guarantee, local patients have nothing to lose. Patients are assured of utmost privacy and professionalism with private waiting rooms and an all-male staff. Further information is available by calling (614) 538-2200. Out-of-towners can call Toll Free (800) 241-8440. Ohio Male Performance Clinic, 3802 Olentangy River Road, Columbus Ohio 43214.
www.ohiomaleclinic.com