

# No safety in Bengals secondary

## Signing of Williams puts Ndukwe's job security at risk

By Zach Swartz  
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

GEORGETOWN, Ky. — An oft-repeated phrase during any major sport's preseason is "Experience breeds competition."

That's the case at Cincinnati Bengals camp. The team signed five free agents with NFL experience in the offseason, none of whom has been in the league for fewer than seven years.

Safety Roy Williams is one of the imports, and he's among those vying for a starting job.

Williams, who was with the Dallas Cowboys the past seven seasons, has strengthened his new team's options at the safety position. In doing so, he has introduced some competition to the mix.

The battle for the starting spot is between Williams, who played in just three games last season before suffering a broken arm, and Chinedum Ndukwe, who had 64 tackles and one

interception in 11 starts for the Bengals.

Last year, Ndukwe, a 2003 Dublin Coffman graduate, and Chris Crocker split starts at strong safety, but Crocker now appears to be the odd man out. Williams is playing with the first-teamers in camp.

"They did a great job last year, and I'm just trying to add on and give them what I've learned over my years in the league," Williams said. "They get to learn every day, and they can take that on to the rest of their career."

With 477 tackles and 19 interceptions in 98 career games, Williams has more experience than Ndukwe. Coach Marvin Lewis says that importing veterans can threaten the job security of a team's young starters.

"They ought to (be threatened)," Lewis said. "It's professional football, and that's what it's all about. Nobody is guaranteed anything. This is play for pay." Ndukwe says he didn't

make a fuss after hearing that Williams was joining the team.

"I tried not to worry about it because all of those decisions are out of my hands," he said. "A lot of people come up to you and are like, 'What about Roy Williams?' But ... my approach hasn't changed. I'm just going about my business and taking care of me."

"I want to be the starter. There's no doubt in my mind. So I just go out and work hard in practice every day to get that spot."

But there exists a balance between working against someone for a starting job and working with him to improve all around. In the safeties' case, the 6-foot Williams has worked with the 6-2 Ndukwe on improving his fundamentals.

"We're all on the same team," Ndukwe said. "The more solid players we have on the field, the better we're going to be overall. But I want to be on the field." To do that, he may have

to go through Williams while working with him. A camaraderie always thrives within the battle for a position, Lewis said.

"(The older players) are not worried about, you know, 'I'm not going to help you or teach that rookie how to do this and how to do that because he'll eventually take my job,'" he said. "At some point, somebody out there is going to take your job anyway."

Williams has made a relatively easy transition to the Bengals. He is joining a defense headed by defensive coordinator Mike Zimmer, who held the same position with Dallas from 2000 to '06.

Lewis maintains that the safety job is still up for grabs. At that position, as at all others, it's about mentality, he said.

"Some people can't handle it," Lewis said. "But then, how can you handle Sunday afternoons? They're not going to handle Sunday afternoon if they're not going to handle the competition."

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## BENGALS TRAINING CAMP

### Veteran running back released

#### Watson two years removed from productive season

The Cincinnati Bengals waived veteran running back Kenny Watson and third-year fullback J.D. Runnels Jr.

Watson, an eight-year veteran, was slowed by a hamstring injury last season. He played in 10 games and gained 55 yards on 13 carries and caught three passes for 4 yards.

In 2007, he played in all 16 games and started five, rushing for 763 yards and scoring seven touchdowns. Runnels didn't see game action last season.

- Among changes on the Bengals' depth chart yesterday:
- Jeremi Johnson moved ahead of Fui Vakapuna at fullback.
  - Daniel Coats was listed as first-string tight end, with Ben Utecht No. 2.
  - Defensive tackle Jason Shirley has been moved to the offensive line and is the third-string left guard. Shirley was wearing No. 70 during practice.
  - At right defensive tackle, Tank Johnson was listed ahead of Pat Sims.

Joe Reedy | Cincinnati Enquirer

► **Today's practice schedule:** One session, 3-5 p.m.

► **First exhibition game:** 8 p.m. Friday at New Orleans

► **Season opener:** Sept. 13, vs. Denver, 1 p.m.

# Quinn showing ability to connect on deep throws

By Mary Kay Cabot  
THE PLAIN DEALER

BEREA, Ohio — Coaches dig the long ball, and Brady Quinn has been showing the Cleveland Browns that he can throw it with ease.

During Sunday's Brown-White scrimmage in Cleveland Browns Stadium, Quinn launched a 51-yard touchdown pass to speedster Lance Leggett on his opening play. During the first week of camp, Quinn aired it out plenty, including a deep pass in team drills to Leggett that the receiver bobbled and then hauled in at least 40 yards downfield.

It appears that the new coaching staff is testing Quinn's arm to make sure he can throw deep effectively, and he's been passing with flying colors.

"It's you guys who have been saying that (he can only dink and dunk)," Quinn said. "I've never shied away from throwing a deep ball. I just try to be smart with the football. I take what the defense gives me, and I'm not going to force a throw. (Sunday), we had a guy who got open downfield and that's the type of offense I like to run. We like to have ball control, control the clock, manage the game and make plays when they are there, but not force things. We're trying to play smart football, and that's the kind of football I like to play."

The good news for the coaching staff is that Quinn could've thrown longer to Leggett if he had to.

"I still had some more in the tank," Quinn said. "On a throw like that, when the guy beats (his man), you never want to overthrow him but you do want to give him a chance. You don't want to underthrow it, either, so I guess you're just trying to

put it on the money if you can."

Quinn said his grip feels even better now than it did before he underwent surgery in November to repair a broken finger.

"I don't know if they put a little something in there for me or what," he joked.

Quinn also came into camp about 8-10 pounds lighter than last season, at 230.

"I did a lot more running," he said. "When I was training down in Florida, we were running so much in the heat, it's just going to fall off."

After spending most of the offseason rehabbing in Berea, Quinn trained in Florida — and took a few players such as receiver Brian Robiskie and Leggett with him.

"Maybe that had something to do with our connection (Sunday)," Quinn said.

Meanwhile, coach Eric Mangini complimented Leggett, who was signed as an undrafted free agent out of the University of Miami last season and spent the year on the practice squad.

A nationally ranked track star at Miami, Leggett has dazzled fans and coaches with his speed.

"Lance lived in the meeting rooms when we first got here," Mangini said. "He was up every day. He wanted the information. He wanted the playbook. He wanted all those things, and he worked at it."

"It's good to see all that hard work translate into being able to make some plays. He's got good vertical speed. There are some things that he needs to improve on, in terms of route running and getting off the press and things like that, that we've been focusing on with all our receivers. But he responds to it. He's very coachable." mcabot@plaind.com

## NOTEBOOK

# Heat gets to Jenkins early

## Former Ohio State player has rude welcome to camp

FROM WIRE REPORTS

Malcolm Jenkins avoided drinking much water before his first New Orleans Saints practice, hoping that would help him make his mandated training-camp weight of 205 pounds.

The rookie weighed in at 204 yesterday, but whatever relief that small triumph provided soon gave way to the distress of heat exhaustion. Not long into practice in steamy Metairie, La., trainers took the former Ohio State player aside, pulled his shoulder pads off and poured water over him to cool him down.

He later returned to practice. "I've been down here and working out over at Tulane in the heat, trying to simulate things, but coming out the first day and throwing on the pads and helmet with a visor and everything, that adds another element to it," Jenkins said. "It's something I'll have to get used to."

Jenkins isn't the first player to succumb to the heat of a southern Louisiana summer day during training camp. He had an added disadvantage in that yesterday might have been the hottest day since camp began. The temperature was about 90 degrees and the humidity around 70 percent, combining for a heat index in excess of 100 degrees.

Making matters worse, Jenkins had to perform a little extra conditioning work in the form of 40 "up-downs" — drills in which players do a push-up, jump up on their feet and hit the ground for another push-up.

"I guess everybody on the defense did 40 up-downs on the first day of camp, so they wanted to make sure I got up to speed," he said.

Jenkins agreed to terms on a five-year contract Sunday, ending his 10-day holdout. He's expected to play in the Saints' exhibition opener Friday against the Cincinnati Bengals.

### Ex-Brown joins Lions

The Detroit Lions acted quickly to bolster their injury-depleted defensive line, signing veteran Shaun Smith, who was released by the Cleveland Browns only two days earlier.

Smith signed a one-year, \$1 million deal, helping the Lions fill a need after Jared Devries, a three-year starter, suffered a ruptured Achilles tendon. He will be out all season.

### Rams' receiving corps takes a hit

The St. Louis Rams will be without No. 1 receiver Donnie Avery for four to six weeks. The second-year player suffered an injured foot during a scrimmage last week.

When Torry Holt left as a free agent after last season, Avery became the Rams' top receiver. He had 53 catches for 674 yards as a rookie.

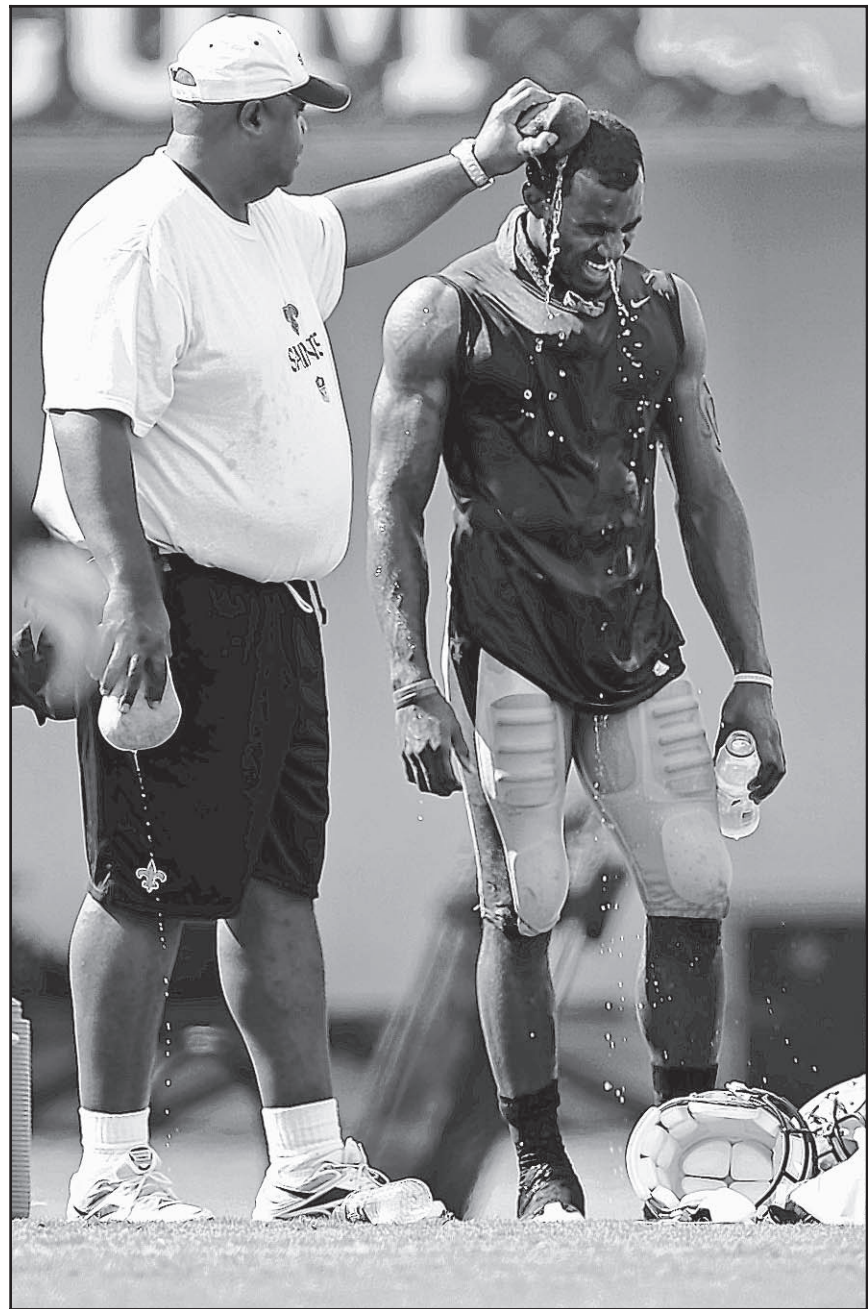
Rookie Brooks Foster, second-year player Keenan Burton and veterans Tim Carter, Laurent Robinson and Ronald Curry are among the nine receivers in camp fighting for jobs.

### Eagles' injuries mount

Two more Philadelphia Eagles players have gone down during an injury-filled training camp.

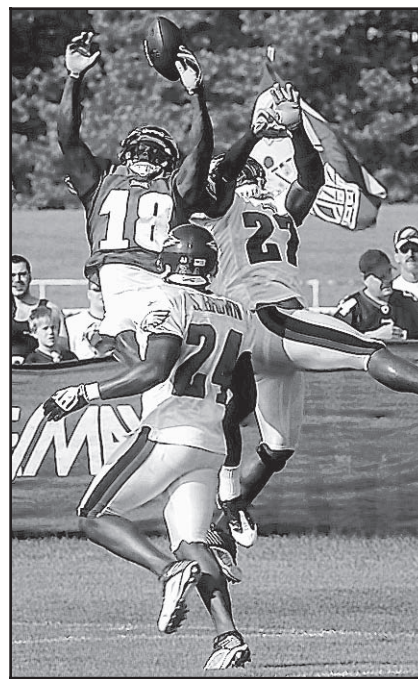
Backup quarterback Kevin Kolb suffered a sprained knee ligament, and former Pro Bowl defensive end Trent Cole left practice with a sprained shoulder.

Both players will miss Thursday's



BILL HABER | ASSOCIATED PRESS

Saints trainer Scottie Patton tries to cool down first-round draft pick Malcolm Jenkins, who was having trouble with the Louisiana heat.



JOE GILL | THE EXPRESS-TIMES (LEHIGH VALLEY, PA.)

Eagles defensive back Quintin Mikell, right, bats a pass away from rookie receiver Jeremy Maclin, the team's first-round pick, in Bethlehem, Pa.

exhibition opener against New England and are listed as day to day.

The Eagles lost starting middle linebacker Stewart Bradley and rookie tight end Cornelius Ingram for the season with knee injuries last week.

### Cowboys back still hurting

Dallas Cowboys running back Felix Jones missed the team's morning

practice to rest an injured toe that shortened his rookie season.

The speedy Jones was already out with a hamstring injury last season when he hurt the toe, forcing him onto injured reserve. He made several dazzling plays in the six games in which he played.

### Panthers hurting, too

Carolina Panthers receiver Steve Smith was carted to the locker room with a right shoulder injury, the latest blow to another key player in an injury-filled start to training camp.

X-rays were negative, but general manager Marty Hurney was uncertain how long the four-time Pro Bowl receiver would be out.

A week ago, the Panthers lost starting defensive tackle Maake Kemoatu for the season because of a torn Achilles tendon.

### Steelers sign ex-Buckeye

The Pittsburgh Steelers, thin at center because of two injuries, have signed former Ohio State lineman Alex Stepanovich.

The 6-foot-4, 296-pound Stepanovich was a fourth-round draft pick by the Arizona Cardinals in 2004 and spent three seasons with them before playing for Cincinnati in 2007 and Atlanta in 2008.

He has played in 46 NFL games, making 34 starts

Justin Hartwig has been bothered by a toe injury since training camp started July 31, and Darnell Stapleton is expected to be out for several weeks after left knee surgery.



## BROWNS TRAINING CAMP

### Not just a fashion statement

#### Quinn casts his vote in favor of brown pants

Brady Quinn came out strongly in favor of the brown pants after Sunday's scrimmage.

"These are awesome," he said. "I love 'em. First of all, they're just cool. They're different. And that stripe on the side (of the white pants) prohibits mobility. They're not as loose as these pants."

The Browns dusted off the brown pants last year for their preseason game against the New York Giants but shelved them again after getting drilled in the game. But there's been talk they might resurface this year.

They will if Quinn has any say in the matter.

— Mary Kay Cabot | The Plain Dealer

► **Today's practice schedule:** 8:45-10:45 a.m., 5:45-7:45 p.m.

► **First exhibition game:** Saturday, at Green Bay, 8 p.m.

► **Season opener:** Sept. 13, vs. Minnesota, 1 p.m.