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Mike Furrey file

CLEVELAND
BROWNS
RECEIVER

► Size: 6 feet,
195 pounds
► Age: 32
► Years pro: 7
(2003-06, St. Louis Rams;
2006-08, Detroit Lions)
► School: Northern Iowa (Hilliard
Davidson High School)

STATISTICS

► 2008: 18 receptions, 181 yards,
0 touchdowns
► Career: 198 receptions, 2,128
yards, 7 touchdowns

BROWNS

Winding path leads receiver back home

By Zach Swartz
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

BEREA, Ohio — Mike Furrey has a few reasons to be proud to be with the Cleveland Browns.

The 32-year-old receiver, signed as a free agent in May after three years with Detroit, has come full circle. He brings experience to a group of receivers lacking in it.

But what excites him the most is not leaving the only NFL team to go 0-16, it's being back in Ohio, his home state.

Furrey is a 1995 graduate of Hilliard Davidson, but with his family from Galion, about 95 miles southwest of Cleveland, he said he didn't have much choice but to be a Browns fan.

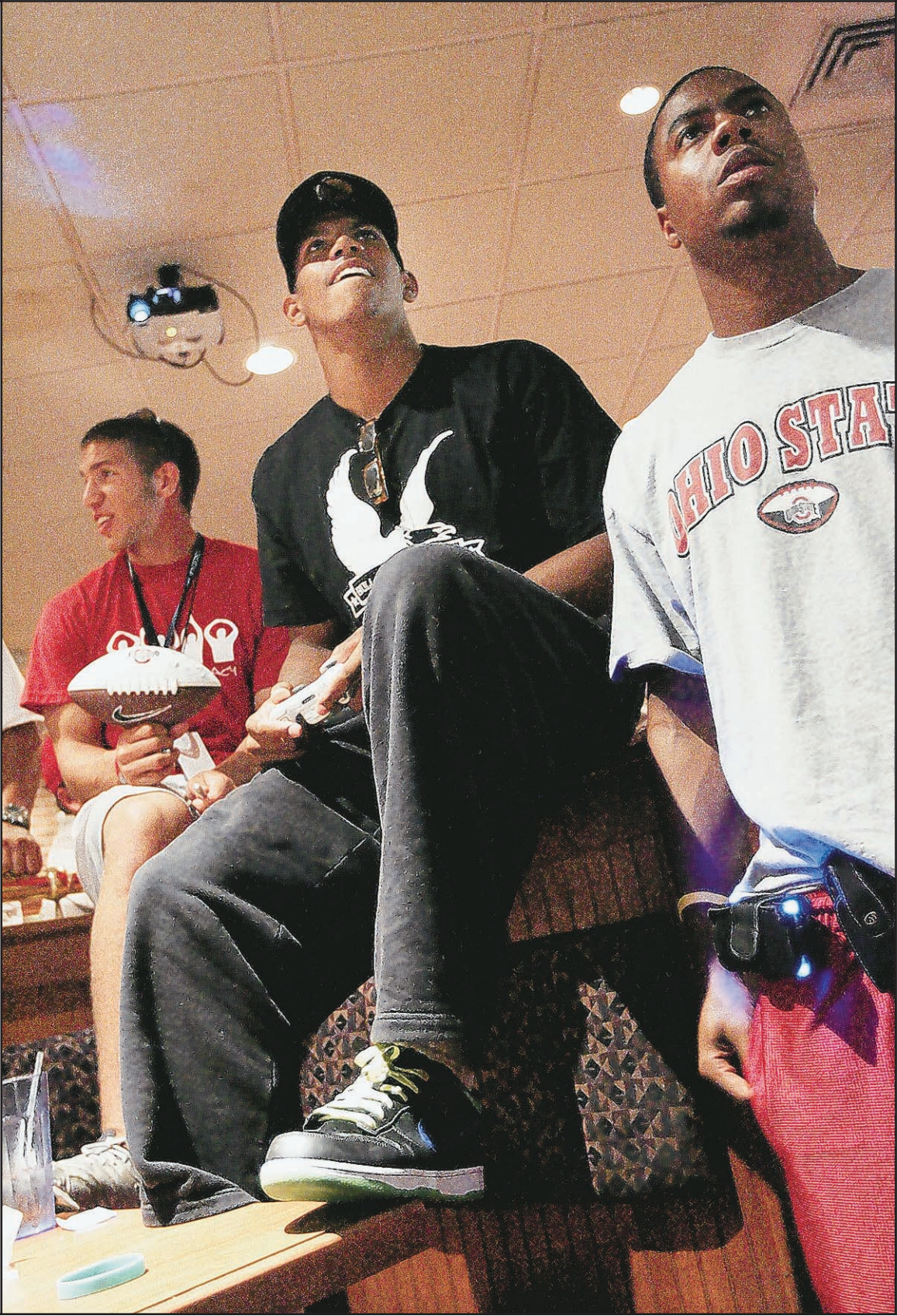
"Growing up two hours from here, you're right in the middle of the Browns and Bengals," Furrey said. "It's pretty neat to be home and to play for a team that you read about all the time in the paper and grew up watching on the TV. It's very exciting and humbling at the same time."

His path to the Browns — and to the NFL — was a winding one. After high school, he spent a year at Ohio State as a walk-on, then transferred to Division I-AA Northern Iowa. He graduated in 1999 after playing for three seasons and finishing second on the school's all-time receptions list.

The 6-foot, 195-pound receiver, who also played safety and returned punts, was signed by the Indianapolis Colts as an undrafted free agent in 2000 but did not play. After one year in the XFL and two in the Arena Football League, he signed with the St. Louis Rams in 2003.

In 2006 with the Lions, he became the first NFL nonrookie

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Terrelle Pryor shows his video-game skills while helping the Charcot-Marie-Tooth Association. OSU teammate Andre Amos, right, was among the teammates who joined the quarterback at the event.

Pryor, Buckeyes fight to sack rare disease

OSU players' video-game tournament raises money for research into disease that afflicts QB's father

By Ken Gordon
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Craig Pryor was a young father, only 21 years old, when he began experiencing the symptoms of Charcot-Marie-Tooth disorder, a rare neurological disease.

Patients usually notice a weakening of their feet and ankles, making it difficult to walk. Later, hands can become affected, as well. It's normally not fatal, but it can be debilitating.

By the time one of his sons, Ter-

relle, signed to play football with Ohio State, Craig Pryor was in a wheelchair.

It was never a big deal in their household, Terrelle said, just a fact of life.

"It's take it or leave it, God made him like that," the sophomore quarterback said. "My dad doesn't want any help doing anything. He's a tough guy."

Yesterday, whether he wanted it or not, Craig Pryor got some help.

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

OCC goes to backup schedule

South-Western's rejected levy costs league four teams

By Steve Blackledge
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Commissioner Dave Cecutti waited for the worst along with other Ohio Capital Conference administrators Tuesday night.

When voters rejected a property tax that was a last-ditch effort to save sports and other extracurricular activities at South-Western City Schools, they moved on with a contingency plan they began discussing months ago.

"The ideal scenario for all of us would have been for the levy to pass," Cecutti said, "but the reality is you have to anticipate the best and prepare for the worst. We're ready to move on to Plan B."

The most pressing matter is completing a football schedule that excludes the four South-Western high schools: Grove City, Central Crossing, Franklin Heights and Westland.

To do so, the OCC will replace conference games against the South-Western schools with games between teams among the 28 remaining schools.

Principals and athletic administrators have mostly agreed on the details, but during their last meeting June 23, they opted to wait for the vote before completing it. They'll now meet Friday.

Cecutti said only the logistics in week eight are being discussed. His contingency plan had Olentangy Orange playing at Upper Arlington and Worthington Kilbourne playing at Gahanna.

Because of their proximity, Kilbourne and Orange had hoped to meet. Also, Kilbourne and UA are already scheduled to play in week five, so they don't want to meet twice. And

"When you put everything in perspective, we all should be thankful we have opponents for those open dates."

JUSTIN SANFORD
Gahanna athletic director

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COMMENTARY

Fans, sponsors falling for Mickelson

AKRON — Middle America loves Phil Mickelson, the Hallmark card of golf. Flip him open to find a sappy sentimentalism that connects with the humanity inside us. And which makes mocking him to be in increasingly poor taste.

Certainly, Mickelson has his detractors, those who dismiss his aw-shucks smile and eagerness to sign autographs as so much phony-baloney. But those detractors are thinning, or are muted for the moment, because Mickelson's wife, Amy, and his mother, Mary, are being treated for breast cancer. And cracking on cancer victims and their loved ones remains off-limits in a culture where not much of anything else is taboo.

But it's more than Amy's distress that has propelled Mickelson into the No. 2 spot behind Tiger Woods



ROB OLLER



Phil Mickelson's popularity is due in part to a willingness to sign every autograph he can, and to look the fan in the eye and say "thanks."

on the *Sports Illustrated* list of 50 top-earning American athletes in salary, winnings, endorsements and appearance fees (ahead of such stars as No. 3 LeBron James, No. 5 Shaquille O'Neal and No. 10 Peyton Manning).

Simply put, Mickelson touches people. And corporate America likes its pitchmen to connect with the audience, which explains why he collects nearly \$47 million

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Pit worker caught fire, kept his cool

Burned in accident last year, he's back at work

By Tim May
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

When Simon Pagenaud pulls his Acura prototype car in for a pit stop Saturday at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, crewman Keith Jones will have his hand on the "dead man" lever.

"I know that cracks you up," Jones said.

That's only because Jones, 48, can laugh about it, too. The last time he was in the pits for an American LeMans Series race at Mid-Ohio, he was on fire.

Pagenaud had pulled in for service last year while leading in just the second race of de Ferran Motorsports' existence. Jones, a 20-year crewman in IndyCar and sports car racing, had been one of the team's key hires. One reason was because he kept his cool, and that was going well for Jones, the fueler.

But as he tugged to pull the

IndyCar Series/ American LeMans Series

- When: Friday-Sunday
- Where: Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, Lexington, Ohio
- Tickets: available at the gate

nozzle from the fuel inlet, it stuck. Unaware, Pagenaud took off while Jones chased in vain and was knocked to the pavement. The hose ripped from the nozzle and gasoline spewed, including onto Jones.

"I rolled over and sat up. I saw the fuel ignite, and I had just enough time to think, 'Oh, —, this ain't gonna be good,'" Jones said. "Then there was this big 'kah-woompf!'"

He was in the midst of a conflagration as his crew and men from other teams moved quickly to try

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