

BENGALS

Already, a serious injury

Achilles' rupture ends season for tight end Kelly

By Joe Reedy
CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

GEORGETOWN, Ky. — Just when the Cincinnati Bengals were starting to feel good about their offensive line, the first test of adversity arrived via injury.

Tight end Reggie Kelly suffered a ruptured left Achilles' tendon yesterday and will have surgery Wednesday. The team said it didn't know the extent of Kelly's injury, but the usual recovery time is six months.

Kelly left yesterday morning's practice at Georgetown College. He was put on crutches and had the leg wrapped in ice.

It's the last thing the Bengals wanted to see, especially considering the run of injuries last season. When the season ended, 23 players had been on the injured reserve list and only five started all 16 games.

This marks the first major injury for Kelly, who is beginning his 11th season. The only other injury that caused him to miss multiple games came in 2003, when a foot injury kept him out of four games.

Kelly, who was third on the team in receiving last



BENGALS TRAINING CAMP

Palmer back at practice

Quarterback recovers from bout with bronchitis

Quarterback Carson Palmer was back on the practice field yesterday morning after missing two practices during the weekend and being quarantined in his dorm room because of bronchitis.

"I'm feeling better," Palmer said. "They say I'm not contagious anymore and can be around my teammates. It's just good to be ... working again."

Palmer spent the weekend resting and taking antibiotics but was still coughing occasionally at practice. He said that he got bronchitis from his family. His wife, Shaelyn, had it and then passed it on to their twins, who then passed it on to Palmer.

— Cincinnati Enquirer

- **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.

year with 31 receptions for 207 yards, was the starting tight end because of his strength as a blocker. He is known to be an excellent run blocker and often has an advantage over smaller defensive ends.

With first-round pick Andre Smith moved to right tackle, it was thought that the transition there would be easier because of guard Bobbie Williams and Kelly alongside him.

Now things are even more unsettled. Besides Kelly's

injury, Smith is unsigned through four days of camp, with Anthony Collins taking his spot.

"That's why we got more guys in the position, because if somebody goes down we have to keep this machine rolling," Williams said. "Reggie's a huge part to this offense. He's a key blocker, and he can catch the ball. If we lose him it's going to be a blow, but we'll manage."

With Kelly out, Ben Utecht becomes the favorite to

move up to the starting spot. The five-year veteran signed as a restricted free agent with the Bengals last year but struggled. He missed six games because of injury and had a tough time bouncing back after a hard hit against Tennessee in Week 2, which resulted in a chest injury. He ended up with 16 receptions for 123 yards.

Utecht is known for his intelligence and having excellent hands, but blocking is not one of his strengths. He is better blocking on the move instead of in stand-up situations.

Another player figuring to get more attention is rookie Chase Coffman. The third-round pick from Missouri is the all-time NCAA receptions leader among tight ends with 247. But because he played in a spread formation, his blocking skills are unknown. He missed most of the organized team activities in May because of a stress fracture but took part in minicamp.

A dark horse might be Daniel Coats, who is back at his natural position. The third-year player saw most of his action last year at fullback after season-ending injuries to Jeremi Johnson and Reagan Maui'a.

Long snapper Brad St. Louis can also play tight end, and college free agent Darius Hill is also in camp. jreed@enquirer.com

Boeckman still has NFL hopes

Todd Boeckman can't remember the last time he wasn't in training camp this time of year.

"It's probably been 10 years," the former Ohio State quarterback said. "Maybe more than that, if you count seventh and eighth grade."

The Jacksonville Jaguars released Boeckman on Friday, just two days before they opened camp.

It was the latest disappointment he has endured in the past year. After being named first-team All-Big Ten in 2007, the fifth-year senior was benched in favor of freshman Terrelle Pryor after three games last fall.

Boeckman went undrafted in April but landed a tryout with the Cincinnati Bengals. He never heard back from them. The Jag-

uars signed him in June, and it was a tough blow to be cut just as he was getting ready to head to Florida.

"I've had a lot of ups and downs," Boeckman said. "I don't know even know the full reason (Jacksonville cut him). I thought I'd at least get a shot in camp."

Boeckman lives in Columbus and will continue working out in case he does get a call. He hasn't had time to formulate a backup plan, such as playing in another pro league or getting a job outside football.

"There are a lot of unknowns now," he said, adding that he hopes teams will need a quarterback at some point this preseason. "I just have to wait and see if anything pops up."

— Ken Gordon

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BROWNS TRAINING CAMP

Turning the corners

Wright injured; Hood works with first team

Cornerback Eric Wright suffered what appeared to be a hamstring injury during the morning session yesterday, and he went to the locker room with his leg wrapped in ice.

Seven-year pro Rod Hood, who signed as a free agent from Arizona, was rotating in with the first team, starting alongside Wright in place of Brandon McDonald. Browns coach Eric Mangini said Hood will continue to rotate in with the starters to find the best combination.

Hood said he appreciates the opportunity to win a starting job, something he had the past two seasons with the Cardinals.

"(Mangini) is a guy of his word," Hood said. "He's giving everybody equal opportunity to come in and compete for a position."

— Mary Kay Cabot | The Plain Dealer

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

RECEIVERS

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second-round draft picks.

"It is early in the camp right now, and we're just trying to compete," Robiskie said. "We're not sure what we're going to be yet, but we're just excited about being out here and getting better and competing every day."

After just three days of camp, it is too early to say what the rookies' role — and that of the receivers as a whole — will be, but first-year coach Eric Mangini said he has been impressed with how Robiskie and Massaquoi have begun.

"(Robiskie) has done a good job since he's gotten back," he said. "The two young guys are kind of going through this experience together. Each day helps the pluses grow on both those guys."

"They work hard. Both of them work hard in the classroom and on the field, and that's going to serve them well."

The Browns, who have 15 rookies in camp, have seven receivers with less than two years' experience in the NFL. Edwards is the unquestioned leader, but Robiskie and Massaquoi are vying to be No. 2.

With the loss of Winslow and the question marks surrounding Heiden, who said he "can't even begin to speculate" about the func-

tion of the tight end this season, an increased role for the receivers would not be surprising.

"Every position wants to be one of the key groups," Massaquoi said. "We are just working hard to make sure we can add the perfect piece to the puzzle. Right now I'm just working hard, but I'm not sure how it's going to translate."

Massaquoi and Robiskie were the last of the Browns' rookies to sign contracts. Massaquoi signed a week ago and Robiskie on Thursday.

Robiskie, 6 feet 3 and 209 pounds, said he hopes to be a major part of the offense but knows that the only thing he can do is work and wait.

"I'm going to do whatever they ask me to do, and that is the mind-set that I've got to come up to this camp with," Robiskie said.

"Whether they need me to play inside, outside or special teams, I'm going to do whatever I can to help this team win games."

At camp yesterday, Robiskie spent most of his time on the outside in 11-on-11 drills but also did some work on special teams. In the final two-minute drill, he ran with quarterback Brady Quinn's offense and caught one pass.

Massaquoi, 6 feet 2 and 207 pounds, worked with Quinn and Derek Anderson, also on the outside. zswartz@dispatch.com

NOTEBOOK

Burress indicted by grand jury

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former New York Giants star receiver Plaxico Burress was indicted by a grand jury on weapons charges for shooting himself in the thigh at a Manhattan nightclub and could face a minimum prison sentence of 3½ years if convicted, prosecutors announced yesterday.

The indictment charges Burress, 31, with two counts of criminal possession of a weapon and one count of reckless endangerment, Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau said.

Giants linebacker Antonio Pierce, who was with Burress in the club and drove him

to the hospital, was not indicted. Burress' lawyer, Benjamin Brafman, said he was disappointed but not surprised by the indictment, which came after Burress testified before the grand jury and expressed remorse for the Nov. 29 incident.

"When you have the mayor and the district attorney both publicly demanding a maximum prison sentence, it was perhaps too much to hope for the grand jury to conduct a sympathetic review of the unique facts of this sad case," Brafman said in a statement.

Besides Pierce, the panel also did not indict the nightclub security guard who carried the gun to Pierce's car, or the hospital staff members who failed to notify police that Burress had been shot.

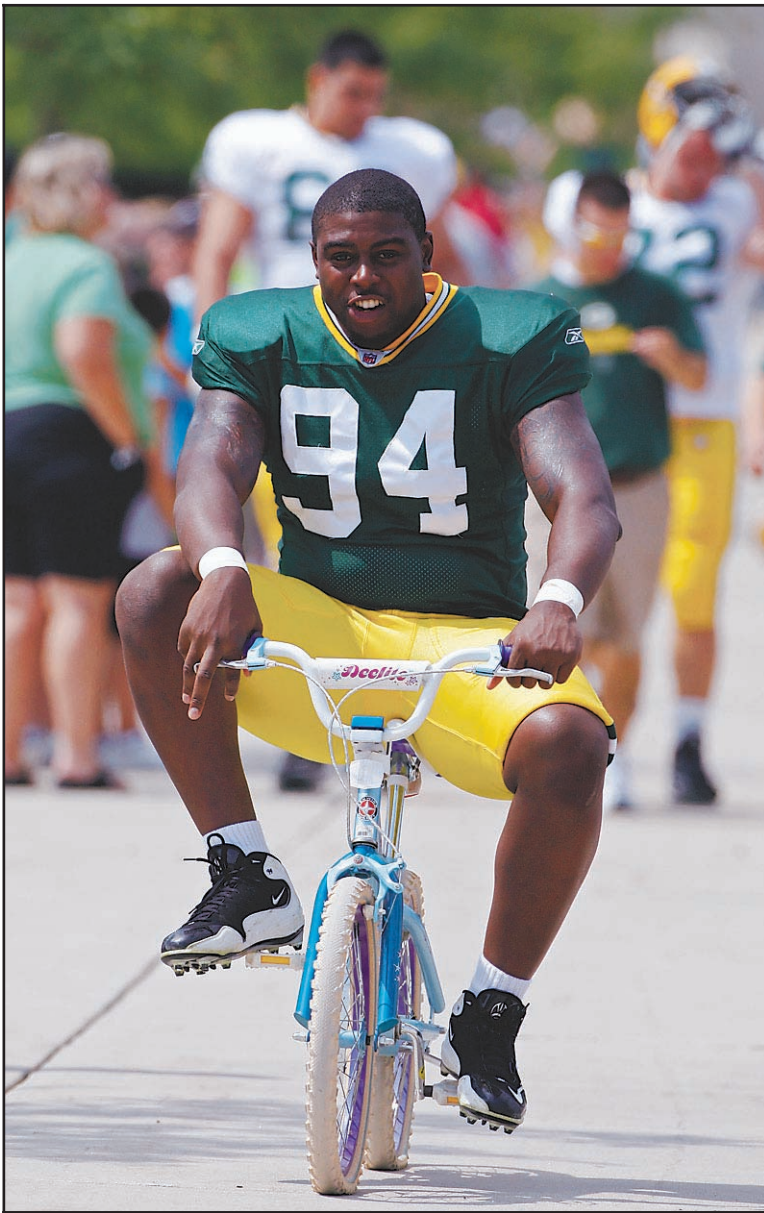
Giants president John Mara said the team was pleased that Pierce was not indicted.

"We said last week we felt strongly that Antonio's actions did not warrant criminal charges, and obviously the grand jury ... felt the same way," he said.

Burress was at the nightclub when a gun tucked into his waistband slipped down his leg and fired, shooting him in the right thigh. Assistant District Attorney John Wolfstaetter said the bullet that hit Burress narrowly missed a nearby nightclub security guard.

The gun was not licensed in New York or in New Jersey, where Burress lived, prosecutors said. Burress' license to carry a concealed weapon in the state of Florida had expired in May 2008.

Assistant District Attorney Mark Dwyer said it is standard policy to request a two-year sentence as part of a plea bargain on such serious charges.



MORRY GASH | ASSOCIATED PRESS

Packers rookie defensive end Jarius Wynn pedals his way to training camp yesterday.

Vick gala postponed

Michael Vick's hometown celebration was postponed because of a scheduling conflict, an organizer said.

The "Michael Vick Community Celebration" in Newport News, Va., scheduled for Saturday, will be held later because Vick has an event that day in Atlanta with the Humane Society of the United States.

Notable

Buffalo Bills running back Marshawn Lynch's three-game suspension for violating the NFL's personal-conduct policy will stand.

Lynch pleaded guilty in March to a misdemeanor gun charge in Los Angeles.

• A sore knee kept Washington Redskins defensive lineman Albert Haynesworth from practice for a second straight day.

"It's not serious," said Haynesworth, who signed a free-agent contract in the offseason that includes an NFL-record \$41 million in guaranteed money.

• Carolina Panthers starting defensive tackle Maake Kemoeatu is likely lost for the season because of a torn right Achilles tendon.


Kemoeatu was injured minutes into the opening training-camp practice yesterday while running during a position drill.


• The Denver Broncos signed first-round pick Robert Ayers, leaving Knowshon Moreno, the team's top pick, as the only unsigned player from their 10-member draft class.

Ayers, a defensive end out of Tennessee, was taken

with the 18th pick, six behind Moreno.

• Philadelphia Eagles first-round pick Jeremy Maclin, a receiver from Missouri, agreed to an undisclosed five-year contract.




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