

Jets Trying to Get Line On Linebacking Corps

By Greg Logan

The magnitude of the numbers is numbing. The Jets' injury-torn defense was shredded for 183 points in the five-game collapse at the end of last season. Miami and Pittsburgh each scored 45 points against the Jets, and Cincinnati added the final 52-point insult to the injuries. Defensive coordinator Bud Carson has to start picking up the pieces somewhere, and the logical place is linebacker.

Although former Pro Bowler Lance Mehl isn't expected to return until mid-October after major knee surgery, Carson appears to have more options than ever at linebacker since he installed the 3-4 defense in 1985. The first of a series of experiments that figures to last almost to the Sept. 13 season opener is being conducted during the four-day veterans minicamp this week at Hofstra.

Since the defensive line produced only 15½ sacks last season and will be without nose tackle Joe Klecko (knee surgery) until at least mid-November, the linebackers' ability to help the pass rush will be extremely important. "It's try-it-and-see with a lot of different things," veteran linebacker Bob Crable said. "We have to see how the pass rush looks. I think they have a lot of ideas in mind, but nothing is etched in stone." Least of all, Crable's position.

In his first full season since recovering from knee surgery, Crable proved himself an effective blitzer from the right outside linebacker position, totaling 3½ sacks and numerous pressures. But he has been shifted to the left outside position, where he would line up against the strong side of the offense and be-

more responsible for stopping the run. It's also possible he may begin the season at the inside right position until Mehl returns.

"I'd like to be set either inside or outside," Crable said. "It's a different style and temperament. But moving from side to side is no problem."

Kevin McArthur, who was cut in training camp and re-signed after Mehl went down, finished the season at the right inside spot but will be tried at Crable's former right outside post. For the moment, second-year backup Troy Benson and free-agent Jay Brophy, who previously started for Miami, are working at right inside linebacker. The only certainty is that Kyle Clifton, who led the Jets in tackles for the second straight season, is the left inside starter.

Veterans Matt Monger and Rusty Guilbeau, who finished as the left outside starter last season but is not attending minicamp because he is unsigned, are listed behind McArthur at right outside linebacker. Rogers Alexander, a fourth-round pick who was released last season, is behind Crable at left outside.

Then, there are the rookies. Second-round pick Alex Gordon, who will be tried at left outside, and third-rounder Onzy Elam, a possibility as a blitzer at right outside, have a chance to crack the lineup. Bob Timmer, an 11th-round pick, will line up inside.

Crable expressed caution about the ability of the rookies to have an immediate impact. "The scheme of the defense is difficult for a rookie to pick up," Crable said. "He's busy learning the system, and that's a lot of pressure for a young kid. We blitz people here and there; there's situation substitution. It's a lot to remember."

Iowa: Agent Paid Harmon

Combined News Services

Iowa City, Iowa—Ronnie Harmon, a Bayside High School graduate who is now a running back with the Buffalo Bills, is one of two former University of Iowa players who received payments from sports agent Norby Walters while playing football for the Hawkeyes in 1985, a university committee confirmed yesterday.

The report from a three-member committee identified the players only as "Student A" and "Student B." But at a news conference to release the report, committee member David Vernon identified Harmon as "Student A."

University president James O. Freedman organized the committee after published reports said Harmon received up to \$54,000 from Walters in 1984 and 1985.

The committee report said it uncovered money orders from Walters to the two players, with Harmon getting a total of \$1,000 in four payments and the other player \$575. Vernon said the committee could not find evidence of the rest of the money Walters says he paid Harmon.

Harmon reportedly dismissed Walters before signing with the Bills, and Walters is suing Harmon for breach of contract.

Gone West Wins Withers

Trainer Woody Stephens is convinced that Gotham Stakes winner Gone West would have played an important role in the Kentucky Derby had the colt been there. But owner James P. Mills, who is 79 and in poor health, chose not to fight the Churchill Downs crowd on Derby Day, deciding to await yesterday's \$115,200 Withers Stakes on opening day of the Belmont Park spring meeting. Mills has a box at Belmont and the crowd yesterday was about 120,000 short of Churchill Downs' 130,532 attendance Saturday.

Gone West wore no roses yesterday and earned substantially less than did the Derby winner, Alysheba. Nevertheless, he got the job done for his owner and the bettors who made him a 1-5 favorite in the 112th Withers. The colt by Mr. Prospector and Secrettame put away the previously unbeaten Pentelicus early and without great argument, then held off a mild bid by High Brite to win the Withers by a half-length under Eddie Maple. He ran a mile on the muddy main track in 1:36 2/5, coming from just off a moderate pace. "I thought he might have beat these horses a little easier," Stephens said.

Although the Withers often produces a Preakness prospect, Gone West is not likely to join the Triple Crown until the June 6 Belmont Stakes, which Stephens has won for five consecutive years. "I believe the [May 24] Peter Pan will be next," Stephens said. "That way, we stay here and don't have to ship."

The Withers, worth \$82,620 to the winner, including a Breeders' Cup premium, increases Gone

HORSE RACING NOTEBOOK

Paul Moran

West's career earnings to \$478,169.

Injured Ogygian is retired

Tartan Farm president John Nerud announced the retirement of Ogygian, a multiple-stakes-winning 4-year-old, shortly before yesterday's first race.

"We are retiring him because of injuries to his ankles and problems with his back," Nerud said. "He ran the first bad race of his life in the Bold Ruler [April 11] and we felt that the situation was not going to improve. It was time to stop."

Ogygian, who was being pointed toward the Metropolitan Handicap, won 7 of 10 starts and \$465,520.

Java Gold out of Belmont

Rokeby Stable's Java Gold, whose temperature was as high as 103 degrees Tuesday, no longer is a Belmont Stakes candidate, according to trainer Mack Miller. Java Gold, who won his two starts this season, also is suffering from a cough. "This wipes us out of everything," Miller said. "We'll see you in August."

Allumeuse bettors lose again

Queens Civil Court Judge Jocelyn Smith ruled yesterday that the New York Racing Association and the stewards at Saratoga acted correctly "as a matter of fact" in the Allumeuse incident Aug. 2.

Smith ruled that the NYRA and the stewards correctly followed the rules of racing after the incident, in which Allumeuse was disqualified wrongly and bettors were denied payoffs. Three previous suits also have been dismissed, with another pending.

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