



Green Bay Packers DE Johnny Jolly excused from mandatory minicamp

By Kareem Copeland •
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Green Bay Packers defensive end Johnny Jolly will not participate in mandatory minicamp next week, coach Mike McCarthy said Wednesday.

Additional information

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Even though Jolly signed a \$2.521 million restricted [free agent](#) tender earlier this week that mandates his attendance at minicamp, McCarthy decided to give him a free pass so he can focus on his upcoming criminal trial.

"There's a lot going on, and he needs to focus and make sure he has everything in line," McCarthy said. "These decisions that are going to be made legally will affect every aspect of his life, most importantly his personal life and then his professional life."

Jolly has not participated in the Packers' offseason program. He is due in court July 30 to face a felony drug possession charge — the same day players report for [training camp](#). He could miss all or parts of training camp and it's possible NFL commissioner Roger Goodell could suspend him.

Jolly played all 16 games in 2009 and posted 39 tackles as part of the No. 1 run defense in the NFL. [Defensive end](#) Ryan Pickett sympathized with his friend and teammate.

"I didn't know he wasn't coming, I'll probably see him this weekend," Pickett said after Wednesday's OTA practice. "He has more things going on than football. He's trying to get his life right."

"This stuff happened two years ago. Since then, Johnny's learned a lot. ... If this stuff doesn't cause you to change, what will?"

The Packers added youth along the line by drafting defensive ends Mike Neal and C.J. Wilson. Still, Pickett said the defense won't be the same without Jolly.

"We will not be better without him," Pickett said. "We definitely need him."

No competition for Crosby

The team has no plans to bring in another kicker to compete with Mason Crosby during training camp, McCarthy said.

Crosby was drafted in the sixth round in 2007 and was the first rookie in 22 years to lead the league in scoring. However, his field goal percentage dropped to a career-low 75 percent in 2009.

"We're committed to Mason," McCarthy said. "He's done a good job in the offseason. He's outstanding in the strength and conditioning aspect of it."

On the flip side, punters Tim Masthay and Chris Bryan are waging a close battle which probably won't be decided until McCarthy sees them perform in game action.

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"They have both done some very impressive things statistically through the workouts, through the practices," he said. "They both have a different dimension. They are different, obviously right-footed and left-footed.

"I definitely like the talent level of both the punters and we'll definitely go into training camp and let these guys slug it out."

Play of the day

Quarterback Aaron Rodgers threw an 11-yard **touchdown** strike to Jordy Nelson during a two-minute drill with 4 seconds remaining. Nelson pulled in the perfect dart just over the head of cornerback Josh Bell, who couldn't turn on the throw.

"Those are the types of things that are part of winning championships, the ability to make those plays and consistently make those throws," McCarthy said. "The defensive side of the room doesn't share that opinion right now, but they are definitely plays and situations that you can learn from."

Odds and ends

♦ Donald Driver, Nick Barnett, T.J. Lang, Spencer Havner, Will Blackmon, **Brett Swain** and Jason Spitz continued to sit because of injury, and McCarthy doesn't expect them to participate in the minicamp. He said the goal is to have them ready for training camp.

♦ Defensive end Cullen Jenkins was not in attendance. McCarthy called it a personal day.

♦ Bryan has been working as the holder for Crosby, but backup quarterback Matt Flynn has held the job in the past. The winner of the holding job, McCarthy said, has a lot to do with who emerges from the punter competition. "Ideally you would like to go with your punter as the holder, based on our past history obviously," McCarthy said.

♦ Safety Nick Collins had the lone interception of the day for the defense, picking off Noah Shepard during 7-on-7 drills.

♦ Cornerback Charles Woodson, who has missed portions of voluntary workouts, fully participated.

"Charles **looks great**," McCarthy said. "He really looks like he is in shape. I know he has been hitting it hard here of late, and it's great to have him out there. ... He has looked good last week and this week, so he looks like he is back in top shape already."

♦ Quinn Porter, Sam Shields, Nelson and **James Jones** took turns returning punts. Nelson was the only one who didn't put one on the ground while Porter dropped three.

♦ Two of the three minicamp practices next week — at 10:45 a.m. Monday and Tuesday — will be open to the public at Ray Nitschke Field. The final practice on Wednesday is closed.

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