

Terrence Wheatley Looks to Put Past Behind Him, Make Roster

by [Jeff Howe](#) on Jun 2, 2010 8:12:36 AM

FOXBORO, Mass. -- It's been a rough year and a half for Patriots cornerback **Terrence Wheatley**.

The 2008 second-round draft pick got off to a pretty decent start in his rookie season, playing in six of the Pats' first eight games and earning his first career start against the Colts. But Wheatley injured his wrist while covering Indy wide receiver **Marvin Harrison**, and the young cornerback with blazing speed missed the remainder of the season.



Then, last year was basically a nightmare. It was supposed to be a good bounce-back season for Wheatley, but he injured his knee in the preseason and never got it together. He missed the Pats' first two regular-season games with the knee issue and was a healthy scratch 10 other times, including the last six weeks of the season and New England's playoff defeat to Baltimore.

When asked how he looks at last season, Wheatley replied, "I guess a bit of a disappointment because you don't play as much as you want to, but again, that's on me. You've got to go out there and perform. You've got to go out there and work hard. It is what it is. That season is over, so now it's on to the new season."

Because of Wheatley's struggles in 2009, these next three months might be the most important of his football life. Cornerbacks **Leigh Bodden**, **Darius Butler**, **Devin McCourty** and **Jonathan Wilhite** figure to be locks to make the Patriots' roster, and the team really values **Kyle Arrington**, too.

It wouldn't be a huge surprise for the Patriots to carry six cornerbacks into the season, which would make Wheatley's spot safe. But the Pats could conceivably only take five in favor of keeping an extra defensive lineman or linebacker because positional battles are tight there, too. One thing is certain, though: Last month's release of **Shawn Springs** was very fortuitous for Wheatley's roster hopes.

"Every year is a big year," Wheatley said. "You can't look at one year as a down year, but I guess if you guys look at it that way, I guess it is. I'm going to go out there and do what I need to do, go out there and work hard every day, and the rest will just take care of itself. I'm not really worried about what can happen or what might happen, what didn't happen. That crap is out of my control. All I can do is just go out there and practice hard. The rest is what it is."

Wheatley said he's added some upper-body strength to help his on-field physicality. The former track star is already one of the two fastest players on the Patriots (along with **Matthew Slater**), according to his teammates, so Wheatley knew he needed to be more well-rounded in terms of strength. He also said he has worked with head coach **Bill Belichick** to improve his technique, and if Wheatley can show some tangible strides this summer, that will really go in his favor.

But Wheatley insists he's taking things day by day, relishes the competition at cornerback and is in a good frame of mind now that the Patriots have resumed offseason practices.

"I'm not going to look too much into it because if I look too much into it, I'm going to over-think it, and you can't over-think things at this level," Wheatley said. "I'm looking to get better and whatever happens, happens."

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