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Jimmy Smith optimistic about seeing more time on defense

Harbaugh, Pagano say plan to increase Smith's duties in the works

By Edward Lee

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Both coach John Harbaugh and defensive coordinator Chuck Pagano said this week that rookie cornerback Jimmy Smith's role would be expanded this Sunday when the Ravens play host to the Cincinnati Bengals.

The team's first-round pick in April, Smith confirmed that he has taken more reps on defense.

"I'm excited to get on the field and contribute to the team," he said. "I've gotten more snaps. They've upped my duties more. So I'm excited to go show what I can do."

Smith, who missed four games with a high left ankle sprain, has not recorded a tackle on defense and has broken up one pass while playing primarily in the team's dime packages. Smith wasn't sure whether he might move up to the nickel back role.

"Whatever they ask me to do," he said. "I don't really know the specifics or anything, but I know that they want to get me out there more on the defense. So hopefully, it's another package. But whatever they want me to do."

Smith has had to be patient as he recovered from the ankle injury and regained the trust of the coaching staff. But Smith said he never chafed at the coaches' plan to take it slow with him.

"The coaches know what they're doing," he said. "So if they were seeing something that told them I wasn't quite ready at the time, they see it. I was trying to get back on as soon as I can, but they're smart coaches and they know what they're doing. I think they're doing it the right way."

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