



Insider: Jones still proves worth on defense

Thumbs up

Brad Jones probably has his roster spot secured based on his extensive involvement on special teams.

During Sunday's practice, he was on both the No. 1 kickoff return team and the No. 1 kickoff cover team. Last season, he tied for second on the team with 11 special teams tackles. He also blocked a field goal in the playoff game against the New York Giants.

Every once in a while, he also comes through on defense. Sunday was one of those days. During the only competitive team period of practice, Jones made the winning play in the no-huddle drill. Dropping into coverage from his outside linebacker position, Jones intercepted an Aaron Rodgers pass in the end zone. On third-and-eight from the 13-yard line, Rodgers tried to hit James Jones in the back of the end zone, but Brad Jones had underneath coverage and picked it off.

Having moved back to outside linebacker after a brief tryout on the inside during the offseason program, Jones has fallen far down the depth chart. He has worked most with the No. 3 defense and remains behind even undrafted Dezman Moses, who has been with the No. 2s. His interception on

Sunday came when he was rotating in with the ones.

But Jones always seems to find a way to stick around and work his way back into the defense. After playing sparingly from scrimmage last season, Jones got the call to start in the playoff game and had the Packers' only sack of Eli Manning in the game.

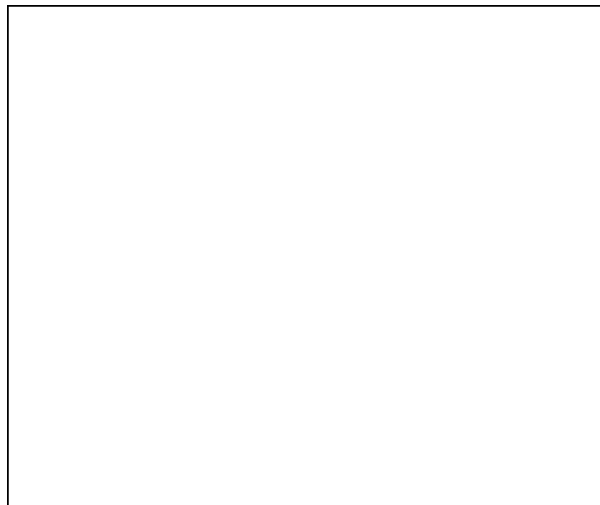
Thumbs down

Maybe the defensive linemen were trying extra hard to gain an edge in the one-on-one pass rushing/pass blocking drill on Sunday, but the downside was they were jumping offsides like crazy.

Twice, Daniel Muir appeared to jump. So did Jarius Wynn and Anthony Hargrove.

Given how much coach Mike McCarthy has harped on pre-snap penalties, he won't be happy when he watches the practice film of that drill.

Advertisement



Print Powered By FormatDynamics™



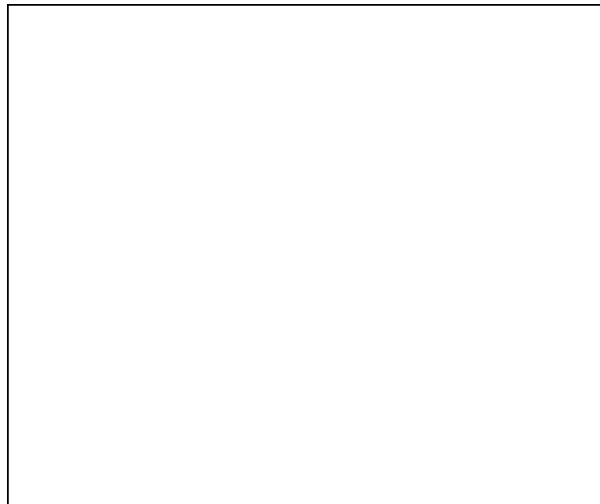
Did you notice?

- Rookie defensive tackle Mike Daniels practiced on consecutive days for the first time in nearly two weeks after battling knee and groin injuries and looked quick in the one-on-ones, splitting a pair of reps against rookie guard/center Tommie Draheim.
- Recently signed free-agent Reggie Wells split reps with Andrew Datko and Herb Taylor at left tackle with the No. 1 offensive line. Wells won both of his one-on-one reps. Datko won all four of his one-on-one reps and has won six straight in the drill. Taylor won his only rep, blocking Daniel Muir.
- Dropped passes won't help the causes of rookies Brandon Bostick, Curenski Gilleylen and Dale Moss. Bostick dropped a touchdown pass. Other than Moss' drop, which led to an interception, he had a strong day, making several catches during the team periods.
- D.J. Smith, normally a mainstay on many of the special teams units, wasn't on the kickoff return or kickoff coverage teams on Sunday. His special teams workload likely will decrease now that he has taken over the starting inside linebacker job in place of the injured Desmond Bishop.
- With Josh Sitton's workload lightened, Evan Dietrich-Smith got most of the team snaps at right guard with the No. 1 offense.
- Phillip Merling took the first reps at end

in place of Ryan Pickett in some of the base defense snaps.

- The smallest training camp crowd of the summer watched Sunday's practice, which at one hour and 45 minutes tied for the second-shortest practice.
- Even though tight end Ryan Taylor (concussion) and defensive end Jerel Worthy (knee) returned to practice, there were still 19 players sidelined because of injuries.

Advertisement



Print Powered By FormatDynamics™



Jimmy Smith Working His Way Back

The second-year cornerback is focused on being healthy for the start of the regular season.

by Garrett Downing
Aug 13, 2012, 6:20AM

PLEASE NOTE: The opinions, analysis and/or speculation expressed on BaltimoreRavens.com represent those of individual authors unless quoted or clearly labeled as such, do not represent the opinions or policies of the Baltimore Ravens' organization, front office, coaches and executives. Authors' views are formulated independently from any inside knowledge and/or conversations with Ravens officials, including the coaches and scouts, unless otherwise noted.

Jimmy Smith is in the midst of a competition for a starting job, but he spent more time watching from the sidelines last week than performing on the field.

The second-year cornerback suffered a back injury on Aug. 2, which held him out of practice for more than a week and forced him out of the preseason opener in Atlanta. He returned to practice on Saturday, but just as a limited participant without doing the full speed drills.

The injury comes at an inopportune time for Smith, who is trying to unseat last year's starter Cary Williams.

"It's a bummer that I can't go out there and compete every day, but at the same time my body is what's really important," Smith said after Sunday's practice. "They need me for September, not the preseason."

He hopes to play in Friday's preseason game against Detroit, but said he has to see how the back feels later in the week.

Last year's first-round pick said that he isn't worried about the injury keeping him out for an extended period of time. He battled a similar injury during his college career at Colorado and is already feeling better after taking the time off to recover.

"It's something that's happened to me before, so I wasn't surprised or anything," Smith said. "It just takes some time to die down."

Injuries limited Smith's production last year, as he suffered an ankle injury on the opening kickoff of the regular season. He was inactive for the next four games before making his first start in Week 13.

Now that he's working through another injury, Smith is taking an upbeat approach.

"Honestly I just try to not even focus on that because I know I get to go out and play," he said. "It's just part of the game. Sometimes little nicks and bruises, and sometimes you're down for a week, sometimes you're down for five days, but you just have to keep up really. You can't be depressed."

In terms of the competition with Williams, neither player has really been able to gain any separation in the race. Williams missed during minicamp and Organized Team Activities recovering from hip surgery earlier this offseason, and now Smith has to deal with injury.

The two players have only been on the field at the same time for the first week of training camp, making it tough for the coaches where they both stand in the competition. Williams is still listed as the starter on the team's official depth chart.

In order to win a starting job, Smith has focused his efforts on adjusting to the faster speed of the NFL game. He struggled to do so last season, and he shed about 15 pounds this offseason to allow him to play faster.

"That's what I'm working on: playing faster," Smith said. "It's not straight-line speed. I'm fast and quick enough, but improving game speed is what I worked on, and dropping weight was just part of it."

Smith, like Williams, is a big-bodied cornerback who the Ravens can use to defend taller wide receivers. Having those two in the lineup to complement top cornerback Lardarius Webb and future Hall of Fame safety Ed Reed, Smith likes what the group has in store this season.

"We're just so dynamic. I think we can cover any receiver set. We have the small, the quicks, and we have the big and strong," Smith said. "You got every element I think that a secondary needs."



Garrett Downing
Staff Writer
BaltimoreRavens.com

Related Keywords

News, Players, Gameday, Preseason Game, 2012, Atlanta Falcons, Garrett Downing, Cary Williams, Jimmy Smith
