



Ex-Pistons guard Chauncey Billups' rehab going well, won't back down from Lakers

The Lakers have garnered headlines with an off-season that has superstars Steve Nash and Dwight Howard headed to the West Coast.

But the other team in Los Angeles, the Clippers, has quietly made some solid moves this summer from giving a five-year extension to franchise cornerstone Blake Griffin, trading for forward Lamar Odom and signing former Piston Grant Hill.

So Clippers combo guard Chauncey Billups, who is diligently rehabbing his left Achilles tendon, isn't about to back down from the Lakers.

"They are trying to stack the deck over there, but I tell you what - I'm very pleased with my team and what we've been able to do and I will just say this - don't nobody scare me, man," said the former Piston with a chuckle.

Billups, who was Finals MVP when leading the Pistons to the 2004 NBA title, spoke briefly with the Free Press over the phone Saturday afternoon and said his rehab is "going well."

Billups, 35, suffered the injury in the February and some wondered if the 15-year veteran was facing the end of his career.

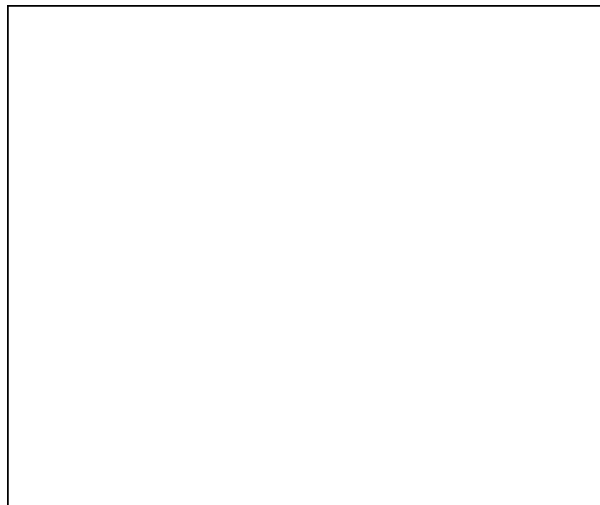
But he attacked his rehab vigorously and said he is doing almost all basketball-related activity with going five-on-five the remaining step. The Clippers signed him to a one-year **deal** this summer.

He would like to be ready when training camp opens in a few weeks, but he is shooting for the season opener.

"I think it's going to be close, but I'm shooting to be ready for the regular season, to be honest with you," Billups said. "But obviously you don't just jump out there in the regular season with no practices, I would never do that.

"But honestly, I'm not in a rush at all. If I'm ready, I'm ready, but I'm just grinding and whenever my body tells me it's time to get back out there, that's when you will see me."

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Calgary Stampede's Edwin Harrison climbs mountain to reach crash site where his grandfather died

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CALGARY—On Dec. 9, 1956, a Trans-Canada airplane crashed into a B.C. mountain, killing all 62 people aboard.

Five CFL all-stars were among the dead, including former Winnipeg Blue Bomber offensive tackle Cal Jones, 23, a rising star from Ohio.

More than 50 years later, parts of the wreckage from Flight 810 are still scattered on Mount Slesse. Last month, Jones' grandson, Calgary Stampede's offensive tackle Edwin Harrison, made a three-hour trek up the mountain with his new bride Kishanda to the memorial marker.

"It was a very humbling and awesome experience. It was truly once-in-a-lifetime experience," said the 6-foot-3, 314-pound Harrison, who this season changed his number to 62.

It was the same number Jones wore in his first season with the Blue Bombers. He also wore the number when he captained the University of Iowa Hawkeyes where he won the Outland Trophy as the nation's top college lineman. That season, the three-time All-American finished 10th in voting for the Heisman Trophy as the nation's top college player.

"Emotionally, it really brought a lot of closure for myself and my family," said Harrison, 27, as he talked about his experience on the sidelines at McMahon Stadium last week. "I left my first pair of cleats that I played a game wearing No. 62 there."

Harrison didn't play in [Saturday's 22-14 loss to the Argos](#) because of a sprained MCL.

The Texan's emotional journey has been captured in a documentary — *The Crash of Flight 810* — directed by Paul Cowan of Infield Fly Production out of Montreal. It will be shown this fall as part of eight original films commissioned by Bell Media in a series entitled [Engraved on a Nation](#) to celebrate this year's 100th Grey Cup. The series will be televised on TSN, CTV and the French-language RDS networks.

At the time of the crash, Sandra Lee, an 18-year-old daughter of a Methodist minister in Houston, had a 4-month-old son fathered by Jones. The boy was Harrison's father, also named Edwin. The toddler would be adopted by the teen mother's grandparents and raised with the Harrison name.

Jones's family in Steubenville, Ohio never knew about the girl he met at the University of Iowa or the son she gave birth to as a freshman in college until sometime afterwards. But there was no contact between the two sides. Being pregnant and unmarried was something their generation never talked about, Harrison said.

"It was taboo I guess," Harrison said. "It's been a trying journey for my father, my grandmother, for my little brother and for the Jones side of the family for everybody being apart from the other side for so long."

Unlike his father, Harrison knew from an early age that Jones was his grandfather. But his father didn't know anything until much later. His grandparents, his mother's parents, raised him.

"The journey has answered so many questions. It has really been a Godsend for my family. I guess the biggest question was why both sides had been disconnected for so long. I really think it was the fear of the unknown that kept us apart for so long. The older you get, you tend to fear change and my father's grandparents resisted change. I think it would have taken them out of their comfort zone.

"Once my father got to a certain age, he knew something was off because his parents were always older than his friends. He started questioning them. As they got older my great grandparents knew they had to answer questions they probably didn't want to answer."



Edwin Harrison with the Calgary Stampede. His grandfather Cal Jones was killed in 1956 and Harrison visited the site of the plane crash this month.

DAVID MOLL/CALGARY STAMPEDERS HANDOUT PHOTO

The families never met face-to-face until Cowan brought them together this past April in Steubenville. Including Harrison, many members from both sides of the extended families were on hand at Harding Stadium where a mock game was recreated under the lights for the documentary. The role of Jones wearing No. 62 in a Big Red uniform was played by a senior student.

"Going into the locker room where my grandfather once sat and sitting in the stands and watching the field where he once played when he was a little younger than me was truly amazing," Harrison said. "I know my father was really blown away. He's seen so many of my games and now he had a chance to sit in a stadium and watch where his father once played."

Harrison, who was with the Kansas City Chiefs for two seasons before becoming a Stampeder after signing as a free agent out of the University of Colorado, started playing football as a youngster.

"I guess I was in the sixth grade when my father first told me the story about my grandfather and I realized how amazing a football player he was. It immediately piqued my interest because I love to play football," said Harrison.

"I started to do research about him on my own. Not many people on my side of the family really talked a lot about him. And I didn't really know how to approach them on the subject."

Although Jones was an offensive lineman, Harrison never knew that his grandfather played that position until after he started playing.

"I've always been an offensive lineman. I guess it was destiny. It was in my blood," Harrison said.

While at Iowa, Jones on Sept. 27, 1954 became the first African-American to be on the [cover of Sports Illustrated](#). After his college career, he declined offers from the NFL because the league paid lower wages to black players.

Instead, he headed north to Canada to play for Winnipeg. The day before he died, he played in the CFL all-star game in Vancouver. He was flying home to Winnipeg to pick up some clothes before flying to Pasadena to watch his friend Frank Gillam play in the Rose Bowl. Saskatchewan players Mel Becket, Mario DeMarco, Gord Sturtridge and Ray Syrnyk were also killed.

"A big reason why my grandfather came up to Canada was that black players didn't have the same opportunity in the U.S. as they did in Canada," Harrison said. "He set the bar truly high. I'll never be able to do the things that he did. All I can do is to be the best that I can. I know he would be proud of me and I know that's all he would have ever asked of me."

A week after they made the trek up the mountain, Harrison sprained his MCL in a game against the Hamilton Tiger-Cats. Had the injury occurred earlier, he wouldn't have been able to climb the mountain during the team's bye week early this month.

"I know my grandfather was watching over me," Harrison said. "The hike was quite challenging. The funny thing was the film crew asked if my wife (a registered nurse in Houston) was going to be okay to climb. I told them they didn't need to worry about her. She was going to be fine. They needed to worry about me."

Being over 300 pounds, climbing up a mountain wasn't something he trained for but he made it.

"It was awesome to see the memorial site. But unfortunately the fog came in over the mountain and we didn't get to see much of the debris. You normally can see it. If you're an experienced hiker, you can go further up the mountain but I'm nowhere near that kind of a hiker.

"My grandfather started something many years ago back in the 1950s and my Dad has been able to bring along his son so that I can now finish the journey for the rest of my family. God does truly work in mysterious ways and connects families."