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Cary Williams has started the first three games, but Jimmy Smith could win the job.



One of the most heated position battles coming into this season was between **Cary Williams** 🧑 and former first-round draft pick **Jimmy Smith** 🧑 for the starting cornerback job opposite **Lardarius Webb** 🧑.

Williams won the job out of training camp and has started the first three games, but Defensive Coordinator Dean Pees said it's still an open battle for the starting job.

"That's been a competition from Day 1," Pees said Tuesday. "That's always been a consideration every game. Every game we kind of go through during the week and those two guys know it that we just kind of rotate things through the week and whoever we feel like is having a better week, that guy could end up being the starter."

Williams struggled on Sunday against New England, as quarterback Tom Brady threw for 335 yards and a touchdown. Williams was in man coverage against Brandon Lloyd for much of the day and the Pats wide receiver finished with nine catches for 108 yards.

Pees and Head Coach John Harbaugh said the Patriots' success had more to do with their prolific offense than it did with Williams struggling.

"You've got Tom Brady that puts it right where he wants to put it. They've got receivers that are in sync and they really are on the same page," Harbaugh said. "I think you have to chalk that up more than anything to execution on the part of the offense."

While Williams has been the starter this season, Smith is still getting plenty of work because the Ravens run out of the nickel package often. Against the Patriots, Smith was in on 67 of the 83 defensive snaps, according to Pro Football Focus.

Smith acknowledged that competing for a starting job isn't entirely out of his mind, but he's not thinking about it every time he steps on the field.

"It's not out of my mind, but at the same time I'm just focusing on what I have to do every play," Smith said. "I was in almost every snap last game so I mean we're all out there on the field, I wasn't really worried about the competition at that point. I'm just trying to go out and do what I do."

Smith finished last week's game with five total tackles and one pass defended. It was the most Smith has played all season.

"It just builds your confidence," Smith said. "The more plays you make the more confidence you have. The life of a corner is all confidence. Besides the skill you need to have confidence because you're out there on an island."

As the Ravens prepare for Thursday's game against the Browns, they will have a short week of preparation to determine whether Smith or Williams get the start. Pees also made a point to say that all three players will continue to get significant reps moving forward.

"They're all kind of starters in our eyes because we play so much nickel defense that they both end up in there," Pees said.

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Dathan Ritzenhein Is Ready for Chicago Marathon

September 25, 2012 11:10 am

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By Peter Gambaccini

Photo by Victah Sailer

Dathan Ritzenhein is the leading American entrant in the October 7 Bank of America Chicago Marathon. His best marathon time is the 2:09:55 he ran for fourth place at the 2012 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials. Ritzenhein regrouped and made the London-bound U.S. team in the 10,000 with a third place 27:36.09 at the Trials. At the London Games, he was 13th in 27:45.89.



Ritzenhein was ninth in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Marathon in 2:11:59, 11th in London in 2009 in 2:10:00, and eighth in New York City in 2010 in 2:12:33. He's a former U.S. 5000-meter record holder with a 12:56.27 best; his fastest 10,000 is 27:22.28. Ritzenhein was a 2009 IAAF World Half Marathon bronze medalist and a 2003 NCAA Cross Country champion for the University of Colorado. Ritzenhein lives in Portland, Oregon, and is coached by Alberto Salazar.

Are you pretty convinced, above all else at this point, that you are a marathoner?

Dathan Ritzenhein: Yeah, that's definitely what I think that I am and what I'm trying to be. I haven't completely hit it out of the park but I've given it a few tries. It's still my real passion, more than anything else. It always comes back to that: What do I really want to do the most?

You've succeeded at a lot of different events, and sometimes probably even surprised yourself. I wonder if you ever thought you were going to be the American record holder for 5000 meters.

DR: I think way back when I was a young kid, I thought I would. But it happened so out of the blue, I guess. It's like I took a step back in time. It's something I thought I would do years before. Maybe it was out of order, more than anything else. I thought the natural progression me would have been that having happened when I was 22 years old and then move slowly up [in distance] from there.

Have you had any marathon build-ups that you were entirely satisfied with that somehow didn't end up with a good race, or has there always been something missing from the buildup for one reason or another?

DR: The Trials this past time [in January], things went the best that they could have, but still, I missed the training the year before. The actual training in those couple of months leading up to the Trials was great, but there was no training before that. When I ran the Trials Marathon in 2007 [he was second in 2:11:07], I was very fit from the track season but I had terrible training after I'd finished the season. I was banged up and really hurting going into that and still ran one of my better marathons.

I guess I've never had things go completely great. This is the first time that it has. With 13 days to go [until Chicago], it's gone almost as good as it could, really. I don't know if I'm going to have any excuses after this, except maybe I could have used a few more weeks of specific marathon training. But sometimes when that happens, you look back and think you were ready too early.

Now, I still feel good and fresh, but I feel like I've gotten everything I need. I don't feel like I'm running out of time, and I don't like I'm overcooked either.

Are there some hard workouts left?

DR: Yesterday [Sunday] was my last really really long marathon-type thing. There's one more big long interval-type workout nine days out. I'll do 8 to 10 miles worth of intervals that are somewhere between 1K and mile repeats. Nothing too crazy, because that's still the kind of workout that can put you in the tank.

When will that be, maybe Thursday?

DR: Thursday to Saturday, somewhere in there. One of the things that makes Alberto a great coach is that he's very flexible. If there's a day that needs to change or a pace that needs to change, we adapt to it. We don't have to get in a specific workout on a specific day. It has to be tailored to how you're feeling day to day.

Alberto did comment that you were doing long runs in which the closing section was particularly fast. In some marathons, you've run well until quite late and maybe just the last couple of miles don't go that well. Are you trying to remedy that weakness with this kind of work?

DR: There's been a little bit more of an emphasis on harder longer runs and also longer interval sessions, too, that are high-quality. For me, the pace has never been a problem. I've always felt good thought the first 70 percent of the race. Maybe I'm not known as a 5K guy so much, even though I have had a lot of success in it. But I have run substantially faster at those shorter distances than a lot of people who are marathon specialists. For me to go out and run 4:45 to 4:55 a mile doesn't feel hard.

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We're trying to spend a little bit more time on my feet, I guess. I might do 25 miles, picking it up the last 5 or 6 miles. So I've covered close to that marathon distance four times in the last six or seven weeks. I've had a lot more long sustained efforts like that. Having only nine weeks between London [the Olympics] till Chicago, I did as many as those types of workouts and long runs in six weeks as I would have in 12 or 15 weeks [previously]. 'Cause I already had the speed. I had to do little amounts of that speed stuff to maintain it because it was already there.

You had put "2:06" as a Chicago time out there in a quote, but Alberto then stressed that the goal was primarily to be competitive. But if you're trying to compete for the win, you might have to go something like 2:06.

DR: I literally said, "I want to be able to run 2:06 in Chicago." But I've run 2:09:55, and that's a big jump. I want to be able to compete in there. There is a big difference between [2:06 and 2:09:55] and I don't know where I lie yet.

That race has been won in 2:05:something and in 2:06 on other occasions. If I'm going to win the race, I'm going to have to run something like that. I'm going to try my hardest, but I'm not going to set my goals based on winning it or based on a specific time.

I just want to have a step in the right direction. What I was trying to say when I said "I want to be able to run 2:06 in Chicago" is I want to try to be able to get better. I don't have to get right to running 2:06 and winning the Chicago Marathon in two weeks. If that happens, that's great. I just want to move forward in a positive direction, because I wouldn't say I've been stagnant in the marathon, but I haven't had a huge curve of success either. I've stayed where I'm at, and I've had problems. So I want to overcome those things. If I have a good race, that's important to me, and I won't look back on any number and say that was a success or a failure.

What was your feeling about your Olympics 10,000-meter performance?

DR: I was just upset that I didn't put myself in the position I needed to be in. I was fitter than what I did. I lost contact from the pack with six laps or so to go and it was very erratic and fast here and there. I just maintained a distance of about 10 meters behind all the way until 600 or 500 meters to go when they took off. It's a different mindset when you're right in a pack and you're waiting for a kick as opposed to, "Oh shoot, I lost 10 meters and I have to claw my way up there."

I wish I would have been able to stay right in it. There were 12 people in that pack. I wasn't going to close in 53 like Mo and Galen [Farah and Rupp] did but I think I would have been able to be in the pack a little better instead of just straggling off the back, just hanging on for dear life.

The IAAF Athletes' Commission has talked about folding the world half marathon into the track world championships. Your most important international medal is at that distance. Would you like to see a half marathon at the major championships like the worlds or the Olympics?

DR: For me personally, I think it would be good. It is probably the distance I've had the most success with. I've run from 61:40 to 60 flat six times, and it's just a good consistent distance for me. It's great timing if you want to do a fall marathon. I'm getting a little older and maybe my years on the track aren't quite so many.

The only concern I have is that I think it might diminish the marathon more at the world championships, the competitiveness. And it is nice to have a separate event on the horizon to look forward to. The problem is that [the world half marathon] has deteriorated in competitiveness and visibility. If they put it into the world championships, the infrastructure's set up. They don't have to pay millions of dollars more to host it. I guess I just wish it was a thriving event on its own.

TwoFiveNine says:

September 26, 2012 at 8:45 am



Good interview. Always interesting when the top guys explain what they are thinking and feeling and give details of their training sessions. Makes you realise that talent alone counts for nothing without serious hard work and dedication.

ARTeach says:

September 26, 2012 at 12:08 pm



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