

Are Browns Ready To Answer Starting Bell?

Some new faces and some familiar faces in new places, that's the Cleveland Browns as they prepare for Sunday's opening of the championship season against the Green Bay Packers in Cleveland Stadium. Kickoff is 1 p.m. (EDT).

The final roster cutdown to 40 players this week left the Browns with eight newcomers, six of them rookies. The other two are third-year defensive tackle George Wright from the San Diego Chargers and wide receiver Gloster Richardson, five-year pro from the Oakland Raiders.

MAKING THEIR first appearance on a regular pro roster are 1972 draftees Tom Darden of Michigan, Cliff Brooks of Tennessee State, and George Hunt of Tennessee, along with 1971 choices Robert (Bubba) Pena of Massachusetts and Paul Staroba of Michigan. Lone free agent to make the grade was offensive tackle Chris Morris of Indiana.

Darden and Brooks, both defensive backs, were Cleveland's first two draft picks this year. Hunt was chosen in the fifth round and will continue to challenge incumbent Don Cockroft for placekicking and punting duties. Staroba and Pena, selected third and fourth a year ago, spent the 1971 campaign on the Browns' taxi squad.

Morris, who has surprised as a "walk on" offensive lineman, was drafted last year but was a late training camp cut.

DARDEN AND PENA are expected to be the only rookie starters against the Packers as the Browns try to shake off an 0-6 pre-season record. Darden, a tall, fast-moving youngster, has come along quickly at strong safety the last six weeks nearly a month of work with the College All-Stars. Pena worked the entire pre-season schedule at the right guard post held down so long by Gene Hickerson.



Richardson Impressed With Browns

CLEVELAND (UPI)—Gloster Richardson, newly acquired wide receiver, said he considers the Cleveland Browns "another championship team with a history of repeating."

Richardson comes to the Browns from Oakland and will see action when Cleveland opens its season against the Green Bay Packers Sunday.

"I'm sure I can help the Browns," he said Thursday. "I look at coming here as joining another championship team with a history of repeating."

Ernie Kellermann, whom the Browns released, was picked up by the New England Patriots. Kellermann said the Patriots plan to keep him on the cabb squad momentarily and then move him up to the regular roster.

The most dangerous single person the Browns expect to meet on the Green Bay team is John Brockington, who gained 1,105 yards as a rookie last year.

Waiting for the Ohio State All-American across the line of scrimmage will be defensive ends Ron Snidow and Bob Briggs and tackles Walter Johnson and Jerry Sherk.

Hickerson, moving into his 15th year with the Browns, currently is operating at the left guard post where he began his long pro career as a play messenger. The switch back was triggered by a broken leg bone suffered by Bob McKay in the Browns' fourth pre-season game this summer.

Moving over to fill in for McKay at right tackle is John Demarie, who originally was a tackle before becoming a fine left guard five years ago. McKay is expected to be placed on the Browns' "move" list later this week while his leg heals.

JIM COPELAND and Fred Hoaglin have been waging a battle at center since camp opened and both should see much action this year. Copeland stepped in last year after Hoaglin suffered a leg injury.

And just to make the juggling complete since last year's opener is young Doug Dieken, who moved ahead of now retired Dick Schafrath as the starting left tackle midway through the 1971 season. Since that time, Dieken has established himself as a thoroughly capable offensive lineman. He had been a tight

end at the University of Illinois through 1970.

Some changes also have been necessitated on the Browns' defensive line because of the departure of Jack Gregory and the losses to knee surgery of third-

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year man Joe Jones and second-round draftee Lester Sims of Alabama State.

RRON SNIDOW WAS prevailed upon to reconsider retirement plans and play a 10th pro season at left end. And promoted to starting status on the right side was Bob Briggs, a native of nearby Toledo, Ohio. Briggs was with San Francisco and San Diego before coming to Cleveland a year ago.

Intact are Cleveland's two excellent starting tackles, Walt Johnson and Jerry Sherk. And joining them for backup support is Wright, 25-year-old Texan who spent the last three seasons with Balti-

more before being traded to San Diego earlier this year.

Charley Hall, a rapidly developing second-year pro, is challenging starters John Garlington and Bill Andrews for a regular outside linebacking assignment. The middle slot remains a three-way struggle among Jim Houston, Dale Lindsey and second-year man Rick Kingrea. Houston also is rated a backup man at defensive end, a position he played in the early 1960's after coming out of Ohio State.

CLEVELAND'S SECONDARY now has outstanding speed with Darden joining fleet veterans Mike Howell (free safety) and Ben Davis (right cornerback) plus last year's No. 1 draftee Clarence Scott (left cornerback). Veteran Walt Sumner, apparently over some knee problems, and young Brooks supply the backup strength.

Offensively, another area of change is at the wide receiver posts. Fair Hooker, Cleveland's top pass catcher last year, still is at his station on the left side and starting his first full season with the Browns is Frank Pitts on the right. Pitts,

obtained from Kansas City a year ago, had an excellent pre-season with 18 catches for 365 yards and five touchdowns.

Earlier this week, Pitts was reunited with Richardson following a deal with the Raiders. Both men originally were drafted by Kansas City in 1965, Pitts fourth and Richardson seventh. Staroba has shown steady improvement this second year with Cleveland and has the added ability to punt. He led the Big Ten in that department two years ago.

THE TIGHT END duties continue in the hands of Milt Morin and Chip Glass, one of the better duos in pro ball. And the running back corps again is headed by Leroy Kelly and Bo Scott with Ken Brown, Bo Cornell and Reece Morrison in relief. Kelly now is sixth on the NFL's all-time rushing list and could move up several more notches ahead of Don Perkins and John Henry Johnson this season.

The all-important quarterback post has turned into a tight fight between Bill Nelson and Mike Phipps, and Browns' opponents can expect to see much of both

of them this year. Nelsen was used sparingly in pre-season, but Phipps showed a great deal of improvement and had a completion average of .578.

So that is the 1972 club assembled by head coach Nick Skorich and his staff. Gone are longtime favorites such as Gary Collins, Erich Barnes, Ernie Kellermann and Schafrath.

Statistics

	C	Op.
First Downs (Total)	96	84
By Rushing	39	38
By Passing	49	36
By Penalty	8	10
Rushes (Number)	171	207
Net Yards Gained	595	773
Average Gain	3.5	3.8
Forward Passing		
Attempted	185	123
Completed	94	62
Had Intercepted	15	8
Net Yards Gained	1,115	683
Average Gain	6.0	5.5
Total Plays (Rushes and Passes)	371	338
Total Net Yards Gained	1,710	1,460
Punts (Number)	30	28
Average Yards	42.2	42.8
Had Blocked		
Punt Returns (Number)	14	16
Average Yards	2.3	8.6
Kickoff Returns (Number)	25	15
Average Yards	20.5	25.0
Fumbles (Number)	14	7
Ball Lost	9	3
Penalties (Number)	36	39
Yards Penalized	402	349

KICKERS AGAIN THRUST INTO SPOTLIGHT

Miami-Kansas City In Rematch

By United Press International

It was ironic last Christmas night that the American Football Conference title was decided by a Cypriot and a Norwegian. But the 1972 could open with the same pair playing a major role.

The Cypriot is Garo Yepremian and he kicked a 37-yard field goal in the "sixth quarter" to give the Miami Dolphins a 27-24 victory over the Kansas City Chiefs and a berth in the Super Bowl. Jan Stenerud, the Norwegian-born place kicker for Kansas, had blown a 31-yarder — normally a sure thing for him — with 31 seconds left.

NFL schedule-makers have decided to open the season with a rematch of that title game, and the Chiefs seem especially apprehensive about it.

They won't come right out and say so, but Coach Hank Stram feels his club is ready to avenge the loss, though it won't make up for the \$7,500 per man picked up by the Dolphins as Super Bowl losers.

Both kickers remember it well. "I can usually tell when a kick is good and I knew that one was good as

soon as I kicked it," Yepremian said. "I saw the ball clear the crossbar and then my teammates began to mob around me. I was wondering what they were doing because I thought I had to kick off. I forgot it was sudden death and so mixed up I didn't even realize the game was over." Stenerud's mood was in complete contrast, even more so because he was coming off a brilliant season.

"I didn't ever want to go on a football field again," Stenerud recalled. "I didn't want to have anything to do with this game. But after a few days I thought things over and decided to go back. I got lots of mail and calls from friends and it helped reassure me."

Stenerud seems back to his old self. He starred in the Pro Bowl game last January and he led the league in scoring during the pre-season. It will be interesting to see his reaction should a pressure kicking situation arise against the Dolphins Sunday.

The Chiefs are essentially the same team except at free safety where veteran All-Star Johnny Robinson has re-


tired and been replaced by Kerry Rardon. Miami, a five-point underdog, has added wide receiver Marlin Briscoe from Buffalo, to take some pressure off Paul Warfield, and Jim Dunaway to the defensive line.

In other openers Sunday, Dallas begins defense of the league title by entertaining Philadelphia, San Diego is

at San Francisco, Oakland at Pittsburgh, St. Louis at Baltimore, New York Giants at Detroit, New Orleans at Los Angeles, New York Jets at Buffalo, Cincinnati at New England, Houston at Denver, Green Bay at Cleveland and Atlanta at Chicago. Washington is at Minnesota in the first Monday night game.


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Bengals Drop Taliaferro

CINCINNATI (UPI) — The Cincinnati Bengals released quarterback Mike Taliaferro and rookie kicker Dave Green on waivers Thursday.

The Bengals picked up Taliaferro on waivers just four weeks ago from Buffalo. He had been with the Bills only a short time after being released by the New England Patriots.

With Taliaferro's release, the Bengals have only two quarterbacks, Ken Anderson and Virgil Carter.

"I'm aware that we're playing it pretty thin," said Coach Paul Brown. "We'll be looking now for another backup quarterback."

Brown said Taliaferro, who lives in Houston, was "agreeable" to the release.

"He said he feels we have two quarterbacks and it makes a difficult position for him," Brown said. "He had been a guy on our move" list all the time."

Taliaferro, who quarterbacked the Illinois team that won the Rose Bowl in 1964, may try to earn a spot with the Houston Oilers.

"They're down to practically one quarterback there and that might be in his thinking," Brown said.

Green, a rookie from Ohio University, lost his bid to replace kicker Dave Lewis on the team.

Anderson, the quarterback, was throwing the ball during Thursday's practice, looking recovered from the jammed fingers he suffered last weekend. He is listed as the starter in the

season opener Sunday against New England.

Also working out at the Bengal training camp, although not with the team, is Greg Cook.

The 1969 American Football Conference rookie of the year has not played since that season because of an injured throwing arm. He is on the team's "unable to perform" list.

Because of a pro football rule, Cook could not play the first seven weeks of the season even if he is ready. Being on the "unable to perform" list also prohibits a player from practicing with the team until Oct. 15.

2 For The Price Of 1 For Plymouth

Plymouth's cross-country squad raced to its fourth and fifth wins of the season without a loss yesterday at Wynford, as the Big Red shut out Hopewell-Louden 15-49, and topped host Wynford 19-36.

Ken Lucas paced the field for Coach Bob James' defending Class A state champions, by completing the course in 10:40. Big Red team members Mike Adams and Brad Buzard finished second and third respectively in times of 10:55 and 11:04.

Plymouth's Ralph Noble ranked fifth with an 11:17 effort, and Steve Adams raced in eighth in 11:40.

One Team Needed

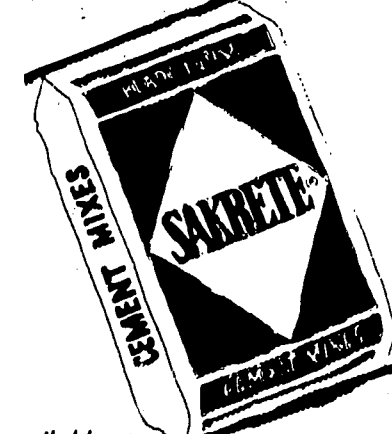
The Bonnie League, which bowls Monday nights at 9 p.m., has an opening for one five-man team. Anyone interested in bowling please call Bonnie Lanes or Chuck Sidoti at 626-5904.

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