

Lewis out for Super Bowl

While Terrell Owens' return is still questionable, he would fill a void left by Chad Lewis for the Eagles

BY ROB MAADDI
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA — The Philadelphia Eagles' thin receiving corps has lost another key member, and whether its star makes it back for the Super Bowl is still uncertain.

Tight end Chad Lewis, who caught two touchdown passes in Philadelphia's 27-10 victory over Atlanta in the NFC championship game Sunday, will miss the Super Bowl with a foot injury.

Meanwhile, All-Pro wide receiver Terrell Owens' status is uncertain. Owens has been sidelined with an ankle injury since Dec. 19. Eagles coach Andy Reid said Monday that Owens has made "great progress" and will try to run on the ankle this week.

Lewis, a three-time Pro Bowl selection, was hurt on his second touchdown grab, a two-yard catch that sealed the win.

"He was crushed," Reid said. "You sure don't like to see that happen to a veteran player that waited his whole career to get to this thing. He'll survive

through it. He'll be down there supporting us, doing everything he can from the sideline."

Lewis spent half the 1999 season with St. Louis before getting cut and signing with Philadelphia. The Rams won the Super Bowl that season.

Lewis' injury, a Lis Franc sprain, is more common in car accidents and equestrian sports than football.

Second-year pro L.J. Smith will take Lewis' spot in the starting lineup against New England in the Super Bowl on Feb. 6. Mike Bartrum, also the long snapper, is the only other tight end on the roster. Reid said the team will try to add another tight end this week. Lewis backed up Bartrum as the long snapper.

Lewis, an unrestricted free agent after the season, had 29 catches for 267 yards and three TDs this year. His role had been reduced with the emergence of Smith, a second-round draft pick from Rutgers in 2003.

Lewis signed as a rookie free agent with the Eagles in 1997. He was cut

two games into the 1998 season and joined the Rams, only to return to Philadelphia a year and a half later.

Lewis emerged as quarterback Donovan McNabb's favorite target in 2000, catching 69 passes for 735 yards and three TDs to earn the first of his three consecutive trips to the Pro Bowl.

A return by Owens would easily offset the injury to Lewis. Owens caught 77 passes for 1,200 yards and 14 TDs in his first year with the Eagles.

Owens' spectacular season came to a halt when he tore two ankle ligaments and broke his right leg in a game against Dallas on Dec. 19. A surgeon inserted two screws in Owens' ankle and a plate on the outside of the ankle three days later.

Owens was told after surgery that he had only an outside chance of returning for the Super Bowl but has rehabbed vigorously and has told teammates he's going to play.

McNabb downplayed the notion that Owens might come back only to be used as a decoy against the Patriots.

"For him, that's disrespectful to say you're going to be used to run dummy routes," McNabb said. "We brought T.O. here for a reason. If T.O. is out there, he's going to catch some balls."

IN BRIEF

Duck football schedule announced Monday

The Oregon football team opens its season on a Thursday night in a nationally televised game against the University of Houston at Reliant Stadium Sept. 1, as announced by Athletic Director Bill Moos on Monday.

The Ducks will play their home opener Sept. 10 against Montana, the first of three consecutive games at Autzen Stadium.

The Grizzlies have made the I-AA playoffs for an NCAA record 12-consecutive seasons and lost in

the national championship game to James Madison 31-21 last season.

The Ducks' last game of their homestand and first Pacific-10 Conference matchup will be against defending national champion USC.

Oregon will then face Stanford and Arizona State on the road before returning to play Washington at home for the second-consecutive season.

The Ducks will visit Arizona before coming back home to face California in their homecoming game. A trip to Washington State follows.

The Ducks end the regular season at Autzen Stadium against Oregon State in the annual Civil War.

— Clayton Jones

Jones: Ducks prove athletes have more to give than cash

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make on the hardwood.

To give money is a good thing to do.

To give time and effort is a great thing to do.

Kudos to those players for looking outside the box and recognizing

that there is a world outside of Oregon, desperate for help.

Thanks for proving wrong all who might think athletes only care about themselves or their sport.

And most importantly, good luck.

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TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTOGRAPHER

Oregon's Jenny Browne looks on as seven-year-old Eugene resident Benn Jessen hurls a ball toward the net at the Ducks' lacrosse clinic held in the Moshofsky Sports Center on Sunday.

Lacrosse: Coach Larsen says team has 'nothing to lose'

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The young Ducks will attempt to overcome a major obstacle that any new program faces — a lack of upperclassmen leadership.

Without an experienced class of juniors or seniors to take the team by its reins, Larsen expects anyone and everyone to step up when the time comes.

"Our strength is going to be that it's going to be someone different all the time," Larsen said. "I've been impressed with a lot of people's ability to lead and our group's willingness to follow."

"We all lead by example," Dorsch said. "People step into the leadership role when needed."

Despite their lack of experience, the Ducks are confident heading into their season opener, having had the benefit of playing together in the fall practice season.

"We realized we were a lot stronger than we thought," Dorsch said.

More helpful than the time the team has been able to play together

is the bond of being a part of something special — the chance to help build a program from scratch.

When Larsen signed his first 17 athletes in November 2003, 14 of the new Ducks flew from all over the country to their own meet-and-greet at defender Liora Lobel's home in Baltimore. The next February, Eugene hosted a U.S. Lacrosse clinic, and another 14 girls flew to Oregon to mingle with their future teammates. By the time practice started, the Ducks were well-acquainted and ready to hit the field running.

Once in Eugene, the team has continued to grow close. By Jensen's estimate, more than two-thirds of the team has taken a sign language class since arriving on campus to better communicate with freshman defenseman Ashley Beghtel, who has been hearing impaired since birth.

"They understand every footstep they take is going to impact the program's direction," Larsen said. "They're a special group, and they have a bond ... no one can take. They're the first."

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