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Poyer is tied for seventh in tackles for the Browns, with an interception and a fumble recovery.

Poyer: He is a mainstay on special teams

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First game back in Northwest

In addition to it being Poyer’s first game as an NFL player in his home territory (he’s getting lots of ticket requests), it will be the first visit to Seattle for the Browns since 2003. The Browns are 3-7 in Seattle since their first visit to the Emerald City in 1977.

“I’m pretty pumped up about it,” Poyer said about the game, before the season even started. “Just being back in the Northwest and to be able to play in front of fans that I grew up playing in front of.”

The Browns are looking for a positive finish to a season that quickly turned sour, with key injuries on both sides of the ball.

On the other hand, it’s been a better year for Poyer, who ended up starting a few games because of those injuries.

He is listed as second-string free safety on the depth chart, behind Tashaun Gipson.

Last summer at his annual football camp in Astoria, Poyer had predicted: “This next year is going to be a big year for me.”

In 2014, “I didn’t accomplish a lot of things that I wanted to ... it was not the season I wanted to have. At the same time it helped me get ready for this (2015 season).”

A breakthrough season

And this season has indeed been a breakthrough.

Through 13 games, Poyer is tied for seventh on the team in tackles with 37, second-most among current non-starters for the Browns.

On Oct. 11, he made five tackles and assisted on three more to earn the game ball in a 33-30 win at Baltimore.

Poyer made his first start on defense the next week in a loss to Denver. In his second start, Oct. 25 at St. Louis, he had 11 combined tackles with a fumble recovery.

Poyer missed the next two games with a shoulder injury, then returned for the Nov. 15 game at Pittsburgh, where he picked off Steelers’ quarterback Ben Roethlisberger deep in Pittsburgh territory.

Poyer: ‘Marked on my calendar’

Jordan Poyer of the Cleveland Browns spoke to The Daily Astorian’s Gary Henley this morning about the game Sunday against the Seattle Seahawks.

On his return to the Pacific Northwest:

“It’s one of those things that’s been marked on my calendar. I’m excited to go play in front of family and friends. I know it’s not ‘home’ home, but at the same time, it’s close enough.”

Team more excited after last week’s win?

“Any time you get a win, the locker room is always more excited. But at the same time, we know we have to get ready to go work this week.

“(The seven-game losing streak) was definitely hard at times, but we just have to

stick together and keep getting better every game.”

Injuries a factor?

“We’ve been banged up all season, all around the board, really. But it’s always ‘next man up.’ That’s how you have to look at it.”

Playing the ‘spoiler role’:

“We just got done talking about that. All these teams that we’re about to play, Seattle specifically, are looking for a playoff spot.”

How has your season been, personally?

“For being my third season and being in the situation that I’m in, I feel like I’ve done well. There’s a lot to improve on, and I’m excited to get to work this offseason, work on those things and come back even better than I was this year.”

Steelers are two games behind Cincinnati in the AFC North, but quickly gaining on the Bengals.

A mainstay on special teams

A third-year pro out of Oregon State who was drafted by Philadelphia in 2013, Poyer is a regular in the Browns’ dime coverage and a mainstay on special teams.

Browns coach Mike Pettine said Poyer also spells veteran Donte Whitner on occasion at practice.

Poyer “prides himself on his preparation,” Pettine told ClevelandBrowns.com, much like Poyer did as a youth athlete in Astoria. “When he’s focused, dialed in, he does a good job for us. I’m expecting him to, in the role that we have for him, to play well.”

“I feel like I’m still adjust-

ing,” Poyer said between seasons, “I don’t think you could ever just be ‘used to’ the speed. Within the rhythm of the game or the rhythm of the season, the more I played, the more comfortable I feel with the speed. It’s always going to take some more adjusting to get used to, especially at the beginning of a season. Everybody’s good.”

Tribute: Grant will go toward drafting three design options

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Leaving home forever

The Scandinavians who emigrated to the North Coast — some by way of North Dakota and Minnesota — knew they risked never seeing their birthplace again.

“They came over in a time, when you left home, you probably were leaving home pretty much forever,” Mathews said. “You might get back once or twice, but you were pretty much leaving.”

Once here, they fished, farmed, logged, worked in canneries, ran boarding houses, established churches and helped shape the hardworking character of Astoria.

The idea of building a permanent monument to honor Astoria’s Scandinavian ancestors, and the sacrifices they endured by coming to the region, had been kicked around for at least a year before the committee applied for the grant, said Carole Lyngstad, a project leader.

Low, mid-range and ‘fantasy’ design

She and Mathews have been meeting with city of-

ficials to nail down a list of viable sites, preferably ones with lots of foot traffic and decent parking nearby. The Parks and Recreation Department is assessing all of the public land within its domain, and the results will inform the heritage association’s options.

With the site chosen, the design work can get underway. The grant will go toward drafting a low-end design, a mid-range design and a “fantasy design” — a design that would reflect the project committee’s dream monument, Bowler said. Local Scandinavian organizations will get to weigh in during the drafting stage.

Though the fundraising — which may include more grants — will influence the design, the heritage association is aiming higher than just erecting a plaque on a granite slab somewhere. At minimum, the monument will tie in the Scandinavian flags, Bowler said.

“When you know your heritage, it gives you a sense of identity, and I think that’s one reason Astoria’s so popular right now — because we know our heritage and we have a sense of identity,” she said.



Submitted Photo

The Scandinavian country flags fly tall at 2014’s Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival.

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