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Poyer ready to 'rock it' with Buffalo Bills

Buffalo hosts Minnesota tonight

The Daily Astorian

Astoria's Jordan Poyer makes his official "game day" debut with his new team tonight when the Buffalo Bills host Minnesota at 7 p.m. EST at New Era Field.

Poyer is going through his fifth NFL training camp, and is expected to play the first quarter of Thursday's game against the Vikings.

Poyer spent the last four years with Cleveland, before signing with the Bills in the offseason. He has not played since suffering a lacerated kidney in Week 6 with the Browns last year, and spent the rest of the season on injured reserve.

The 26-year-old Poyer still finished last season with 39 total tackles in just six games, just four short of his career-high 43 tackles in 14 games

with the Browns in 2015.

Poyer is slated to be one of Buffalo's two starting safeties this year, as the Bills — looking to rebuild their defense — signed Poyer along with Green Bay's Micah Hyde in the offseason.

Playing in the AFC East, Poyer and the Bills will face Tom Brady and the world champion New England Patriots twice a season. Poyer's only West Coast appearance this year will be Nov. 19 at the Los Angeles Chargers.

In an interview on the Bills' website last month, Poyer said Buffalo's games with New England will be "definitely something I'm looking forward to. I've played them a couple times the last couple years. I'm excited."

After graduating from Astoria High School in 2009, Poyer played four years at Oregon State before he was drafted by Philadelphia in the seventh round of the 2013 NFL draft.

He played three games with the Eagles in 2013 before signing with Cleveland.

Poyer will wear No. 21 with the Bills.

When Poyer and Hyde signed with Buffalo as free agents, they both had to pick new numbers. They both wore 33 for their previous teams, and that number is already taken on the Bills by Colt Anderson.

"They had 21 and 23 available," Poyer said. "We both looked at each other, which way are we going to go? So I just said off the rip, I'll take 21."

Based on how he was feeling the first time he had his full Bills uniform on for a team photoshoot, Poyer was happy with his choice.

"I'm going to rock it," he said. "No significance behind it. I'm happy in a new place. New place, new number. In Cleveland I had 33. Philadelphia, I had 33. Putting that behind me. It's a new place, I'm excited about being here. New place, new number."



The Daily Astorian/File

Jordan Poyer visits with his mom, Julie, following Cleveland's 2015 game at Seattle. Poyer signed with the Buffalo Bills in the offseason.



AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez

Seattle Mariners' Nelson Cruz points skyward as he crosses home plate following his solo home run against the Oakland Athletics during the fifth inning of a baseball game Wednesday in Oakland, Calif.

Cruz homers twice to power Mariners past A's

By MICHAEL WAGAMAN
 Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Nelson Cruz wasn't nearly as impressed with his latest power display as Seattle teammate Kyle Seager was.

On a day when Seager hit a three-run homer in the first inning to get the Mariners off to a fast start, Cruz trumped him with two towering 400-foot home runs to continue his season-long feast on Athletics pitching.

Seattle beat Oakland 6-3 on Wednesday to complete a two-game sweep.

"It's cool being on deck when he gets hold of one because he can do stuff that there's not a lot of guys can," Seager said of Cruz. "He's a lot of fun to watch and you certainly want him on your team. He's incredible, the stuff he can do."

Robinson Cano had two hits and scored twice while Ben Gamel singled and made another sparkling defensive play to help Seattle to its fourth win in five games.

The Mariners, who entered the day tied with Kansas City and Tampa Bay for the second AL wild card, finished 6-3 on their road trip.

Cruz hit a two-run homer in the third, his 25th, then added his 26th in the fifth. It's the second multi-homer game in four days for the Mariners slugger, who has 22 RBIs in 13 games against the A's this season — a Seattle record against Oakland.

"I can't explain it," Cruz said. "You go to all the ballparks and you don't feel it. I guess luck."

Seager homered in the first after Jean Segura and Cano singled.

All three home runs came off Oakland starter Jharel Cotton (5-9).

Khris Davis hit his 31st home run and Matt



AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez

Seattle Mariners' Nelson Cruz drops his bat as he hits a solo home run against the Oakland Athletics during the fifth inning of a baseball game Wednesday in Oakland, Calif.

UP NEXT: MARINERS

• Los Angeles Angels (57-58)
 at Seattle Mariners (59-56)
 • Tonight, 7:10 p.m. TV: RTNW

Joyce also homered for the A's, one day after returning to the lineup following a two-game suspension for using an anti-gay slur.

Emilion Pagan (1-2) pitched one-hit ball over 2 2/3 innings in relief of starter Yovani Gallardo to earn his first career win.

Edwin Diaz retired three batters for his 25th save.

Gallardo was knocked out of the game in the fifth inning after allowing three runs and six hits.

The Mariners, who went into the day with 67 errors, made two defensive gems.

Gamel made a leaping catch while crashing into the left-field wall to rob Marcus Semien of a hit in the fourth inning, the latest in a string of stellar plays from the rookie outfielder. Center fielder Jarrod Dyson also made a leaping catch near the wall in center in the first inning.

"There were some subtle plays that kept us down a little bit," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "Our bats weren't great in the middle of the game but if one of those breaks goes one way or the other, now we're looking at a different ballgame. But they didn't so it was a great play."

Cotton, winless since June 23, allowed six runs and eight hits over six innings.

Can't go distance

The A's have gone a franchise-record 154 consecutive games without a pitcher throwing a complete game. The last pitcher to go the distance for Oakland was Kendall Graveman on Aug. 19, 2016. The streak was the third-longest active drought in the majors entering the day behind Tampa Bay and Atlanta.

Diaz dealing

Diaz has 12 saves since the All-Star break, most in the majors. The Seattle closer also has a scoreless streak of 18 2/3 innings on the road dating to May 24.

Up next

Mariners: LHP James Paxton (12-3, 2.70 ERA) pitches in the opener of a four-game series against the Angels on Friday night in Seattle. Paxton leads the AL and is tied for second in the majors with 113 wild pitches.

Seahawks rave about potential of CB Griffin

By TIM BOOTH
 Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — Even though he's now a professional, Shaquill Griffin is still receiving an intense education.

And in this scenario, Richard Sherman is one of the primary instructors.

"He's mentally sharp. That's really, really unique for a rookie to be that mentally sharp and mentally on it," Sherman said. "He's incredibly coachable. He does a great job of just being coachable and when they correct a mistake then he makes sure he makes the corrections."

There are very few questions surrounding the starters for the Seattle Seahawks when the season begins Sept. 10 at Green Bay. The cornerback opposite Sherman, though, is one of those and perhaps the most important to answer in the weeks leading up to the regular season.

It became an issue when starter DeShawn Sheard suffered a torn ACL in his left knee during Seattle's playoff loss to Atlanta. Sheard needed a small follow-up procedure that delayed his return even further.

Enter the rookie Griffin, Seattle's third-round selection out of Central Florida, who is competing with veteran Jeremy Lane for the starting role opposite Sherman.

"I'm getting a lot of help from Richard and you know, every now and then I get the chance to move a little faster," Griffin said. "Now I'm starting to get the hang of it. The game is starting to slow down for me."

Griffin was a priority pick for the Seahawks. There were other options Seattle could have taken earlier in the draft, but the Seahawks liked Griffin's mix of size at 6-feet and speed.

For all the certainty in Seattle's standout secondary, the spot opposite Sherman has proven troubling since Byron Maxwell left as a free agent following the 2014 season. Cary Williams was brought in for the 2015 season, only to be benched and eventually cut later. Sheard, a converted safety, was more than adequate last season while regularly getting picked on as teams avoided Sherman, but his knee injury altered Seattle's plans.



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

Seattle Seahawks' Shaquill Griffin and Richard Sherman talk between drills at NFL football practice in Renton, Wash.