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SPORTS

Seahawks’ Griffin enjoys having focus on football

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — Nothing will ever be completely normal for Shaquem Griffin as a football player.

He will always be known for being drafted and making the Seattle Seahawks roster despite not having a left hand.

But this training camp has felt different for the second-year line-backer. There’s been less hoopla. There haven’t been cameras following his every move. The focus has been on where he fits as a football player and ultimately proving he belongs on the roster for another season.

“I felt like I was able to be myself and focus on football instead of all the outside talk and everybody in your ear day after day. It was kind of good to get back to strictly football and strictly football itself,” Griffin said. “That’s all I wanted to do — period — was play football. When it comes to balancing everything I got used to that last year, but it felt good to solely focus on football and being around the guys all the time and not worry about commercials this, and signing that.”

Griffin will get his final chance to make an impression in the pre-season Thursday night when the Seahawks face Oakland. Griffin has missed the past two preseason games after suffering a bruised knee in the preseason opener against Denver. He returned to practice Tuesday and is expected to play against the Raiders.

It’s important for Griffin to get on the field again to show what he brings to the Seahawks.

“I don’t feel like I’m behind,” Griffin said. “My whole thing was to work my butt off to get back and focus on learning from everyone in front of me. ... It was more mental learning and putting myself in situations.”

Griffin’s rookie season was a whirlwind. Every move he made in training camp was documented, culminating with Griffin starting the season opener at Denver due to injuries. But he also had to contend with the fact that his size — 6-foot, 227 pounds — has made it difficult to find a permanent position on the field. Griffin’s biggest contributions came on special teams.

Coach Pete Carroll said it was evident Griffin and his comeback brother Shaquill had more to deal with than anyone else a year ago.

“I think both the brothers really took it to heart. They know that they had gone through a tremendous amount last year, and it was a distraction for them and they had to live with it,” Carroll said. “It remains such a great story and it was so hot for so long. As well as they apply themselves, and tried to deal with it, it was more than anyone else had in that regard.”

Both brothers spoke of changes they made to their diets and workout plans in the off-season, and both believe there has been improvement.

Now comes the task of finding a spot on the field that best suits Shaquem.

“The main thing for us is coaches want to see guys running fast and hitting,” Griffin said. “That’s what preseason is all about. You run a few plays and you shouldn’t mess up the few plays that you have. Do everything right, make hits, hit hard, run fast.”

GIRLS SOCCER

LCYSA TEAM TAKES THIRD IN TIGARD SHOOTOUT



The LCYSA Ospreys, in blue, in this month’s win over Lincoln.

O’Brien Starr-Hollow

The Astorian

The Lower Columbia Youth Soccer Association’s age 15-and-under girls Classic team recently took third place in the Southside Tigard Shootout.

Comprised of players from Astoria, Warrenton and Seaside — with guest players from Clackamas United and Beaverton FC — the “Ospreys” won the third-place friendly match in the bronze division with a 2-1 win over Lincoln Youth Soccer, the weekend of Aug. 16 through Aug. 18.

The U15 team from the LCYSA actually opened with a 1-0 loss to Thelo Allegiant on Friday at Cook Park, followed by Saturday losses to Lincoln (3-0) and Oregon Trail FC (2-0).

The Ospreys bounced back to defeat

SCOREBOARD

THURSDAY
Volleyball — Knappa at Warrenton, 6 p.m.
Cross-Country — Seaside at Hillsboro Invitational
FRIDAY
Football — Astoria jamboree, at CMH Field, 6 p.m.; Warrenton jamboree, 6 p.m.
Volleyball — Astoria at Catlin Gabel, noon
SATURDAY
Volleyball — Warrenton Tournament, 10 a.m.

Lincoln 2-1 on Sunday at Tigard Stadium for the tournament’s third-place spot.

Taylor Danielson, from Clackamas, scored the opening goal for the Ospreys, placing the ball over the Lincoln goalkeeper from 20 yards out.

Lincoln tied the match with a penalty kick in the 25th minute, but the Ospreys

answered in the 50th minute, when Pele Starr-Hollow, of Astoria, scored the go-ahead goal, assisted by Tenley Hattori, of Clackamas.

Aside from the Lincoln penalty kick, Osprey goalkeeper Andrea Ortega, of Seaside, made some huge saves and kept a strong Lincoln offense out of the goal.

The Ospreys will head into the fall Classic season with games in the Portland metro area and at Volunteer Field in Warrenton, beginning Sept. 7.

Lower Columbia’s U13 girls Classic team also played in the tournament, finishing 0-3 in pool play, followed by a 4-0 loss to Tualatin Hills United in the friendly B game Sunday.

The LCYSA team suffered pool play losses to Southside Evans (3-0) on Friday, and Saturday losses to Tualatin Hills (2-1) and Oregon Trail FC (5-0).

Pac-12 saw some key QB competitions heading into season

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

Gardner Minshew’s success was something of a pleasant surprise last season for Washington State. Now the Cougars will look to his backup, Anthony Gordon.

Washington State was one of several Pac-12 teams that went through a quarterback competition before the season. Washington was similarly tasked with replacing Jake Browning, while Oregon State’s Jake Luton was pushed in his sixth season of eligibility by Nebraska transfer Tristan Gebbia.

Gordon spent the past few seasons behind Luke Falk and then Minshew in coach Mike Leach’s Air Raid system, waiting his turn. It came when Leach named him the starter for No. 23 Washington State’s opener at home Saturday night against New Mexico State.

Gordon beat out Gage Gubrud, a transfer from Eastern Washington who was granted a sixth year of eligibility after he was sidelined for part of his senior season with a toe injury. Gubrud had beat Washington State in his first start with the Eagles in 2016, throwing for 474 yards and five touchdowns.

Leach told reporters that Gordon had started to separate himself earlier this year.



Ted S. Warren/AP Photo
Washington State quarterback Anthony Gordon, shown here in 2018, has big shoes to fill.

“He had a really good spring and then he really didn’t break stride from spring to fall camp. He was very steady in camp,” Leach said. “Steady, but also explosive.”

Gordon has big shoes to fill.

Minshew, a graduate transfer, emerged as the team’s starter during fall camp after a three-way competition with Gordon and Trey Tinsley. Minshew ended up as the Pac-12 offensive player of the year, throwing for 4,779 yards and 38 touchdowns for the Cougars (11-2) last season. He ended up as a sixth-round draft pick by the Jacksonville Jaguars.

A look at the Pac-12’s other quarterback competitions:

WASHINGTON: Similar to the rival Cougs, No. 13 Washington is also replacing a big-time QB.

Jacob Eason started for Georgia as a freshman but eventually lost the job to Jake Fromm. He transferred to Washington but had to sit out a season. After earning the job in camp, he’ll start on Saturday when the Huskies host Eastern Washington.

Jake Haener, who was in the mix, abruptly left the Huskies after Eason won the job. Washington coach Chris Petersen said Haener’s departure was a surprise, but it also clarified the competition.

Eason replaces Browning, who threw for 3,192 yards with 16 touchdowns last season, leading the Huskies to a 10-4 record and the Pac-12 championship. Browning now plays for the Minnesota Vikings.

OREGON STATE: Coach Jonathan Smith announced last week that Luton will start for the Beavers on Friday night when they host Oklahoma State.

Luton had been limited by injuries to just nine starts since he transferred to Oregon State in 2017 and was granted a sixth year of eligibility by the NCAA. During his first season in Corvallis, he missed eight games with a spine injury. He played in

eight games with five starts last year but was hampered by a concussion and an ankle injury.

“I’m just trying to stay healthy and just trying to be consistent throughout the year. I’m not trying to light up any record books or anything like that,” the 6-foot-7 quarterback said. “I want to put the team in position to win games and make sure I’m on the field. If I can do those two things I think we’ll have a good year.”

THE RETURNEES: In the Pac-12 North, the returning quarterbacks include Oregon’s Justin Herbert and Stanford’s K.J. Costello. Chase Garbers, who started Cal’s final seven games last season, is back at starter for the Golden Bears. He was challenged in camp by transfer Devon Modster, but the job was widely seen as Garbers’ to lose.

In the Pac-12 South, Utah brings back Tyler Huntley, while USC quarterback JT Daniels will have a new system under offensive coordinator Graham Harrell. Arizona returns Khalil Tate but the Wildcats have already had a rough start with a 45-38 loss to Hawaii in an early opener last weekend. Steven Montez embarks on his senior season at Colorado.

FALL SPORTS PREVIEW 2019

COMING IN THE SATURDAY ISSUE OF THE ASTORIAN

