

NFL

Seahawks hoping Thomas Rawls can find his role again

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — Thomas Rawls still smiles. He still talks of his determination and desire to help his team improve and ultimately win.

But it hasn't been an easy first month of the season for the Seattle Seahawks running back. He's been in the middle of a backfield rotation that's proven more challenging to balance than first expected.

Rawls has gone from being the presumptive starter before the season began, to being slowed by yet another injury, to suddenly being a healthy inactive last week when the Seahawks thumped the Colts.

And now, he's back in a prominent role with perhaps a chance to claim his place again as Seattle's primary ball carrier.

With rookie Chris Carson now on injured reserve because of an ankle

injury suffered last week that required surgery, it's now Rawls' opportunity to reclaim a spot he first earned two years ago as a rookie and has struggled to keep since.

"It's part of the game and all you can do is control what you can control," Rawls said. "Just come out and practice hard and work hard and continue to be a leader and whenever you get these opportunities they're so valuable because you just never know how long you'll play this game and I'm grateful of that."

Rawls will be back in the rotation along with Eddie Lacy, J.D. McKissic and possibly C.J. Prosise for Sunday's NFC West showdown with the improved Los Angeles Rams.

So far nothing has come easy this season for Rawls or much of Seattle's run game.

Rawls has only been active for two of the four games, missing the opener in Green Bay while still



In this Sept. 17, 2017, file photo, Seattle Seahawks running back Thomas Rawls (34) rushes against San Francisco 49ers defensive end Solomon Thomas (94) during the first half of an NFL football game in Seattle.

AP Photo/John Froschauer, File

recovering from a sprained ankle in training camp. He's carried the ball five times for all of 4 yards in the two

games he was active and then was unexpectedly scratched last week.

"I didn't go into an atti-

tude or funk or anything like that. It was just one of those things where it's a business decision and I'm OK with that," Rawls said.

"I don't come before this team, I don't come before this organization. I stay in my place and that's a players place, and whenever I touch the field, when No. 34 is out there, I'm out there. If I'm not, I'm not. But you're going to know if I'm out there because I'll be out there having fun and working hard for my team."

It's been a trying three seasons for Rawls. He burst onto the scene in 2015 as an undrafted rookie stepping in when Marshawn Lynch was injured and electrified Seattle's run game.

Rawls was averaging 5.6 yards per carry and had 870 yards when injuries first started derailing his burgeoning career. Rawls suffered a serious broken ankle late in the 2015 season.

He spent the entire

offseason recovering, then two games into the 2016 season — in Los Angeles against the Rams — suffered a lower leg fracture that sidelined him another seven games.

Rawls had two big games when he returned late last season, including a franchise playoff record with 161 yards in a wild-card round win over Detroit.

"We haven't seen him in a while," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said. "We really haven't had a chance to see him on a regular basis. This is kind of a chance for him to re-enter. I'm really excited for him."

Seattle is likely to spread the carries around against the Rams. Lacy is coming off his best game with 52 yards on just 11 carries. And McKissic flashed speed that's been missing from the run game with his 30-yard TD.

"I'm not sure how I felt a couple of years ago," Rawls said. "I feel good today."

Men's College Basketball

Ducks begin work to retool, reload after record season

By STEVE MIMS
The Register-Guard

EUGENE — The Oregon men's basketball team opened practice on Friday and then tried to impress a few top 2018 recruits.

The Ducks officially began the follow-up to their Final Four run when they took the floor at Matthew Knight Arena for the first practice with a roster of 12 players, including the late addition of walk-on guard Will Johnson. Three five-star recruits visited the school over the weekend when Oregon played host to Cal in football.

Oregon brings back five players from last season with sophomore point guard Payton Pritchard as the only returning starter. Forwards Keith Smith and Roman Sorkin helped the Ducks finish 33-6 while forwards M.J. Cage and Paul White each sat out a redshirt year.

Oregon coach Dana Altman added six scholarship players, including graduate transfers Elijah Brown and MiKyle McIntosh. Five-star forward Troy Brown Jr. headlines the class of four freshmen that also includes forwards Abu Kigab and Kenny Wooten along with guard Victor Bailey Jr.

The Ducks have six weeks of work before opening the regular season at home Nov. 10 against Coppin State. Oregon hosts Northwest Christian for an exhibition Oct. 30.

Altman has not been made available for interviews to preview the season. He will join the rest of the Pac-12 Conference coaches at media day Oct. 12 in San Francisco.

Oregon is likely to start Pritchard and Elijah Brown, who averaged 18.9 points per game as a junior at New Mexico, in the backcourt with Troy Brown Jr. on the wing. The Ducks have a variety of options inside with 6-foot-10 Cage and Sorkin along with 6-9 Wooten and White. The 6-7 McIntosh averaged 12.5 points and 5.6 rebounds per game as a junior at Illinois State.

Kigab helped Canada win the FIBA U19 World Cup by averaging 14.7 points and 10.6 rebounds in the tournament. Smith was injured much of his freshman season while Bailey is expected to come off the bench at point guard.

Johnson, a 6-1 guard from Pacific Palisades, Calif., is the grandson of former UCLA and NBA star Marques Johnson.

Elijah Brown, Sorkin and McIntosh are the three seniors, leaving the Ducks with five scholarships available for next season. The Ducks recently secured a commitment from five-star forward Louis King after 6-10 Miles Norris earlier committed to the Ducks.

Oregon hosted a trio of five-star prospects over the weekend, according to 247Sports.com, as it looks to add players who can sign when the early recruiting period opens on Nov. 8.

Bol Bol, a 7-1 center from Mater Dei High School in Santa Ana, Calif., ranked as the No. 3 overall prospect in his class, visited along with Emmitt Williams, a 6-8 power forward ranked No. 21. Guard Will Richardson is the No. 47 overall player from Oak Hill Academy in Virginia.

Men's College Basketball

Beavers motivated to bounce back

By JESSE SOWA
Corvallis Gazette-Times

CORVALLIS — Tres Tinkle wakes up every morning with a daily reminder hanging above his bed: 5-27.

With Tinkle on the sideline for the final 26 games last season due to a broken wrist, and two other players having left the program, Oregon State's men's basketball team was undermanned and struggled to keep up in the Pac-12 Conference.

Those numbers — 5-27, the Beavers' record — keep Tinkle focused on getting better and determined to not let his team slide to those depths again.

"It's in the back of our mind," he said. "We don't bring it up a lot. But I think we use it as motivation to work even harder and want to see it fall away this year."

Tinkle, a talented 6-foot-8 forward, was granted a redshirt and enters a second straight season as a sophomore in eligibility. On the court, he rejoins a team with more experience that's added several newcomers who could be immediate impact players.

Oregon State opens practice Wednesday, a little more than four weeks from its first game. The Beavers play Pacific in a Nov. 3 exhibition at Gill Coliseum and then host Southern Utah on Nov. 10 to begin the regular season.

"Very, very different," junior guard Stevie Thompson said of this year's squad. "We have a lot more depth. We have a lot more people who can score on their

own ... a lot of people that can make plays for each other, so it should be a fun year."

Thompson and his brother, freshman guard Ethan Thompson, are back together after playing two seasons of high school basketball with one another at Bishop Montgomery in Los Angeles.

Ethan was last year's California state player of the year. With the addition of freshmen Zach Reichle and Xavier Smith, the Beavers now have eight guards on the roster.

Junior post Drew Eubanks ultimately remained with the program after gauging potential interest from NBA teams before withdrawing his draft entry.

He leads a thin but veteran group of big men that now includes Seth Berger, a graduate transfer from Massachusetts who was recruited by Wayne Tinkle when Tinkle was at Montana.

"He runs the floor really well. He rebounds," Eubanks said of Berger. "He's always talking on defense and he just plays really hard to the point where you can always count on him being where he needs to be. If somebody gets beat he's always there."

The team gained experience and life lessons during a trip to Spain in August.

The players saw firsthand the devastation of the terrorist attack in Barcelona, which happened just outside their hotel. Wayne Tinkle said the emotional hours and days following brought the team unity that he saw throughout the rest of the trip and has continued on into the

workouts after the return home.

"It's night and day the way the guys are enjoying themselves, pushing and challenging each other in everything we do," the coach said. "Conditioning, lifting, workouts ... it's all done from the right angle in a positive manner and it's all helped with the jelling and chemistry we're building. As we get closer to game time we've got to continue that and carry it over once it starts for real."

While seeing the tragedy take place, Tres Tinkle said he believes sharing those moments together will make the team stronger going forward.

"When you have that team chemistry and that bond, you'd like to see others do well," he said. "We're going to be happy and feed off each other's success. Hopefully it will help us win games and then it's going to make us that much closer."

The Beavers had 10 practices before the trip and played four of five games on their original schedule.

Freshman forward Alfred Hollins didn't make the Spain trip because he needed to complete a class, but is now cleared to play.

Senior center Cheikh N'diaye missed the trip in order to finish his requirements for graduation. A shoulder injury that's plagued him throughout his time at OSU has kept him on the sideline this offseason.

He played in just nine games last season due to injury. Like Tinkle, he was granted a medical hardship and an additional year of eligibility from the Pac-12.

PLAYOFFS: Cleveland picks up Game 1 after impressive outing from Bauer

Continued from 1B

Dallas Keuchel starting for the Astros against Drew Pomeranz.

Among the shortest players in the majors, Altuve couldn't be a bigger leader for the Astros. He's one of the few players remaining who languished through a rebuilding process that led to three straight 100-loss seasons from 2011-13, and is perhaps the main reason this team ran away with the AL West title this year.

"First off, how good is Jose Altuve?" Houston manager A.J. Hinch asked. "It's incredible to watch him step up and be every bit the star that we needed today for sure. It's hard to describe in different ways."

Altuve hit .346 this year, his fourth straight 200-hit season. He had 24 home runs this year — this was his third career multihomer game, and the first time he'd hit three all at once.

Quite a comeback from his only previous postseason — in 2015, he batted just .154 (4 for 26) without an extra-base hit.

The crowd of 43,402, which included Hall of Famers Nolan Ryan, Jeff Bagwell and Craig Biggio, waved bright orange towels as Altuve trotted around the bases.

Sale never got into a rhythm and was chased after walking Josh Reddick with no outs in the sixth. The left-

hander was tagged for nine hits and matched a season high for most runs allowed.

"Anytime he mislocated, particularly in the middle of the plate, they made him pay for it ... And then his slider was hit and miss today," manager John Farrell said. "Some were flat, some had good depth, but the inconsistency to the location pitch to pitch is a difference in this one against a team that makes you pay."

After fanning 308 in the regular season, Sale struck out six. But he allowed three homers and three doubles, marking just the second time in his career that he's given up six extra-base hits.

"Never really gave my team a chance to win. Put them in a hole early," Sale said. "They fought back and they fought back hard and I gave it right back to them. It happens (but a) terrible time for it to happen."

Verlander, a playoff veteran who was starting his 17th postseason game, yielded six hits, struck out three and walked two to help the Astros take the early lead in the series.

CLEVELAND 4, NEW YORK 0

CLEVELAND (AP) — Trevor Bauer made Aaron Judge look silly, and he made his manager look like a genius.

Named a surprise starter for Game 1, Bauer chopped



Cleveland Indians' Jay Bruce, right, is congratulated by Edwin Encarnacion after Bruce hit a two-run home run off New York Yankees starting pitcher Sonny Gray during Game 1 of the ALDS on Thursday in Cleveland.

AP Photo/David Derman

Judge and New York's other big bats down to size, and Jay Bruce drove in three runs as the Cleveland Indians began chasing their first World Series title in 69 years with a 4-0 win over the Yankees on the Thursday night in the opener of the AL Division Series.

Bauer struck out Judge three times, twice getting the MVP candidate looking. He allowed just two hits in 6

2-3 innings before manager Terry Francona, who chose to start the right-hander over ace Corey Kluber, turned to baseball's best bullpen, using Andrew Miller and closer Cody Allen to finish the three-hitter.

Allen came in with two on and two outs in the eighth to face Judge, who struck out for the fourth time and angrily snatched at his bat frustration, and finished for

a save.

Bruce connected for a two-run homer in the fourth off Sonny Gray and added a sacrifice fly in the fifth as the Indians began a journey to try and end the majors' longest Series title drought.

Eyebrows were raised when Francona said he was going with Bauer instead of Kluber, and the eccentric right-hander, perhaps best known for slicing a pinkie open while repairing a drone during last year's postseason, delivered a performance that started October just right for the Indians.

"Trevor from pitch one, he had his breaking ball early, and he had a good one," Francona said. "He had his life on his fastball. He pitched in. I thought he pitched a terrific game."

Kluber, an 18-game winner during the regular season, will start Game 2 on Friday against CC Sabathia. Coming off their win over Minnesota in the wild-card game Tuesday, when Judge homered in his playoff debut, the Yankees came in with momentum.

Bauer stopped the Bronx Bombers in their tracks.

Taking the mound to his usual thundering warm-up music, "The Pursuit of Vikings," an intimidating song by Swedish metal band Amon Amarth, Bauer didn't mess around.

He struck out Judge in the first watching a curveball before fanning Gary Sanchez

with a pitch way off the plate.

Bauer, who is 11-1 in his last 14 starts, struck out Judge again in the fourth, but the All-Star reached on a wild pitch. Bauer, though, regrouped by getting Sanchez to bounce into a double play before he freeing Didi Gregorius for his sixth strikeout.

Bauer got help from All-Star-second baseman-turned-center fielder Jason Kipnis, who made a diving catch to rob Chase Headley in the third. As Kipnis slowly got to his feet, Bauer raised both arms above his head, pumped his fist and screamed to salute his teammate.

"All I've been hearing is that I shouldn't be playing center field," Kipnis said. "That was a fun one to run down and be a part of. I had a good time. I'm very happy."

Bruce gave the Indians a 3-0 lead in the fourth with a towering homer to right.

After Edwin Encarnacion walked, Gray came inside with a 0-1 fastball and Bruce got around on it. As his shot cut through the fall night, Judge appeared as if he might be able to make a play near the wall, but the 6-foot-7 slugger could only watch as Bruce's shot sailed into the seats.

Bruce nearly caught Encarnacion on the bases, and as he finished a home-run trot that was more of a sprint, Cleveland's fans hollered "Bruuuuuuce" like a crowd at a Springsteen concert.