

Fujita Takes on Another Rebuild

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As he settles into his new community, Browns linebacker Scott Fujita hasn't forgotten the struggles in Louisiana. Plus, more player notes from OTAs...

[Scott Fujita](#) is big on rebuilding projects. The former Saints linebacker was involved in one the winter after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans and now he is deep into another as a linebacker with the Browns.

The Saints were 3-13 the year before Fujita signed with New Orleans as a free agent in 2006. Seven months earlier Katrina devastated the city. The losing record and the storm damage could have driven Fujita away. Instead, those conditions and [Sean Payton](#), at the time a rookie head coach, lured him to the Saints.

Now Fujita finds himself in a similar situation with the Browns, minus the hurricane damage. The Browns are in dire need of repair after going 5-11 in 2009 after finishing 4-12 in 2008. There is excitement in Cleveland because the Browns did win their last four games in 2009, but everyone involved knows much has to be done.

The city of Cleveland is getting more than an able-bodied linebacker. As did every player on the Super Bowl champion Saints, Fujita earned \$83,000 as part of the winning team. Unlike other players, Fujita donated half his winnings to charity -- about \$21,000 to the Haiti earthquake relief fund and another \$21,000 to the gulf restoration project.

Part of Fujita's heart is still in The Big Easy. He is following news of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico closely. But make no mistake; he is settling in quickly in his new community and with his new team.

"It's a huge change, but it is a change that my family is embracing," Fujita said. "We love to explore new areas of the country and for us, that's a part of it. It's not just playing football on Sundays; it's getting to know the country well. We know that there's a great fan base here. We've always heard a lot about it, so we're excited about that."

No segment of the defense has been overhauled more than linebacker since Eric Mangini was named head coach in 2009. [David Bowens](#) and [Eric Barton](#) were signed in free agency last year. [David Veikune](#) (second round) and [Kaluka Maiava](#) (fourth round) were 2009 draft picks. In October they acquired [Jason Trusnik](#) in the trade sending [Braylon Edwards](#) to the Jets. Fujita was signed in free agency and last month they acquired [Chris Gocong](#) in a trade with the Eagles.

Bowens and Trusnik are flexible enough to play inside or outside. Barton is an inside linebacker. He is recovering from neck surgery but hasn't been active in OTAs during his rehab.

Fujita can play inside or outside. The Browns did not replace outside linebacker [Kameron Wimbley](#) after trading him to Oakland prior to the draft. Fujita says he does not know where he will end up. It could change game to game.

"It remains to be seen," Fujita said. "We have a lot of linebackers right now who can play a lot of different positions and I think that's one of our strengths. I think a lot of us have a lot of versatility and that's going to be one of the big strengths of this defense."

[D'Qwell Jackson](#) is in the mix. He is strictly an inside linebacker. He is a restricted free agent and has not signed his tender. He is skipping the OTAs.

PLAYER/PERSONNEL NOTES

--RB [Jerome Harrison](#) is participating in the OTAs now. He is a restricted free agent and has not signed his tender but signed a waiver so he could practice. Harrison skipped most of the offseason conditioning program and the first week of

OTAs because of his contract situation. He was excused from practice Thursday for reasons unrelated to his contract.

--David Veikune is concentrating strictly on playing inside linebacker. As a rookie last season he was trying to learn inside and outside. He had trouble with the transition after playing defensive end at [Hawaii](#).

--Rookie guard [Shawn Lauvao](#) has unofficially taken Alex Mack's role of making false starts in practice, the punishment for which offense is running a lap around the practice field.

Mack was notorious last year for running laps as a rookie center either for moving early or misfiring on a snap. Lauvao ran two laps at a recent OTA practice. Lauvao can play guard or tackle, but so far he is concentrating on playing right guard.

--There is no timetable for [Shaun Rogers](#) to return to the practice field. He is working with trainers while he recovers from a broken leg. He also is waiting to hear from Commissioner Roger Goodell about what punishment he will receive for having a loaded gun -- Rogers said he forgot he had it -- at the airport two days before Easter.

Rogers never has been friendly with the media and since the gun incident he has been dodging reporters more than ever. He finished working with trainers during OTAs Thursday, and as he headed to the locker room a reporter asked, "How's the leg feeling, Shaun?"

"It feels like a leg," he said.

STRATEGY AND PERSONNEL

[James Davis](#) is back practicing with the Browns. He underwent shoulder surgery after being hurt in practice last September as a rookie. During the first week of OTAs he was on the exercise bike working with the other players rehabbing from offseason surgery.

"It's been almost a year," he said. "I feel like a rookie again. The difference is when I look at the playbook I know what to do. I don't have to learn everything all over again. I have to get back to playing football again."

Since Davis' injury [Jamal Lewis](#) was released, [Peyton Hillis](#) was acquired in trade and [Montario Hardesty](#) was drafted. [Chris Jennings](#), who was signed during training camp last year, is in a fight for a backup spot.