

Alouettes' Dix surprised by release

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This is the uncertainty of professional sports: Last month, De'Audra Dix said he received a call from head coach Marc Trestman, advising him to be prepared for the start of training camp. He was told to be ready for the challenge of competing for a starting position in the Alouettes' secondary.

But then last Friday, as first reported by *montrealgazette.com*, he was advised by assistant general manager Marcel Desjardins of his release, the team electing to go in another direction.

"I was kind of surprised. I'm home training and was ready to prove myself, show I'm still at the top of my game," Dix told *The Gazette* on Tuesday from his winter home in Merritt Island, Fla. "Of course I'm upset. It hurt for a second. I've been to two Grey Cups and I know what it takes to win."

After playing collegiately at tiny and little-known Johnson C. Smith, a Division-II school, Dix was discovered during an open tryout held

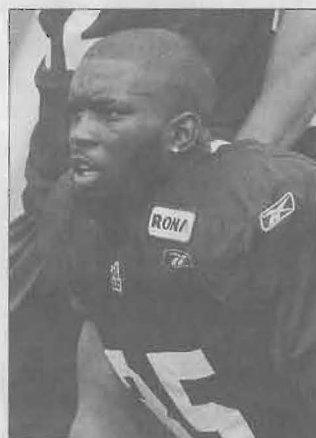
by the Als, the defensive back paying \$80 to attend. He earned a roster spot as a rookie in 2009, starting four of 10 games.

He intercepted three passes over two seasons, playing strong-side cornerback. The 5-foot-10, 160-pound speedster had some good games and some that weren't as good, during which he was exploited and beaten. "At times, I probably had a (bad) game here and there," he admitted.

Dix balked at being put on the Als' practice roster out of training camp in 2011, requesting and being granted his release. But he was asked to return after Jerald Brown sustained a season-ending injury in the opening game, against British Columbia. Dix started the remaining 17 games. He recovered three fumbles and had 28 defensive tackles.

Playing strong-side DB in a makeshift secondary, Dix intercepted a pass in the East Division semifinal, against Hamilton, but the Als lost and allowed 52 points.

"I think I played pretty good in the playoff game,"



JOHN MAHONEY GAZETTE FILE PHOTO

"I thought I showed I've still got it," former Alouettes cornerback De'Audra Dix said.

he said. "I thought I played really well (during the season) and was used in different parts of the secondary. I think I did well. When someone was hurt, I filled in and I knew the scheme.

"I thought I showed I've still got it."

Dix, 28, can only hope another Canadian Football League team is interested in his services, signs him and is at least prepared to bring him to training camp in June.

Time remains in his favour and he said, through his agent Kevin Markey, inquiries will be made to every team. Markey didn't return a message left by *The Gazette*.

"I just need an opportunity. I'm not looking for a handout," said Dix, who also was utilized occasionally by Montreal as a kickoff and punt returner. "I'm going to embrace this. It'll bring the best out of me. I look forward to proving myself."

But it might take an injury before Dix hears from any teams.

"He was playing because they had injuries," one CFL executive said. "He's a guy you tried to go after."

Said another: "No interest. That sums it up."

Dix might be able to resurface in Winnipeg, reuniting with defensive co-ordinator Tim Burke. Burke was the DC and Dix's position coach with the Als. But the Blue Bombers also are fairly deep in their secondary.

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