

Anderson vows to colour within lines

Feisty back settles with Trestman

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News, it seems, occasionally travels slowly in the Canadian Football League.

At the league's recent evaluation camp in Toronto, British Columbia general manager Wally Buono, merely the CFL's career leader in wins by a head coach, approached Darren Gill wondering when Gill's client, Dwight Anderson, was going to be released by the Alouettes.

The answer: Not now or anytime soon.

As Montreal general manager Jim Popp told montrealgazette.com in mid-February, the team's controversial defensive back will be returning when training camp begins in early June.

Als head coach Marc Trestman, who was believed to have butted heads with Anderson last season, has had a series of talks with the player this winter.

There was never any doubt of Trestman's belief in Anderson's athletic skills as the team attempts to rebound from a disappointing 10-8 record, combined with an East Division semifinal loss at home to Hamilton in overtime. Instead, like with any player, Trestman wants the combustible Anderson to act, perhaps, in a more rational manner next season.

"Some of the things he did were resourceful and he wasn't totally out of the box," Trestman said on Monday. "I



MIKE CASSESE REUTERS FILE PHOTO

Alouettes defensive-back Dwight Anderson is staying with the club, but will be expected to be on his best behaviour.

don't think D.A. has much to change. He wasn't a distraction to any major degree."

The Als signed Anderson from Calgary on the opening day of free agency in February 2011. It was believed at the time Montreal had procured the prized gem that was available.

But Anderson, a CFL all-star in 2010 when he intercepted five passes, two of which were returned for touchdowns, displayed a penchant for taking unnecessary penalties — a sure way of entering Trestman's doghouse. Anderson also was penalized by the league for poking Saskatchewan receiver Weston Dressler in the eye, which he claimed was accidental.

Later in the season, Anderson was accused of spitting at spectators at Hamilton's Ivor Wynne Stadium, although the CFL quickly dropped its investigation of the alleged

incident, evidence lacking.

Anderson's season ended after only 10 games. Suffering a torn quad muscle, he was placed on the nine-game injured list. The Gazette subsequently reported there had been an off-field disagreement between Trestman and the player, Olympic Stadium security having been called to escort the player out of the facility.

But that now all seems to be a historical footnote.

"I'm not surprised at all to be returning," Anderson said from his winter home in St. Louis.

"For sure we've spoken, mostly for our lines of communication. But I'm going to be the same player I've always been. But (Trestman) wants me to be more of a leader and made it clear there are expectations.

"We spoke about last season, but it wasn't just me. He

has these talks with every player. We had some good conversations. I'm always going to be D.A. He just wants it to be between the lines."

Had Anderson not been injured, none of this likely would have occurred. The Als' secondary was severely depleted through injuries as the season wore on; Anderson's presence undoubtedly would have helped. But Anderson grew frustrated with his injury and took those feelings out on players during games.

Still, Anderson probably will be expected to be on his best behaviour next season. He'll have little room for error. The addition of new defensive coordinator Jeff Reinebold, himself a liberal thinker, should assist Anderson, the two likely to have much in common.

"This was all new to both of us. We were both teetering ... coming to a new situation," Anderson said of his relationship with Trestman. "But it was never a problem. There are expectations he's got for everybody.

"I can't change who I am. I'll still talk and still be there," Anderson added. "Whatever I do, it has got to be between the lines. I'm cool about that."

With Montreal, Anderson had one interception he returned 50 yards for a touchdown against the Tiger-Cats. He also had one quarterback sack. He registered 40 tackles while knocking down five passes.

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