

## ALOUETTES

# Deslauriers remains with club

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Slightly more than a week ago, it appeared Éric Deslauriers was prepared to test the free-agent market.

But on Friday, the Alouettes announced the non-import receiver, a former first-round draft choice, has been signed to a new two-year contract.

So what happened? This isn't rocket science. The Als increased their offer, making Deslauriers and his agent believe the 6-foot-4, 206 pounder could become more of a component in the team's offence. And that was enough for the deal to come together quickly.

"They plan on giving him a shot as the fifth receiver," said Fred Weinrauch, Deslauriers's Montreal-based agent. "I'm not saying we broke the bank, but they wouldn't pay that just for him to be a special-teams player."

"He may not win the (starting) job, but we expect him to have more playing time."

When Deslauriers, selected seventh overall in the 2006 draft, signed an extension with the Als in January 2010, he was forced to accept a reduced salary. That came after a season in which he dressed for only four games and caught one pass, being used primarily on special teams.

Deslauriers earned as estimated \$55,000 last season. The Als already made him an offer this winter – one that obviously wasn't substantial enough to consummate the deal. It appeared Deslauriers was going to test the market, not only hoping for more money, but the opportunity to play more regularly with another team.

But Weinrauch had a chance encounter with head coach Marc Trestman last week at Trudeau airport, at which time Trestman suggested Deslauriers could be a ratio changer next season. GM Jim Popp then made a new offer on Thursday, and the two sides struck a deal.

It can be assumed Deslauriers received an increase in his base salary along with incentives that can be reached with playing time – at receiver. The rest, of course, is now up to him.

"Honestly, I feel like I can start here. But obviously it has been five years and I've not done that yet," Deslauriers said in a telephone interview. "I hope, with a few plays and a positive image, I can get a few more reps."

"The starting five receivers are still here obviously," he continued. "But I feel like I can get a piece of the action."

For only the second time in his career, Deslauriers dressed for all 18 regular-season games in 2011. Although he caught a modest six passes for 98 yards, he scored two touchdowns – including Anthony Calvillo's record-breaking 395th career scoring pass against Toronto on July 15. Deslauriers made an acrobatic catch at the back of the end zone.

Deslauriers also connected with Calvillo on a 75-yard pass-and-run touchdown in the East Division semifinal, against Hamilton.

Deslauriers, 30, of Gatineau, becomes eligible for free agency again in 2014.

The Als also signed three 2011 draft choices – former Concordia offensive-tackle Anthony Barrette, defensive-back Blaine Ruttan and guard Reed Alexander.

Others agreeing to terms: Receivers Travon Patterson, Sidney Stewart and Trent Guy; defensive-backs Vince Anderson, Daryl Townsend and Michael Carter; defensive-ends Daunte Akra, Chris Hodgson and Ventrell Jenkins, and defensive-tackle Tremaine Johnson.