



AP Photo

Detroit Lions safety Terrence Holt (42) defends against wide receiver Charles Rogers on a pass play during their Black and Blue practice at Ford Field on Aug. 6.

Lions off the injured list

A team decimated by injuries for two years is now healthy

BY JAMES COOK
Record-Eagle staff writer

ALLEN PARK — At the Detroit Lions' training facility here, there's a large tent intended to treat injured players.

Fortunately for the Lions, that tent has had few visitors in recent weeks.

Over the grind of a 16-game NFL season, injuries are bound to occur.

Just ask the Lions, who have been one of the hardest hit teams in terms of players placed on injured reserve for the last two to three years.

So what do you do to combat injuries?

If you're the Lions, outside of a metal plate for Charles Rogers' twice-broken collarbone, you go get some depth to have good players on the bench for just such an occa-

sion.

And that's exactly what the team has done over the past several years, re-signing their own top players and adding more through free agency and three successful deep drafts in a row under team president Matt Millen, who was recently rewarded with a five-year contract extension.

The three-headed wide receiver monster of Rogers, Roy Williams and Mike Williams gets much of the attention, but the team's added depth could be just as big a factor in the team's success.

A team that was decimated by injuries much of the last two years is now nearly 100 percent healthy.

"I think every team wants the same thing," cornerback Fernando Bryant said. "If you can put the same 11 on the field, you have a better chance to win. That's something our defense never really did last year. As long as we can stay healthy and make some plays on the ball,

we're going to be alright."

In the off-season, the Lions didn't lose any players they made a significant effort to retain.

The first addition of the off-season was a big-hitting safety, as the Lions got out of the gates and signed the top strong safety on the free-agent market by locking up former Denver Bronco Kenoy Kennedy.

"It'll definitely help out a lot for the corners," Pro Bowl cornerback Dre' Bly said of Kennedy's presence. "If a receivers goes across the middle, they have to think twice now because with Kenoy and his reputation of being a hard-hitter is a great addition to our team."

Also added in free agency was Rick DeMulling, who will take over at left guard for David Loverne, a free agent signee last year who will now become a backup and might not even make the team. DeMulling joined tight end Marcus Pollard in coming to Detroit from Indianapolis, where the two

were cogs in the league's most potent offense last year.

Kevin Johnson, a seventh-year wideout with great hands, came in to provide depth at receiver behind the team's last three No. 1 picks — Rogers and the two Williamses — to form potentially one of the best receiving corps in the NFL.

Detroit also added depth by signing running back Jamel White, guard/tackle Kyle Kosier, guard/center Brock Gutierrez, quarterback Jeff Garcia and cornerback R.W. McQuarters. Kosier and Gutierrez were starters last year for the 49ers — blocking for new Lions offensive coordinator Ted Tollner — but will provide veteran depth in the trenches. Garcia also played under Tollner two years ago in San Francisco.

The Lions also traded a conditional draft pick to the New York Jets for safety Jon McGraw, a second-round pick by the Jets three years ago.

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DETROIT LIONS

2004-05 record: 6-10

Head coach: Steve Mariucci

Key additions: SS Kenoy Kennedy, OG Rick DeMulling, TE Marcus Pollard, WR Kevin Johnson, QB Jeff Garcia, CB R.W. McQuarters, T/G Kyle Kosier, C/G Brock Gutierrez, RB Jamel White.

Key losses: OT Stockar McDougle, TE Stephen Alexander, WR Az-Zahir Hakim (released), FS Brian Walker (released), FS Brock Marion (released), QB Mike McMahon, QB Ty Detmer, DT Kelvin Pritchett (retired), WR Tai Streets.

Draft picks: Mike Williams, WR, USC (1st round); Shaun Cody, DT, USC (2nd round); Stanley Wilson, CB, Stanford (3rd round); Dan Orlovsky, QB, Connecticut (5th round); DE Bill Swancutt, DE, Oregon State (6th round); Johnathan Goddard, LB, Marshall (6th round).

Projected starting lineup:

OFFENSE

QB	Joey Harrington
RB	Kevin Jones
FB	Cory Schlesinger
WR	Roy Williams
WR	Charles Rogers
WR	Mike Williams
LT	Jeff Backus
LG	Rick DeMulling
C	Dominic Raiola
RG	Damien Woody
RT	Kelly Butler

DEFENSE

DE	James Hall
DT	Shaun Rogers
DT	Dan Wilkinson
DE	Cory Redding
OLB	Boss Bailey
ILB	Earl Holmes
OLB	James Davis
CB	Dre' Bly
SS	Kenoy Kennedy
FS	Terrence Holt
CB	Fernando Bryant

SPECIAL TEAMS

KR	Eddie Drummond
PR	Eddie Drummond
K	Jason Hanson
P	Nick Harris
LS	Don Muhlback

'04 NFC NORTH STANDINGS

Team	W	L
Green Bay	10	6
Minnesota	8	8
Detroit	6	10
Chicago	5	11