

T.O., Keyshawn cut; Brees, Culpepper find new homes

By DAVE GOLDBERG
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two star quarterbacks found new homes Tuesday, and two talented but troublesome receivers went on the open market.

Daunte Culpepper landed in Miami and Drew Brees in New Orleans, a few hours before Terrell Owens was released by Philadelphia and Keyshawn Johnson was cut by Dallas.

For the Eagles, parting ways with Owens was inevitable. But the Cowboys' move was unexpected and is sure to fuel speculation that Owens could be headed to the Cowboys, where he could never have coexisted with Johnson, sometimes dubbed "Me-shawn."

The quarterbacks played off each other.

Brees, who had been considering Miami and New Orleans, agreed to a six-year deal with the Saints shortly after the Vikings traded Culpepper to the Dolphins for what was reported as a second round pick. However, Brees' agent, Tom Condon, said his client had been leaning toward the Saints in the past two days.

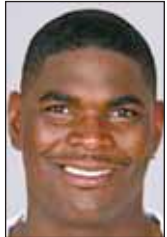
Not only did that take the two experienced QBs off the market, but it raised another question: Does New Orleans dangle the second pick in the draft for teams seeking Southern California quarterback



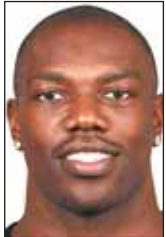
BREES



CULPEPPER



JOHNSON



OWENS

Matt Leinart? Aaron Brooks, the Saints' quarterback for the past five years, is likely to be released, adding another quarterback who has some value to the market.

Both Culpepper and Brees are coming off major injuries.

Brees, a standout for the Chargers the past two seasons, injured his throwing shoulder in the team's final game last season and underwent surgery. He has said that he expects four or five months of recovery but doesn't anticipate any long-term effects.

The Saints will pay him \$60 million over six years, \$10 million guaranteed.

Culpepper threw just six touchdowns and had 12 interception last season, playing just seven games before he tore three ligaments in his knee.

"Anything we do is contingent on a player passing a medical exam," Miami spokesman Harvey Greene said.

Another veteran quarterback,

Jon Kitna, is going to Detroit, according to his agent, Michael Moyer. Kitna backed up Carson Palmer in Cincinnati for two years after being named the NFL's comeback player of the year in 2003, his first season with the Bengals and his only one as a starter with them.

Then there were the receivers. Owens and Johnson were partly responsible for a clause in the new labor agreement that prevents teams from benching players by deactivating them.

It first happened with Johnson in Tampa Bay in 2003, when coach Jon Gruden deactivated him for the final six games for disciplinary reasons. The Eagles did the same last season with Owens, suspending him for four games, then deactivating him.

Owens' release was timed so that the Eagles could avoid paying him a \$5 million roster bonus due today. In addition to Dallas, Denver, Kansas City and Miami are said to be interested.

WEDNESDAY'S OTHER NFL ACTION

Philadelphia Eagles

Signed former Bengal Matt Schobel to back up L.J. Smith at tight end. Schobel caught 90 passes for 938 yards and nine TDs in four seasons with the Bengals.

Tennessee Titans

Signed former New England wide receiver David Givens. Givens, who had a career-high 59 catches last season, has seven touchdowns in the postseason. The Titans also signed 35-year-old Kevin

Mawae, the six-time Pro Bowl center who was cut by the New York Jets last month.

Detroit Lions

Re-signed defensive end Kalimba Edwards and kick returner Eddie Drummond to five-year deals.

New York Giants

Confirmed signing former Dolphins cornerback Sam Madison and Monday's deal with R.W. McQuarters, and signing Jason Bell and Quentin Harris. They also re-

signed three veterans: backup quarterback Tim Hasselbeck, offensive tackle Bob Whitfield and kick returner Chad Morton.

Jacksonville Jaguars

Signed Mike Williams, the fourth overall pick in the 2002 draft. The 360-pound offensive lineman was cut by Buffalo.

Kansas City Chiefs

Restructured Pro Bowl guard Will Shields' contract, guaranteeing he will finish his career with the team.

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