



By Greg Benson

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Tonight marks the final chance for players to make that lasting impression to secure a spot on the team's 53-man roster. The Raiders broke training camp last week and the Alameda headquarters is bursting at the seams with 75 gridiron goliaths roaming the halls and bumping shoulders in a crowded locker room.

Things will significantly thin out on Friday as the final cuts come in and 22 players are trimmed

from the team.

One player to already catch head coach Dennis Allen's eye is second-year scat back Taiwan Jones. This 6-foot, 197-pound speedster hails from Antioch — just 45 miles north of O.co Coliseum.

Last year, as a rookie, Jones played in 10 games totalling 16 carries for 73 yards and 8 kickoff returns for 165 yards. Unfortunately, he was inactive for the final six games due to a hamstring injury.

But the young Jones appears well healed and ready to return to action as evidenced by his premier performance Saturday night.

"He was explosive," said Allen. "He had a really nice run where they got penetration and he cut back, and he was able to get around the defense. That's one of the things he gives you. He does have some real speed. So, his ability to get on the edge is good for us."

Jones is expected to see much more action this year in relief of starting running back Darren McFadden. Other than McFadden, Jones is the only other running back returning to the team from last year.

Competing with Jones is Mike Goodson — another speedy back with return abilities acquired from the Carolina Panthers.

New General Manager Reggie McKenzie made the trade for Goodson as his first deal upon taking over the leadership of the Oakland Raiders.

This pressure-packed competition will definitely bring out their best efforts tonight in Seattle.

CAPTION: Running back Taiwan Jones ran for 50 yards on 10 carries in Saturday's 31-20 victory over the Detroit Lions.

PHOTO BY GREG BENSON