Browns defensive lineman Emmanuel Stephens got his first extended playing time against the Houston Texans last Sunday. During the game, Stephens registered four total tackles, including three solo stops.

If T.J. Ward is unable to play Sunday against the St. Louis Rams, Usama Young could slide into the starting strong safety spot.

Browns defensive back Youngleft the New Orleans Saints and came to Cleveland with the intention of competing for a starting spot in the secondary. However, an injured hamstring negated any chance Young had of competing during training camp.

Although Young missed both Wednesday and Thursday's practices as the Browns prepared for Sunday's game against the St. Louis Rams, he returned to the field Friday and could find himself in the starting lineup. The Browns again practiced without starting strong safety T.J.

Ward and according to coach Pat Shurmur, the second-year defensive back from Oregon is “most likely out” for Sunday.

“I feel good with the week of preparation,” Young said. “I had to take a lot of mental reps, but was able to get out there today. I feel confident. It’s like Week Nine, Week 10. There are going to be some guys banged up. Going into camp, we knew we had a deep secondary. Those injuries do hurt, but we’ve got to go out and play at a high level.”

Young, who was limited and listed as questionable for the game, was on the field last Sunday when the Browns surrendered 261 rush yards to the Houston Texans at Reliant Stadium. That was a game Young and the Browns are looking forward to erasing with a good performance Sunday.

“You never want to give up that many yards on the ground or in the air,” Young said. “You want to bounce back this week. We went over those corrections that we needed to make and now, we’ve got to execute this Sunday.”

Young was not the only Browns player able to return to practice Friday.

After missing Thursday with an illness, kicker Phil Dawson took his usual practice repetitions.

Wide receiver Mohamed Massaquoi (head) was unable to practice, but was not sent home as he had been on Wednesday and Thursday.

“He was in the meetings,” Shurmur said of Massaquoi. “I talked to him briefly today and he said he was feeling better.”

In addition to Massaquoi and Ward, running backs Peyton Hillis and Montario were held out of practice, as was defensive back Dimitru Patterson. Hardesty, Hillis and Massaquoi have been ruled out for Sunday, while Ward is doubtful and Patterson is questionable.

Like Dawson, punter Brad Maynard (left thigh) and linebacker Quinton Spears (ankle) were full participants in practice. Dawson, Maynard, Spears and Norwood are probable.

Wide receiver Danario Alexander (hamstring), linebacker Josh Hull (hamstring), tight end Lance Kendricks (foot), running back Jerious Norwood (hamstring) and tackle Jason Smith (head) missed St. Louis' Friday practice, while quarterback Sam Bradford (ankle), defensive ends James Hall (knee) and Eugene Sims (shoulder) and linebacker Bryan Kehl (ankle) were limited.

Alexander, Kendricks, Norwood and Smith have been declared out for Sunday, while Bradford, Hall, Hull, Kehl and Sims are questionable.

Defensive tackles Gary Gibson (hip) and Darell Scott (head), running back Steven Jackson (foot), defensive end C.J. Ah You (calf) and safety Darian Stewart (ankle) were full participants and are probable for the game.

SEEING MORE TIME

Browns defensive lineman Emmanuel Stephens got his first extended playing time against the Houston Texans last Sunday. During the game, Stephens registered four total tackles, including three solo stops.

"It was a good opportunity because I was in Houston, my hometown," Stephens said. "That was good for me and I enjoyed that. Did it boost my confidence up? Yes, it did."

As the Browns prepared for the Rams earlier this week, Stephens got more work in the defensive line rotation.

"He's done a good job and he's probably going to get a lot of reps this weekend," Shurmur said.

“We feel good about the way he plays. He plays extremely hard. e knows what he’s doing and he’s going to get an opportunity to show what he can do.”