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By JAMES W. WADE III

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The Cleveland Browns are officially back with the opening of the training camp in Berea. “First day in pads, it’s always a little bit sloppier. Some of these guys haven’t carried their pads in competitive situations since the middle of last year. For the most part, the work was good, we got some good runs,” said Browns new Head Coach Pat Shurmer.

The Browns ran drills in pads, which is always the starting point.

Quarterback Colt McCoy, who had worked out during the off season, was getting used to throwing in shoulder pads.

“Some of the receiver’s stepped up. I thought there was good competition. There were periods where I thought the defense looked very, very, good. Then there were also some bigger plays on offense as well, got a couple long gains. It appeared like, without knowing much, we pulled through it physically okay, which is a little bit of a concern. I’m getting a pretty good feel now for where they’re at physically, but not knowing totally, I think they held up decent,” said Shurmer.”

This year, the Browns this year will have to find a replacement for cornerback Eric Wright. The loss of Wright, who agreed to contract terms with the Detroit Lions, was not planned by the Browns and will be felt.

The Cleveland Browns have signed free agent defensive end Jayme Mitchell and completed their trade with St. Louis for offensive guard John Greco.

Mitchell was acquired by the Browns in a trade last season from Minnesota, but the 6-foot-6, 285-pounder was not activated for 12 games by coach Eric Mangini.

This year, coach Pat Shurmur intends to start Mitchell at left end. He was originally signed by the Vikings as an undrafted free agent in 2006.

Greco, acquired for an undisclosed 2012 draft pick, started four games in three seasons for the Rams. He spent last season with Shurmur, who was St. Louis' offensive coordinator before being hired by the Browns.

Also, first-round draft pick Phil Taylor missed his third practice Monday in a contract holdout. Taylor was the most prominent player missing when the Browns prepared to take the field for their first practice of training camp.

Per terms of the new collective bargaining agreement, the first practice was nothing much more than a walkthrough in shorts and T-shirts. It was closed to the public.

Taylor, a defensive tackle from Baylor, is the only Browns draft choice who did not agree to contract terms in time to avoid holdout status. The club announced all seven other picks were signed.

It also confirmed the signings of kicker Phil Dawson to his one-year franchise tender. “I really didn’t know what was going to happen. I am not very good at predicting the future. I felt like that was it. Whether I emotionally said goodbye or not, I wanted to make sure people around here knew how I felt. I guess that took me down a road here, where in January I thought I may never come back. To get the news this off-season that I will be back and now to be here, it’s a surreal feeling, but it’s one I am embracing and looking forward to. I am ready to get after it. I am kind of frustrated that I can’t be out there practicing right now, hopefully that will all get worked out because I want to get prepared and have a good season,” said Dawson.

Coach Shurmer has talked about Josh Cribbs being used more as a receiver this year. “I think he’s got a chance to be. Really the first couple days, until we sat him down, he did some good things. He can catch the football, he knows how to separate. Obviously, because of his return skills, he’s good with the ball in his hands after he catches it. Those are all three really good attributes,” said the coach.

The Browns will get underway on Sunday, September 11, with a home game against the Cincinnati Bengals
before heading on a road trip to Indianapolis.

Four of the first six games (against Cincinnati, Miami, Tennessee and Seattle) will be at Cleveland Browns Stadium, while four of the final six (at Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Arizona and Baltimore) are on the road.

The Browns have one primetime game in 2011, a Thursday night game against the Pittsburgh Steelers
on December 8 at Heinz Field.