



DEANGELO HALL RETURNS TO LEAD TEAM BACK TO POSTSEASON

Coming off his best individual season in years, cornerback DeAngelo Hall this offseason re-signed with the Redskins after an enlightening conversation with first-year head coach Jay Gruden. Now the three-time Pro Bowler looks to help lead the defense back to the playoffs.

by ROSS HOLLEBON



The Redskins knew if they were going to accomplish their goal of moving back into the hunt for the postseason, there was a player the team needed back in 2014. Cornerback DeAngelo Hall was the first starter the Redskins re-signed during an offseason in which many moves were made to the roster, proving the value and importance of retaining the team leader, who also stressed he wanted to be back after meeting new head coach Jay Gruden.

"I came up here and talked with him and the coaching staff," Hall said. "Before I was leaving the building, I was like, 'I like these guys. We are gonna win a lot of games.' I immediately called my agent and Bruce [Allen] to get something done."

After making that decision, Hall has not changed his tune after an offseason consisting of productive workouts, OTAs and minicamps.

"Love him," Hall said about his new head coach. "Love his energy, his demeanor out on the field, his passion for the game, his understanding of offenses and defenses."

The veteran cornerback was a bright spot on Jim Haslett's defense in 2013, registering 102 tackles, four interceptions, three forced fumbles, and a fumble recovery. Making the most of several turnovers, Hall became the first player in Redskins history to score three defensive touchdowns in a season (two via interception return, one via fumble return).

Between the lines Hall is a menace, antagonizing opponents and often frustrating them with his physical style and vocal approach. He does not shy away from contact or conversation, no matter who the opponent may be.

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Hall is also looked at as a role model for the team's younger players in the secondary, like David Amerson, Phillip Thomas, Bacarri Rambo and Bashaud Breeland.

Breeland - taken by the Redskins with the 102nd overall pick in the fourth round of the 2014 NFL Draft - said he modeled his own game growing up by watching Hall on TV.

Now, Breeland is getting the chance to learn first-hand from the three-time Pro Bowler.

"D-Hall, he was one of my favorite corners growing up," Breeland said. "I model his game. He's a very, very, very interesting player. He is really good."

Hall's attitude helps define the tenacity and relentlessness of a defense expected to bring a commitment to pressure in 2014, although he knows leadership doesn't just fall on him and veteran safety Ryan Clark, who has returned for his second tour of duty in Washington.

Hall said the Redskins have tremendous leadership at every position on the field.

"It's not going to be just us," explained Hall. "It's going to be [nose tackle] Barry Cofield, [defensive end Jason] Hatcher, Rak [linebacker Brian Orakpo] and [linebacker Ryan] Kerrigan. We are trying to lead as a team, compete as a team, and win as a team."

For now, however, Redskins fans are just waiting for training camp in Richmond, Va., so Hall and the rest of the players can work with the coaches and take the initial steps back to the playoffs for a proud Washington franchise.

