NFL player to hold camp in Aptos

by Peter Buske
Feb 28, 2013 | 1684 views | 0 7 | 0

St. Louis Rams wide receiver Nick Johnson, a former San Lorenzo Valley High and Cabrillo College standout, is returning to Santa Cruz County to host a football camp at the end of the month.

The camp, co-sponsored by Cabrillo College and the 7-on-7 Training Academy founded by Johnson in 2011, will take place from 9 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. March 30 at the Cabrillo campus in Aptos.

“First and foremost it’s about giving back to the community,” Johnson said.

Twenty percent of the proceeds from the $75 entry fee will go toward Cabrillo’s fundraising goal to build a new sports facility.

Johnson said he has trained “several guys” in the local area, including Scotts Valley High senior running back Ari Wargan for several weeks this past summer.

Wargan was named the Santa Cruz Coast Athletic League offensive player of the year at running back after the 2012 season.

“It was really cool because he had a really great season because he put in the work,” Johnson said.

Johnson said he is passionate about football and about training and wants to help local athletes succeed.

“(Santa Cruz County) is not a hotspot for highly recruited guys, but there are some guys who are great athletes,” he said.

Johnson, 23, was a standout football player and track and field athlete for SLV H before graduating in 2007 and attending California State University, Sacramento, on a track and field scholarship.

After one year in Sacramento, he returned to the county as a wide receiver for the Cabrillo College football team, where he excelled for two years. He then signed a full-ride scholarship to Henderson State University in Arkadelphia, Ark., and played two seasons.

Following graduation, Johnson went to live with Cochran in Southern California, where he trained for five months before signing with the St. Louis Rams as a free agent wide receiver.

Johnson played on the team’s practice squad last season, at one point running back, where he stood in at C.J. Spiller’s Buffalo Bills on the scout team.

This season, he thinks he has a good chance to make the 53-man roster at wide receiver, on special teams or even as a defensive back.

“If he makes the team, a two-year deal worth $405,000 per year will take effect.

“I feel pretty good,” he said. “The coaches have shown more confidence in me, especially toward the end of last season. I’m looking forward to going to camp, and I plan to make the team this season.”

The March 30 camp at Cabrillo College, in the style of the NFL combine, will include evaluation in vertical jump and broad jump, 40-yard dash, shuttle, medicine ball toss and other tasks. It will include position-based football instruction for all positions and then live one-on-one and seven-on-seven competition in shorts and T-shirts.

Zack Heberer, a former University of Southern California lineman, will teach during the camp, along with Johnson and Cochran.

For information: www.7on7trainingacademy.com