SPORTS

By Doug Ferguson

McIlroy should emerge even stronger

BOYLAKE, England — The celebration began long before Rory McIlroy had a chance to drink out of the Claret Jug.

McIlroy was upstart in the clubhouse at Royal Liverpool for the traditional trophy presentation when, with the fans and cameras already in position, the chants below from club members waiting for a gesture of the British Open champion:

“Rory! Rory! Rory!”

It was a rousing scene for a club that starts with “Royal,” but nears the end of its history. McIlroy had turned the champagne bottle into an RBI starting safety opposite Morgan Burnett.

That’s a sign the team is giving Hyde a serious look at a new position after he played strictly cornerback last year. But make no mistake, general manager Ted Thompson selected Ha Ha Clinton-Dix with the No. 21 pick overall in this year’s draft to assume the back end of the defense since Nick Collins couldn’t answer injury in Week 2 of the 2012 season.

That puts the smart money on Clinton-Dix starting at safety in the NFL’s Thursday night regular-season opener Sept. 4 at Seattle. The Packers need playmaking on the defensive side of the ball after their scoring defense has finished 18th, 12th and fifth for the past three seasons, and their two most notable draft picks, Nick Perry and B.J. Raji, have each missed the past three seasons because of injury.

“Obviously, you pick a guy No. 1 you hope he’s going to help you to a better defense,” said Dom Capers, the Packers’ defensive coordinator.

“He’s played a defensive system that I’m familiar with, that’s what Nick (Shabazz) did. His defense in 2004 in Miami. His defensive coordinator was Mike Nolan who was my ordanly coach for me in 2006. The volume of stuff he’s had to do and learn from their system there comes over well for him coming in and learning our system.”

The Packers tried to make-do at safety after Collins’ injury with marginal-at-best NFL players in Charlie Peprah and Morgan Burnett. Last season, the safeties combined to allow 11 touchdowns, including four interceptions at safety for as far back as the position can be clearly identified in the media grade, which is 1972.

Assuming Clinton-Dix steadies Hyde, the Packers will have two relatively tall, rangy starters. Their height is balanced — Clinton-Dix and Burnett measured 6-1 3/8 at their respective NFL scouting combine — and they’re essentially equal in weight (Clinton-Dix was 208 pounds at the combine, and Burnett reumed listed at See PACKERS, Page 2B

By Pete Dougherty

Clinton-Dix, Hyde provide talent opposite Burnett

TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2014 WWW.STEVENSPOINTJOURNAL.COM

Peralta sharp, Brewers beat sloppy Reds

Green Bay Packers safety Ha Ha Clinton-Dix participates in running practice on June 19 at Boy Minchik Field. packet sports Post-Capital Media Photo

Packers 5-2 win Monday at Miller Park in the opener of a three-game sweep in left field apparently just past Carl

Peralta sharp, Brewers beat sloppy Reds

Associated Press

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