

Snapping point

Alvarez believes center Katula will have long professional career

By JEFF POTRYKUS

jpotrykus@journalsentinel.com

Madison - When University of Wisconsin coach **Barry Alvarez** was asked this week which of his departing seniors might enjoy the longest National Football League career, he offered a name that might surprise some fans:

Advertisement **Matt Katula.**

Katula, a former two-way lineman at Waukesha Catholic Memorial High School who became a proficient long-snapper with the Badgers, was one of 17 former UW players who worked out for NFL scouts Wednesday at the McClain Center.

While other players displayed their strength, leaping ability and agility, Katula worked on the side with several scouts curious to see his velocity and accuracy.

"They gave me a (target) to hit - a foot below the waist, a foot above the waist and 6 inches outside," Katula said. "Out of probably 35 I had one that was out of the box."

His times were between .66 seconds and .71 seconds.

"That is exactly what I was looking for," he said. "I was really happy with that."

Katula, 6-foot-6 and 289 pounds, anticipates he will have to make someone's roster as a free-agent because teams rarely use a draft pick on a long-snapper.

"As long as I get into a camp and just try to play, that's all I really care about," he said.

When told of Alvarez's prediction, Katula smiled and declined to think that far down the road.

"That's because I don't get hit as much," he said, laughing. "And 12 plays a game isn't very much wear and tear on the body.

"I just want to get into a camp and show them what I can do there. If I have to beat out their guy . . . I can do that."

New home? Erasmus James and **Jonathan Welsh**, UW's dynamic starting defensive ends last season, went through drills designed for outside linebackers Wednesday. Those included dropping back into pass coverage, reversing direction and sprinting toward the line of scrimmage and trying to intercept a pass.

Welsh (6-4 and 233) is too light to play end in a 4-3 defense and seems destined to be tried at outside linebacker/rush end in a 3-4. James (6-4 and 263) first went through such drills at the recent NFL scouting combine.

"My athletic ability allows me to switch without having much problem," James said. "It's not a hard transition."

Tests of wills: Former UW All-American defensive tackle **Tim Krumrie**, the defensive line coach of the Buffalo Bills, tested the strength and staying power of six former UW defensive linemen with a personalized drill.

Krumrie and each player stood upright, face to face, and basically engaged in several minutes of hand-to-hand combat.

Krumrie's goal is to measure the character and fight of each player.

"You've got to be focused," James said of the grueling tussle. "You're down in the fourth quarter, two minutes left . . . you've got to keep fighting and working until the game is over."

Krumrie, who played 12 seasons in the NFL, went head to head with **Anttaj Hawthorne**, **Jason Jefferson**, **Darius Jones**, who sat out last season; **Kalvin Barrett**, Welsh and James.

Badgers bits: Wide receiver **Darrin Charles**, hoping to show the scouts quickness despite his lanky 6-6 frame, was timed at 4.62 seconds in the 40-yard dash and caught the ball well.

"I felt really good all day long and couldn't be any happier," he said . . .

Defensive backs **Scott Starks** and **Chuckie Cowans** impressed in different areas. Starks was timed at between 4.30 and 4.35 seconds in the 40-yard dash. Cowans had the best vertical leap with an effort of 39 inches. . .

Jim Leonhard could only watch his former teammates perform Wednesday. Leonhard remains idle with a stress fracture in his left foot and is uncertain when he will be able to take part in individual workouts.

"I had it probably the last half of the year," he said. "I didn't think it was anything too big until the end

and then I got an MRI right after the bowl."

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