

Packers: Hawk agrees to \$37.5 million deal

JASON WILDE

GREEN BAY - It didn't quite happen in time for Friday night's first training-camp practice, but Green Bay Packers first-round draft pick A.J. Hawk is in the fold.

The team reached an agreement on a six-year, \$37.5 million contract with the former Ohio State star, an NFL source confirmed Friday, shortly before the Packers took the field for practice.

The No. 5 overall pick in the April draft, Hawk is expected to start at will (weak-side) linebacker and should be on the field for today's 2 p.m. practice. Hawk was in Green Bay at his home - he lives just down the street from Brandt in a golf-course subdivision - when the sides agreed, but he did not make a cameo appearance at the 2-hour, 15-minute practice.

Talks heated up Thursday after the New York Jets reached an agreement with tackle D'Brickshaw Ferguson, the No. 4 overall pick, and the Tennessee Titans came to terms with quarterback Vince Young, the No. 3 selection.

On Friday morning, the San Francisco 49ers signed Maryland tight end Vernon Davis, the No. 6 pick, to a five-year deal worth about \$25 million, a contract that includes more than \$15 million in guaranteed money.

Hawk's contract is essentially a five-year deal because if he plays 35 percent of the Packers' defensive snaps this year - a safe bet barring injury - the Packers will reportedly owe him \$10 million or the equivalent of the franchise tender for linebackers in the sixth year. Such a number would be cost-prohibitive and force the team to restructure the deal or sign Hawk to an extension. The first five years of the deal are worth \$26 million.

Last year, quarterback Aaron Rodgers broke Brandt's six-year streak of getting the team's first-round draft pick signed in time for the first full-squad practice of training camp. Rodgers missed the first two days of full-team practices before coming to terms. Rodgers missed a total of eight practices - four rookie-only workouts and four full-squad sessions - before joining the club.

This time, Brandt was able to get Hawk's deal done with less of a delay. All Hawk really missed Friday besides practice was his morning physical, some strength and conditioning tests, a few administrative meetings and one team and one defensive meeting.

"I talked to A.J. He's a team guy, and he cares about his image," Rodgers said. "He doesn't want to (miss time). He seemed pretty anxious to get started. He wants to have a big impact on this team."