

# 'Poz' is positively superb for Buffalo Bills

Sal Maiorana • Staff writer • September 30, 2008

ST. LOUIS — His professional football career now consists of a mere 6½ games, which means [Paul Posluszny](#), in NFL time, isn't even halfway through his rookie season with the Buffalo Bills.

But there's no way you can convince anyone in the league that this kid from Penn State — whom Buffalo selected in the second round of the 2007 NFL Draft — looks like, or plays like, a rookie.

And the first testimonial would be delivered by Bills coach Dick Jauron.

"We tend to forget how young he is in the NFL game," said Jauron. "He missed almost the whole year a year ago, but he's really playing well. He's getting more and more in command of our schemes and making all the calls and the adjustments. He's one of many guys who we like having on this team."

Posluszny is the leading Bills tackler with 31 (though that number could be adjusted when tape of the Rams game is reviewed by the coaches), and he is rounding into exactly the kind of play-making, ball-hawking linebacker the Bills envisioned he would be.

With the 23-year-old in the middle of the defense, it has become increasingly difficult for opposing teams to attack via land on the Bills. Outside of a rough first half against St. Louis when the Rams piled up 148 yards rushing, the Bills have been stout against the run this season.

By comparison, the last three years the Bills ranked 31st, 28th and 25th in rushing yards allowed. This year they are 17th, and Posluszny's role in that improvement is one of the reasons why Buffalo has started 4-0 for the first time since 1992 and is tied with Tennessee for the best record in the league.

"You can just tell he's getting more and more comfortable every single week," said outside linebacker Kawika Mitchell, whose arrival in Buffalo, as well as that of defensive tackle Marcus Stroud, has also been a key factor in the upgraded run defense.

"He won the Butkus Award (as the best linebacker in college football in 2005). He won that for a reason; he's a good player, so the more comfortable he gets, the more tackles and big plays he's going to make."

Against the Rams the Bills wanted to take advantage of the weak St. Louis offensive line. Defensive coordinator Perry Fewell installed some up-the-middle blitzes, which were designed to try to get Posluszny unimpeded alleys to quarterback Trent Green. Poz blew through the Rams line twice and nailed Green, once forcing a third-down incomplection.

"We had some different looks put in this week for blitzes," said Posluszny. "I don't think it was (the coaches) wanting to get the middle linebacker involved more, it's just each week we're going to build and change things up so when teams scout us we'll have different looks."

That's part of it. But the fact is the Bills know Posluszny is capable of handling anything they throw at him, and more times than not he's going to execute the call.

"At times they think of him as a rookie, but at times they think of him as a long-time vet," said Mitchell, who loves the way Poz plays because, like Mitchell, he's very much into the game emotionally as well as physically. "If he continues to play like this the more he's going to be able to do in this defense."

Of course Posluszny refuses to pat himself on the back. It's just not his style.

"I don't feel like a rookie, but there's so much room to grow," he said. "I look at a guy like Kawika, he's been around six years and he knows so much and sees things a little quicker than I do. I can't wait to be at that level, to have all that game experience."

Still, despite playing less than seven NFL games, Posluszny believes he's starting to get acclimated to the chaos that is the middle of an NFL field on a Sunday afternoon.

"I feel comfortable, I don't feel like a rookie, I know what I'm doing out there, but I can definitely see that there's a lot more maturity and a lot more room to grow," he said.

"With each game, just getting more experiences, you learn a little more. I just log those and the next time we can pull that out of our pocket and say 'all right, we know how to do this from now on.' Each week I'll grow and learn more as a player."

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