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## Carothers making waves

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By Craig TerBlanche

NFL Europe



Playing in the NFL is a dream of Greg Carothers, but that wasn't always the case. Carothers is from the small city of Helena, Montana where he grew up playing football, but loved playing basketball.

"Basketball was my favorite sport when I was younger," Carothers said. "In fact if it wasn't for one of my best friends, I would probably not be playing football today."

In high school, Carothers was a three-sport athlete playing football, basketball and running track. And it wasn't until his junior year that he realized football could pave his way to bigger and better things.

### Greg Carothers went

from a small town to a big school to play his college football. (waynepaulo.com)

"I never thought about going to a major college," Carothers said. "I wanted to, but I never thought the opportunity would come my way. Then my sophomore year I started getting letters. At first I just thought it was neat and I would hang them up on my wall. Then after my junior year schools started making offers and that's when I knew this is what I was going to be doing."

Next thing he knew, he was in Seattle attending the University of Washington on a football scholarship.

"It took me a long time to get comfortable in Seattle," he said. "It was difficult leaving home, but I am not one to complain about an opportunity like this."

Just five games into his freshman year, Carothers was named the starting safety for the Huskies and took advantage of every opportunity given to him.

"Coming from a small town in Montana with 45,000 people and getting the opportunity to play in front of 80,000 people every game was great," he said. "With the things I have been granted and the opportunities I had at Washington I can't really complain."

However, there was some concern his senior year when he was moved from safety to linebacker.

"I had built up quite a resume at safety, so I wasn't sure what to expect," he said. "I thought moving to linebacker was going to hurt my chances at the NFL."

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It didn't. Carothers was invited to attend training camp with the San Francisco 49ers where he impressed the coaching staff, but with the 49ers trying to build a new system, Carothers just didn't fit.

"I went to San Francisco and I was cut after the third game," he said. "It wasn't a good situation. I hadn't graduated from school yet, so I missed mini camps and I think that had a lot to do with it. It just wasn't the right fit for me."

Now a free agent, Carothers has an opportunity with the Amsterdam Admirals to show all 32 teams what he brings to the table.

"I think this is a great opportunity," he said. "I am thankful for being put in this situation. Making it in the NFL is all about opportunity and making the best of your chances. You have to get people to turn their heads and look at you...I can show people what they missed out on."

He sure turned some heads with his performance against the Rhein Fire in last Saturday's 24-14 win. Carothers led the team with nine tackles and one interception, but knows there is constantly room for improvement.

"You always have something to improve on," he said. "I don't go out there to just run around. If I am going to run, I am going to try and catch someone. It is not fun to just run around. I am not out there for exercise. I want to run for a purpose and I want to do things right."

Wanting to do things correctly is what separates Carothers and why he was named a defensive team captain.

"He tries to do the right things," linebackers coach John Leijten said. "He asks questions and pays attention to what we are saying. He takes a lot of notes and tries to get better. He likes to watch film and enjoys correcting his mistakes. He is a guy that realizes his situation and wants to get back to the league."

Whether or not Carothers makes it back to the NFL is up to him, but one thing is for sure, the Admirals are pleased to be his stepping-stone to the next level.

"He is a guy that we are very fortunate to have right now," defensive coordinator Daryl Sims said. "He plays with a lot of emotion and that kind of stuff is contagious. Having a guy like him on your football team is a huge benefit."

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