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Lions sign DL Jackson, re-sign Redding, FitzSimmons

By Len Pasquarelli
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In a flurry of pre-draft moves, the [Detroit Lions](#) on Thursday retained a pair of unrestricted free agents, defensive end [Cory Redding](#) and tight end [Casey FitzSimmons](#), and also signed unrestricted free-agent defensive lineman [Tyoka Jackson](#).

Redding and FitzSimmons are both three-year veterans and both signed the one-year qualifying offer for an unrestricted free agent. Redding will earn \$1.573 million and FitzSimmons \$721,600. An 11-year veteran, Jackson signed a two-year contract, the financial details of which were not yet available.



FitzSimmons

Jackson

Redding

Jackson, 34, adds experience and versatility to the Detroit defensive front. In stints with Miami (1994), Tampa Bay (1996-2000) and St. Louis (2001-05), Jackson has appeared in 142 games and registered 156 tackles, 27 sacks, eight forced fumbles and three recoveries. The deal with Detroit reunites Jackson with Lions first-year head coach Rod Marinelli, his former defensive line coach in Tampa Bay.

The former Penn State standout, who entered the league with Atlanta as an undrafted free agent in 1994 but was released by the Falcons in training camp, has logged considerable playing time at both end and tackle and is expected to be a swingman with the Lions. A two-time defensive captain in St. Louis, Jackson is also regarded as a player with high character, an element Marinelli is seeking to improve with his team.

In free agency, Jackson hoped to re-sign with St. Louis and perhaps complete his career with the Rams, but team officials apprised him a few weeks ago that he was not in their plans.

Redding, 25, has been the Lions' starting left defensive end in each of the past two seasons. He is a solid anchor defender against the run and, at times, has flashed some pass rush ability. Last season, Redding established a career best with 42 tackles.

A third-round pick in the 2003 draft, Redding has played in 39 games and started 32 of them. The former University of Texas standout has 92 tackles, two sacks, one forced fumble and three recoveries.

A former undrafted free agent, FitzSimmons has 43 career receptions for 302 yards and one touchdown. A standout player at the NAIA level, playing for Carroll College, he has appeared in 45 games.

Redding and FitzSimmons will both be eligible for unrestricted free agency next spring unless they sign contract extensions before then.

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