

STARS & STRIPES

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JIM HENDERSON: ON DECK

Apart from the fortunate confluence of the arrival of Sean Payton and Drew Brees in 2006, in my mind the most important reason this is the most successful era in the Saints' history is this: this regime's ability to evaluate and accumulate talent.

Long gone are the days of never-would-be draft choices and never-would-be-again over-the-hill additions. If this group makes a decision on personnel you can bet it comes after careful consideration and objective assessment.

The Saints' reasoning can't always be justified to the fans and the media out of consideration for the players affected.

Case-in-point: Chris Ivory.

Ivory's physical running style and flashes of brilliance endeared him to a legion of Saints' fans. As the club limped along last year while compiling the 25th ranked rushing attack in the league, most of the fans and much of the media couldn't understand why the apparent solution -- Chris Ivory -- sat on the bench.

A player's value to the team hinges on two inter-twined essentials: ability and availability. Chris had short-comings in both departments.

He was only available in 6 of 16 games last year; either because of chronic hamstring problems or because the coaching staff never put him in the game. Nagging injuries affected his availability throughout his Saints' career.

continued on page 2



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As for his ability, the Saints felt they couldn't risk Drew Brees' health as the most valuable player on the team while trying to incorporate Ivory in the offense as anything other than a straight-line, collision-inducing running back.

In 2012 he had two receptions in the passing game. And while the front office and coaching staff were getting roundly criticized for their reluctance to put Ivory on the field, privately they just had to weather such criticism while out of respect for Ivory never explaining that his problems... identifying audibles, blocking assignments, blitz pick-ups, and other mental aspects crucial to the Saints' number one ranked passing attack in the league jeopardized its efficiency and even more importantly, Drew Brees' longevity.

And so in the course of this year's draft the Saints were able to obtain a third round draft choice from the New York Jets for Ivory -- a player who probably would not have made the 2013 roster.

In New York, Ivory missed most of training camp with ---what else ---a sore hamstring. In his first pre-season action in game number two of pre-season he carried six times for 13 yards.

Meanwhile the Saints turned that third round selection from the Jets into nose tackle John Jenkins who figures to have lasting value to the team in their new 3-4 defense.

So the next time any of us question the wisdom of the current Saints' player evaluation, we should probably all heed the words of caution that Jim Mora once gave the media when it comes to basing its criticisms solely on what's apparent.

"You think you know. But you don't know. And you never will."

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Saluting Veteran

ALBERT JOSEPH SIMON

Albert Simon was born on March 22, 1920 to Mr. & Mrs. Herminegilde Simon in the tiny community of Shell Hill in Vacherie, La.

He entered the service as a single man on Feb 11, 1942, just one month shy of his 22nd birthday. His time of basic training and maneuvers sent him to Camp Beauregard in Alexandria, La...to Camp Mc Clelan in Alabama...to Camp Shelby in Mississippi...to Camp Livingston in Alexandria...then, on January 1, 1944 he boarded the USS Monterrey in New Orleans to Hawaii as an Assistant Gunner with Company "D" of the 152nd infantry and arrived at New Guinea in the Philippines on January 17,

1944. He served for a total of 1 year, 10 months and 7 days in the battles of Luzon, Leyte Gulf, Subic Bay and Zigzag Pass. Some of the stories he recounts of his time in the Philippines are those of the monsoons they endured and of the time he heard of the death of a fellow Vacherie native. He was discharged from the service on November 15, 1945. He returned to Fort Sam Houston, Texas where he was given \$26.95 as travel pay to return home. He and 3 other Louisiana soldiers pooled their funds and took a Taxi back to Louisiana with his journey ending in Thibodaux, La and finally back home in Vacherie. He received the following Declarations and Citations: American Theater Medal; Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal with 3 bronze stars; Philippine Liberation Ribbon with 1 Bronze Star; Victory Ribbon with 1 service stripe and 3 overseas service bars; Good Conduct Medal and Combat Infantry Badge. These times of his service to our country are still vivid in his mind at his current age of 93.



To read the rest of his story, visit www.fabt.com.

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3

In observance of the upcoming holidays, all offices will be closed on: ★ ★ ★

Labor Day
Monday, September 2nd

Columbus Day
Monday, October 14th

Veterans Day
Monday, November 11th

Thanksgiving Day 
Thursday, November 28th
All offices will close at noon Friday, November 29th

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**Congratulations to the winners of the
Quarterly Stars and Stripes Drawing!**

Lorina Daigle of Thibodaux
Madeleine Daste of Luling
Mary C. Tarsney of Metairie

Each won a \$50 Visa Gift Card by entering last issue's contest drawing.

Thank you for reading this publication of Stars and Stripes!

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Please return by October 31, 2013 to be eligible for this drawing.
Winners will be announced in the next quarterly publication of Stars and Stripes.