

LAKE COUNTY  
NEWS-SUN  
SPORTS

As **Dwyane Wade** is introduced as a member of the Bulls, he recalls when he began to focus on being a champion — watching the NBA Finals as a youth growing up on the South Side



Dwyane Wade said he started watching the Bulls while growing up in suburban Chicago and watching Michael Jordan's NBA championship teams in the 1990s.

# 'MY NBA DREAM STARTED HERE'

STORY BY K.C. JOHNSON | Chicago Tribune PHOTO BY TERENCE ANTONIO JAMES | Chicago Tribune

The morning after he stunningly severed his 13-season association with the Heat and verbally committed to his hometown Bulls, Dwyane Wade co-hosted a national talk show with Kelly Ripa. ■ In the weeks since, he has co-hosted a program with an entertainment and style magazine, traveled to China for a shoe-promotion tour and introduced music acts at Lollapalooza in Grant Park. ■ Yes, Wade is a crossover star with a capital "S." Now the Bulls hope he remains an NBA star as the 12-time All-Star battles the undefeated Father Time. ■ The Bulls finally officially introduced Wade at a Friday news conference at the Advocate Center. The Richards High School alumnus, who will turn 35 in January, verbally committed July 6 and signed a two-year, \$47 million deal July 15 that includes a player option for the second season. *Turn to Bulls, Page 2*

## BEARS

### Strain is not severe

Bears to be cautious with Long's recovery in training camp

BY RICH CAMPBELL  
Chicago Tribune

Right guard Kyle Long will miss some practice time due to the left calf strain he suffered Thursday, but a person with knowledge of the situation said the injury shouldn't jeopardize Long's availability for the regular season. And Long could return to football much sooner than that.

Officially, coach John Fox declined to put a timetable on Long's return, saying he's "day to day." Of course, that assessment proved to be open-ended in last summer's saga regarding Kevin White's availability. Long was not made available to media Friday.

Most importantly, the Bears understand how a calf strain can linger and snowball into long-term problems because of what happened with Alshon Jeffery



NAM Y. HUH/AP

Bears wide receiver Alshon Jeffery catches a pass during practice Friday at training camp in Bourbonnais.

last summer. So they're determined to be cautious with Long's return and ensure he's past the problem.

On the flip side, just because the Bears have the luxury of time between now and the Sept. 11 season-opener against the Texans doesn't mean they'd be content to prepare without Long.

He's switching positions this year back to the right guard spot at which he entered the league. And he's sandwiched between a new right tackle (Bobby Massie) and an inexperienced center (Hroniss Grasu). For an offense

that's asking its line to move in unison in the zone running game, practicing together is important.

For the foreseeable future, Long's status will require daily monitoring. Meanwhile, Ted Larsen practiced in Long's place. Larsen missed the final half of organized team activities and all of minicamp due to, coincidentally, a strained calf. This will give the Bears a chance to take a closer look at him, while second-round rookie Cody Whitehair continues to settle in at left guard.

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## LOCAL NOTES

### Flag football's a hit in Antioch

Numbers double for league's second season

BY BOB NARANG  
News-Sun

The Antioch Youth Flag Football League has yet to play a game this season.

But the AYFFL already is a winner.

Founded by Jon Kotloski and Troy Devine last season, the league consisted of four teams and roughly 30 players, Kotloski said.

This season, with practice set to start in the third week of August, the league has increased to eight teams and 72 players. The league features kids mostly from third and fourth grade, but also has some fifth-graders.

Kotloski said the league helped fill a void in the community and surrounding areas for parents seeking an alternative to tackle football leagues.

"There were a lot of parents and coaches, whether (for) commitment, injury-related or concussion (reasons), that had nowhere for their kids to play other than being pigeonholed to play tackle

football or not football at all," he said. "We started the league because we had a lot of interest and knew the timing was right. We got off the ground late last year. This year, with a full year under our belt, and word of mouth, we doubled in size from last year."

The fall league is coed, with a 6-on-6 format. Games typically are played on Saturday mornings, and the league is scheduled to have an eight-game regular season followed by playoffs. Although the rosters are mainly made up of with Antioch residents, Kotloski said there also are players from Wisconsin, Lake Villa, Lindenhurst and Spring Grove.

Kotloski said the league is the ideal bridge for parents seeking to wait another few years before sending their kids to a tackle football league.

"Some kids and parents are ready, but a lot want to learn the sport and have fun before they put on a helmet and play tackle football," he said. "We're glad that we're hopefully filling a void in the community and knew interest was there. We wanted to do something

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