BEARS MINICAMP

Martz, Cutler eager to get show going

Warner: O-coordinator is flexible

BY SEAN JENSEN

Bears offensive coordinator Mike Martz and quarterback Jay Cutler are in the honeymoon stage of their relationship, learning each other’s inclinations and intricacies. They’ve already pored over hours of film together, but they’ll be taking an important step during the three-day minicamp, which opens today at Halas Hall, because the entire offense will be on the field, not on a whiteboard or computer.

The widespread assumption is Martz will try to duplicate the St. Louis Rams’ “Grievous Bow and Turd” but two-time league MVP Kurt Warner said Martz won’t simply impose his will on Cutler.

“I always say that quarterbacks have to see the game, see the offense the way it’s designed to be seen,” Warner said immediately after Martz was hired Feb. 13. “If you don’t, then it’s just tough.

“There can be a particular play that you could show me and Peyton Manning and Matt Hasselbeck. And for me, it might be, ‘Oh, I got this…’

That’s an easy read. ‘Then you go to Peyton, and he says, ‘I know of a way to get what we’re doing for you.’ And you go to Martz, and he says, ‘I’m not seeing it.’ Then you take another play, and it’s the exact opposite. That’s what I think this game is all about. The ability to have no offense that fits the way the quarterback sees the game.

That was a point Martz stressed in 1999, when Warner replaced an injured Trent Green as the Rams’ starting quarterback.

“We had so many plays,” Warner said. “He said, ‘If there’s anything you don’t like, tell me.’ I didn’t see it, I’d say, ‘Throw that one out, and I’ll tell you why.’”

The coordinator and quarterback have to be on the same page, Warner said.

“If you don’t see the game the way they see the game,” Warner said, “it’s not a good match. It’s like playing catch-up because you’re trying to do something that you’re not fully comfortable in.”

At first, Warner was frustrated, especially because Martz was constantly yelling and screaming.

But he trusted the process and slowly recognized the benefits, which heightened his passion to learn more from Martz.

“As we created things together, and he created things, I understood it,” Warner said. “It always played into the way I saw the game.

“Can the quarterback see the game the way you’re trying to teach it? If so, and he’s got the skills and ability, there’s greatness there.”

Cutler said earlier this week that he can see the “potential” of Martz’s offense. More important, Cutler and Martz have worked through some concerns.

“We got everything kind of hashed out because I had some issues with the timing offense and not being able to see things,” Cutler said. “It was a little bit of give and take. It’s been really interesting working with him, a lot of fun.”

Martz said at the rookie minicamp that he has tried to avoid spending too much time looking at Cutler’s old film.

“I don’t want to analyze how he did things in the past,” he said. “Here’s what we do, let’s see if we can adapt to it, tempo and reads and how we do things, it’s been terrific on all that stuff.”

Joe Kansa dismissed Martz’s reputation for being too demanding on his quarterbacks.

“Isn’t that what we want as players?” said Kansa, who played for Martz in Detroit. “He is demanding. He understands the difference between a halfyard and a yard is astronomical because that’s how complex the game is at this level.”

Kansa, who projected Cutler to be a top-five quarterback under Martz, added that Cutler will have even more on his plate now than he did under Mike Shanahan.

“It’ll be a lot more complex,” Kansa said. “But there’s nothing like coming to work and how he’s challenging you, week in and week out. You begin to understand the system, how that really just dominates the other team’s thinking.”

The Bears have spent weeks learning Martz’s offense, but they’re eager to put it into practice.

“It’s a great offense,” light end Greg Olsen said. “There’s a lot of interesting details that make it very successful.

“I think this weekend will go a long way towards strengthening it, to go full speed and do it in a competitive environment.”

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For the record, Olsen doesn’t want to be traded

BY SEAN JENSEN

Greg Olsen admittedly was alarmed when the Bears hired Mike Martz as their offensive coordinator in February.

But Olsen told the Sun-Times on Thursday that he never asked to be traded, and he insists he’s confident that he’ll remain a prominent part of the offense.

“The question that immediately arose was, ‘Where do I fit in this offense?’ I was right there; I wasn’t moveable,” Olsen said. “I know I’m one of the best coordinators in the NFL. For me, the track record wasn’t there. But I feel positive and optimistic after conversations with him and what he’s done on the role in our offense like I have had the last couple of years.”

Olsen hadn’t quitled persistent trade rumors, remaining mum for much of the offseason. He said Thursday he didn’t want to be traded to another team.

“In this process, never once did I say publicly or privately that I didn’t want to be in Chicago,” he said. “If I was up to me, I’d play my entire career with the Bears. Obviously, there’s lot more that goes into it than that. But I’ve enjoyed my first three years here, and I’ve gotten better each year, and I want to be staples in this offense for years to come.”

Originally from New Jersey before a college career at Miami that ended the Bears to draft him in the first round in 2007, Olsen said he

safely Ed Reed, a Miami alum, at the Metropolitan Club. It’s one of two events planned next week by the University of Miami Alumni Association of Chicago. On Friday, there will be a golf outing at Oakbrook Country Club. Last year’s events raised $46,000 for scholarship funds for Chicago-area students who want to attend Miami.

“I’m just trying to give back for the opportunities they gave me,” Olsen said. “They gave me a scholarship to come play here, one of the top teams in the country, and believed in me and developed me and helped me get drafted.”

For information on tickets for either event, visit www.cubalumni- came.org.

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