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Mack's Holdout Continues

By Dave Lukow

Khalil Mack may not be there when the games count.

A lingering holdout over a contract dispute has kept the star defensive end - the 2016 NFL Defensive Player of the Year - away from Oakland Raiders during training camp and the preseason. Mack wants a contract extension, but the parties don't seem close to a deal.

According to Yahoo Sports, Mack's holdout will last into the regular season. The former University at Buffalo standout is in the fifth year of a contract signed as a rookie.

Taken fifth overall by the Raiders in 2014, Mack, 27, had 76 tackles and four sacks his first season. He also forced a fumble. The next year, the Florida native had 77 tackles, 15 sacks and two forced fumbles.

In 2016, Mack totaled 11 sacks, 73 tackles and five forced fumbles. He had one interception, which was returned for a touchdown.

Last season, Mack again started every game - something he's done each year since entering the league - and finished with 78 tackles and 10.5 sacks. He's gone to three Pro Bowls and has been named All-Pro on two occasions.

With no sign negotiations are moving forward, trade rumors are in the air. Among the teams seen as potential landing spots for Mack are Green Bay, Chicago, the New York Jets and the Buffalo Bills.

Buffalo, 9-7 in 2017, made the playoffs for the first time since 1999 a year ago. Part of the team's success was due to an opportunistic defense that had 18 interceptions and forced 19 fumbles. The Bills, though, ranked 29th in the NFL with 27 sacks.

To help with the pass rush, Buffalo signed former Washington defensive end Trent Murphy. A Stanford product, Murphy had nine sacks and 47 tackles in 2016. He missed all of last season with an injury.

The Raiders had 31 sacks and five interceptions in 2017. Oakland recovered nine of the 12 fumbles it forced.