

Some Bengals have tricky return from storm

Written by Joe Kay

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The Associated Press

CINCINNATI — With a storm bearing down and his flight cancelled, Bengals snapper Clark Harris had to improvise.

He got his wife and their 4-month-old child in a car and headed west, driving more than 12 hours through wind and heavy rain to get back to Cincinnati as the Bengals' bye weekend wrapped up. He pulled into town in the early morning hours on Monday, wondering if his beachfront house back in New Jersey was still standing.

"My house is presently in the process of being demolished, probably, by this hurricane," Harris said on Monday afternoon. "I'm right on the shore, 30 minutes north of Atlantic City, right on the bay. I got water in my backyard and everything. It is probably going to be in my house by, probably, about now."

Several Bengals had travel trouble as the team returned from its bye weekend, but all arrived safely for a practice late Monday morning.

The Bengals got a few new worries and lost a little more ground in the AFC North over the weekend. The second-place Pittsburgh Steelers improved to 4-3 with a victory. The Ravens lead the division at 5-2. Cincinnati (3-4) has already lost to both teams this season.

The Bengals host the Denver Broncos (4-3) on Sunday. Those that made it back to town to watch the Sunday night game on television saw the Broncos beat the New Orleans Saints 34-14. Peyton Manning threw for 305 yards and three touchdowns.

Cincinnati has lost three in a row for the first time since 2010, leaving the Bengals in a sense of desperation. With home games against the Broncos and the Super Bowl-champion Giants the next two weeks, their season is on the line already.

"We like that position, to be honest," cornerback Leon Hall said on Monday. "No one gives us a chance after losing three games in a row and Denver is playing really well. You have to give it to them, but we like that position."

"We would prefer to be 5-2 instead of 3-4, but we have to deal with the position we're in now and not let those losses stack up on each other."

Several players spent the day getting updates on Hurricane Sandy and how it was affecting their hometowns on the East Coast. Rookie receiver Mohamed Sanu had his jersey number retired at South Brunswick High School over the weekend, then re-booked his flight out of New Jersey to get back to Cincinnati.

"Been texting back and forth with friends and family and a nephew to see how the weather was," Sanu said. "They're saying it's not as bad yet, but it's getting there."

Running back Brian Leonard had one of the last flights out of Newark.

"I got lucky," Leonard said. "I know there was a ton of flights canceled before mine and after mine, but I got lucky and was able to get out of there last night. I know Clark Harris had to drive 11 hours with a crying baby the whole entire way, so I felt bad for him."

Make that 12 1/2 hours in the car for the long snapper, who was upbeat after practice on Monday while trying to get storm updates.

"Well, nothing you can do about it," Harris said. "I can't stop a hurricane from coming. So,

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whatever happens, happens. I got flood insurance for a reason.”

NOTES: Coach Marvin Lewis said Leonard should be ready to go against the Broncos. He missed a 24-17 loss to Pittsburgh before the bye because of bruised ribs. ... A year ago at the trade deadline, the Bengals sent quarterback Carson Palmer to the Oakland Raiders for draft picks. Lewis said there's nothing in the works this time: "I don't envision anything." The trade deadline has been pushed back two days to Thursday because the storm forced the league offices to close. __PUBLIC__