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## Making Mr. Right: Jets' Revis Is Finished Product



Richard Perry/The New York Times

THE VISION Darrelle Revis of the Jets studies film of every play of the next receiver he will face.

By [GREG BISHOP](#)

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. — If Darrelle Revis were building the ideal cornerback from scratch, he would start with the footwork of [Deion Sanders](#), add the vision of Ty Law and mix in Darrell Green's speed, Champ Bailey's hands and [Charles Woodson](#)'s athleticism.

His cornerback would do it all: shadow the speediest receivers and bump the tallest off their course, run, leap, tackle, intercept. His cornerback would double as a defensive magician, the player who makes elite wideouts disappear each week.

To his [Jets](#) teammates, Revis's ideal cornerback sounds something like Revis, their shutdown corner and most valuable player. Because although Revis

approaches the level of the players that he listed, his game is not defined by speed, or strength, or any single attribute, but rather by the totality of his skills.

“You’ve got to have it all,” he said. “I look at myself sometimes on film, and I’m like, how did I just do that?”

On Sunday in Indianapolis, Revis will attempt to add Reggie Wayne to his milk carton of missing receivers — Andre Johnson, [Randy Moss](#), Marques Colston, Steve Smith, Roddy White and [Terrell Owens](#) — and bolster his case for [N.F.L.](#) defensive player of the year.

Already, Revis is close to the majority of his season goals, as outlined on the paper on his coffee table. They include team player, leader, best cornerback in football, [eight interceptions](#) (two away), 50 tackles (one away), Pro Bowl, playoffs and [Super Bowl](#).

“When I look at my game, I see that the people who surround me have basically built me into a machine,” he said. “Like I’m made up of all these parts.”

Part 1: memory. In his rookie season, Revis watched film with safety Kerry Rhodes. He did not understand the difference between watching and studying. Now in his third year, Revis studies film daily, during meetings and from 60 to 90 minutes on his own.

This season, Revis stopped viewing run plays, because he reacts to those instinctively. Instead, he watches every play from the current season, dozens of times, of the next receiver he will face.

First, he looks for body language. Does the receiver tilt his shoulders forward on a pass play? Has he run go routes with his left foot forward at the line? Does he pop and flex his fingers before running across the middle?

Revis does not play poker, but he said every player has tells, including him. The key is finding what separates a Moss from a Colston, then exploiting that.

“It’s all about memorization,” he said. “I’m in the walk-through calling out routes and formations. To the public eye, in the game, it looks easy. And it is, if you’ve seen it dozens of times and you know what’s coming.”

Part 2: muscle. Revis does [additional off-season training](#) at Fischer Sports. He lifts monster truck tires, pulls sleds and runs up mountains in the brutal Arizona heat.

Each week, they hold Festivus Fridays, where fellow professionals like [Philadelphia Eagles](#) quarterback [Donovan McNabb](#) and Revis run through 8 to 10 drills without a break, stop for “halftime,” then perform every drill again.

This year, Revis and [his trainer](#), Will Sullivan, studied each receiver he would face this season and trained accordingly. Revis drew additional motivation from Adrian Wilson, the Arizona safety who followed a Super Bowl appearance by training the same way.

The result: Revis said that he rarely tired during games.

“He just attacks his job,” Coach [Rex Ryan](#) said. “If there is one guy I want to cover somebody, with my paycheck on it, I want it to be Darrelle Revis.”

Part 3: mind-set. When Dennis Thurman joined the Jets’ coaching staff last off-season, Revis, already a Pro Bowler, started an early conversation with two words — coach me. Thurman found Revis more advanced than cornerbacks with similar experience, ahead in technique, fundamentals, and knowledge, but still, Revis wanted most to learn.

In Revis, Thurman found the most competitive of cornerbacks, the kind of guy who wishes he could cover the Hall of Famer [Jerry Rice](#). In the off-season, Revis studies the greats at his position, even shoots text messages to Sanders for advice.

Revis plays with a quiet swagger and an unshakable confidence. That came from his uncle Sean Gilbert, [a longtime](#) N.F.L. defensive end. Gilbert remains Revis’s harshest critic, but even he does not seem surprised by his nephew’s progress.

For nose tackle Kris Jenkins, the only benefit to being injured is watching Revis’s development. Jenkins said Revis loved his job and he would pay to watch Revis play. Player to player, those are two of the highest compliments around.

“It’s because of guys like Revis that the Jets will turn the corner,” Jenkins said.

By taking away the elite receivers of opponents, Revis allows the Jets flexibility in their defense. Safeties that may otherwise help him are free to defend against other players, or the Jets can overload zones and force quarterbacks to throw toward Revis, which explains his N.F.L.-leading 30 passes defended.

Praise comes from coaches and opposing quarterbacks. Ryan spent 10 minutes recently arguing for Revis as defensive player of the year, an award last snagged by a cornerback (Sanders) in 1994. More telling, New Orleans quarterback Drew Brees said he was hesitant to throw in Revis's direction.

"It's how complete he is more than anything," Thurman said. "I hesitate to compare him, because he's so rare and I want to be fair to him. That's how good he is."

Still, Revis knows more work lies ahead. Thurman noted that in practice, Revis occasionally watched the quarterback instead of covering his man. Gilbert pointed to the potential interceptions that Revis dropped the past two games.

Sometimes, Thurman must remind himself that Revis is only in his third season, not yet at his prime. Just think, Thurman said, where Revis will be in two years, after five seasons — and all of 26 years old.

Told that his nephew feels like a machine, Gilbert laughed.

"We've got a long way to go," he said. "Right now, Darrelle is a dune buggy. We want him to become a racecar."

And maybe, if the progress continues, the ideal cornerback.

Source:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/27/sports/football/27jets.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/27/sports/football/27jets.html?_r=1)