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Pugh picks up pro game

Posted Oct 20, 2010
By Bryan Strickland

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CHARLOTTE – Given the pace, precision and physicality of play, the NFL gridiron can be an overwhelming place for a rookie.

Panthers rookie safety [Jordan Pugh](#), however, has managed to bring the chaos under control.

"I thought things went well," said Pugh, who had an interception in the Panthers' last game, his first NFL start. "It was moving fast at first with all the excitement and the adrenaline, but it slowed down after awhile.

"It was fun and exciting out there."

Pugh's parents were in town from Dallas for his interception against the [Chicago Bears](#) on Oct. 10. Pugh produced one of the Panthers' four interceptions in the game and helped Carolina establish franchise records for fewest net passing yards allowed (29) and fewest passing first downs allowed (two).

Pugh credits his parents – along with his fellow safeties – for helping him make the transition from college to the pros seem so seamless.

"One thing my parents always taught me was to be prepared," said Pugh, got his shot when safety [Sherrrod Martin](#) suffered a concussion Oct. 3 at the [New Orleans Saints](#). "When Sherrrod went down and I came in against the Saints, I knew the guys were counting on me to do my job, so I always prepared like I was the starter. I caught onto that early from watching Charles (Godfrey), watching Sherrrod and watching Marcus (Hudson) and how they all study and prepare.

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"It's one thing to do that in college; it's another thing to do it on this level."

Pugh got it done at Texas A&M, ranking first or second on the team in passes defended in each of his last three seasons. The Panthers selected him in the sixth round of the 2010 NFL Draft, and after surviving a heated battle in the secondary for a roster spot, Pugh has quickly made his way into the mix for playing time.

Pugh marvels at the way the game is played on the NFL level, but he isn't intimidated by it.

"When people talk about the speed of the game, they think that it means that everyone is just really fast, but I think it's that everybody knows what they're doing," Pugh said. "Everybody is so in-tune, and everybody is executing real well. Everybody is on point.

"That's the biggest adjustment, coming from college to pro."

It's an adjustment that Pugh has made much faster than most rookies.

"He doesn't look at himself as a rookie," said Godfrey, who started every game as a rookie in 2008 and currently leads the NFL with four interceptions. "I like his attitude. I like his approach. I've talked to him, telling him, 'This is what you've done your whole life. It's nothing different. Just practice and do what you have to do, but don't try to do too much. The plays will come to you.'

"I think he's doing a great job."

Martin may be back this Sunday when the Panthers return to action against the [San Francisco 49ers](#) at Bank of America Stadium. Either way, Pugh will be ready.

He's also ready for some team success to go with his encouraging and enjoyable start.

"Of course we want to win – and that's the biggest thing right now – but doing what you love to do and playing with guys who love it too, it's fun," Pugh said. "You've got to love it."



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