

Titans trade former MVP McNair to Ravens

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)-Steve McNair finally split with Tennessee Titans and is heading for Baltimore.

McNair, who led the Titans to the 2000 Super Bowl, was finally dealt Wednesday to a team that has been seeking a prime quarterback throughout its 10-year existence. He still had to pass a physical in Baltimore to finalize the deal, but the Ravens planned to introduce the man who shared the NFL's MVP award in 2003 as their new quarterback at a

news conference Thursday afternoon.

The Titans swapped the face of their franchise and a fan favorite for what is believed to be a fourth-round pick in next spring's draft. They had been trying to renegotiate McNair's salary from his scheduled \$9 million to reduce a \$23.46 million salary cap hit.

"Obviously, the best situation would've been somehow to have been able to pay him what his market value was and keep him," said Bus

Cook, McNair's agent. "Without that, it's best for everybody that Steve moves on."

McNair, who turned 33 in February, was the winningest quarterback in franchise history. In 11 seasons, he went 81-59 and shared the MVP award with Peyton Manning three years ago.

The quarterback won a grievance last week that allowed him to return to the team's headquarters and work out after being told he couldn't on April 3.

But the Titans had given McNair's agent permission

to talk with Baltimore on April 30 about a contract, and Cook worked out a five-year deal with an \$11 million signing bonus and \$1 million salary for 2006.

That was much more than McNair could get from the Titans, who had drafted quarterback Vince Young of Texas with the third overall pick in April. The Titans declined to comment after issuing a brief statement announcing the trade.

"Upon passing a physical, final trade terms will be agreed upon," the statement said.

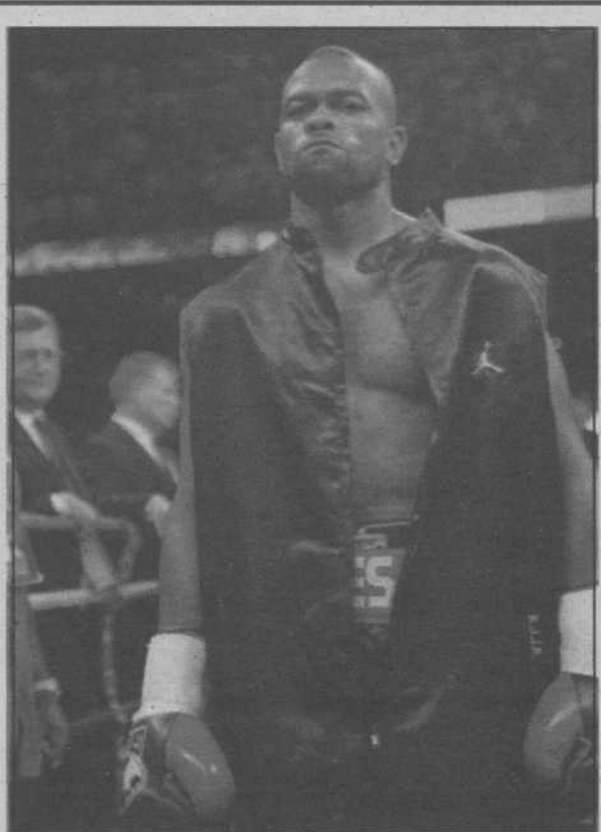
McNair is expected to be the starting quarterback for the team that ended the Titans' bid for a second straight Super Bowl appearance in 2001. That loss is merely one piece of the former AFC Central rivalry featuring physical games and trash-talking between the coaches.

Ravens coach Brian Billick said Wednesday he wasn't worried about McNair's physical, even though the Titans had asked for a new physical, saying McNair failed his exit physical after missing the regular season finale with a strained

pectoral muscle.

"As I understand it, he was cleared to play in the Pro Bowl. That one I'll leave it to a higher pay grade than me to figure out how someone can fail an exit physical but be cleared to play in the Pro Bowl. I'm a little confused about that myself," Billick said. The trade gives the Ravens the first star quarterback they have ever had.

The trade also will reunite McNair with his favorite receiver. Derrick Mason signed with Baltimore last year after being released in a salary cap purge.



Roy Jones Jr. hopes to return to top fighting form.

Roy Jones Jr.: A loss, it's a wrap

BOISE, Idaho (AP) - Roy Jones Jr. says he'll quit boxing if he loses his next fight.

"I doubt it, but if I do lose I'm pretty much going to be calling it a day," Jones said Friday, participating by telephone from Pensacola, Fla., in a news conference to promote his fight here next month with Prince Badi Ajamu.

"I hate to think of it like that," said Ajamu, who called himself a fan of Jones. "But inevitably it's a reality that's going to be faced come July 29."

In the scheduled 12-round bout at Qwest Arena, Jones will end a 10-month layoff and try to take Ajamu's North American Boxing Organization light heavyweight title.

The 37-year-old Jones (49-4) is a former middleweight, super middleweight, light heavyweight and heavyweight champion. But he's lost his last three fights, two by knockout.

Jones said he's "very motivated because some people think I've lost it."

The 34-year-old Ajamu (25-2-1) has never fought someone of Jones' stature.

The two do have a common opponent of a sort in Antonio Tarver, who holds most of the belts for light heavyweight champion given by various world boxing organizations. Jones fought Tarver in three title fights - Ajamu faced Tarver as a sparring partner.

"It just shows me I can compete at that level," Ajamu said. "But I know the world hasn't seen that."

Tarver handed Jones two of his last three losses and took all of Jones' championship belts in the process.

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