

Mexico just another road trip for Cards

By **DARREN URBAN**
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While the NFL pumps up its first regular season game outside the United States when the Cardinals play San Francisco on Sunday, the players inside the Arizona locker room aren't feeling the effects.

That's because the Cardinals have done everything possible to make this week seem like any other road trip.

"The field is still 53 yards wide and 100 yards long, right?" fullback Obafemi Ayanbadejo said. "I don't really care where we play, to tell you the truth."

Issues for the trip include air quality (Mexico City has a lot of smog), elevation (the city is around 7,500 feet above sea level) and security.

Both Cardinals coach Dennis Green and 49ers coach Mike Nolan dismissed the elevation and air quality as a big factor, mainly because both teams will have to play in the same conditions.

Safety isn't expected to be a big problem, although Ayanbadejo said, "I've seen 'Man on

Fire.' I saw what Denzel had to do," a reference to a Denzel Washington film in which a little girl was kidnapped in Mexico.

"All jokes aside," he added, "our security will be fine, we'll have a good game, and then we'll come back."

Cardinals senior director of football operations John Idzik said the message to the players will be "when in doubt, stay in the hotel confines."

"Hopefully, with what we have to do and what we have (available) in the hotel ... there is enough there where the guys can kick back and relax and concentrate on the game," Idzik said.

Which is exactly what most players planned on doing anyway.

"I'm sick of losing, being honest," defensive tackle Darnell Dockett said. "I don't look at this as going to Mexico, I look at this as we gotta win a game. I don't care if we have to go to the other side of Africa, we've got to win this game."

CARDINALS NOTEBOOK

INJURIES PILE UP

Green began trying to piece together a lineup Wednesday in light of a giant — and significant — injury list.

"We are being challenged," Green acknowledged.

Four starters are out this week, including defensive tackle Russell Davis, who decided on surgery for his torn biceps and went on the injury reserve list. Davis said he will head to Alabama and Dr. James Andrews to get the surgery, which ends his season. Also out are quarterback Kurt Warner (groin), cornerback Antrel Rolle (knee) and tackle Oliver Ross (hand), who all will miss at least a month.

Green didn't seem concerned about the defensive line, which is down to six healthy bodies on the roster — three ends and three tackles. But cornerback could be a problem.

Rolle will likely have surgery — he flew to Miami, Fla., to get a second opinion — and fellow starter David Macklin is nursing a bad hamstring

himself.

"You know your body, you just have to listen to it," said Macklin, who is listed as probable. "I'm not at full tilt right now, but I'm not bad."

Raymond Walls will start in Rolle's place. Eric Green would start for Macklin if needed, and Lamont Reid is the only other cornerback on the roster.

EXTRA POINTS

Green said he hasn't decided who will replace Ross — Ian Allen or Fred Wakefield. ...

Also missing practice Wednesday were running back James Jackson (hamstring), linebacker Eric Johnson (hamstring), fullback Harold Morrow (ankle) and return man Reggie Swinton (hamstring).

Green said the main reason he was OK with giving up a home game to play in Mexico, was because he wanted the Cardinals to get a national television appearance. The game will be on ESPN.

"I didn't feel the National Football League would put us on TV without it, and I was right," Green said. "And us being 0-3, I'm not going to argue with them right now."

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