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DAEQUAN HARDY

AGE: 23 (June 13, 2001) | HT: 5-9 | WT: 179

COLLEGE: Penn State

NFL EXP: Rookie

HOMETOWN: Pittsburgh, PA

ACQUIRED: Draft (2024, R6)

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FIRST-AND-10

DAEQUAN HARDY was drafted by the Bills in the 6th round (219th overall) in 2024. Hardy, the 2023 NCAA punt return touchdown leader (2), is the first Nittany Lion drafted by the Bills since 2009.

SHOUTOUTS

- Played 48 career games at Penn State from 2019-23.
- Totaled 60 career tackles (40 solo), 7.5 TFLs, 3.5 sacks, five interceptions, including one returned for a touchdown, 25 passes defended and one forced fumble.
- In 2023, set or matched career highs in tackles (22), TFLs (3), sacks (1), interceptions (2) and passes defended (9).
- Served as a punt returner in 2023 and returned 17 punts for 248 yards and a nation-leading two touchdowns. Ranked first in the Big Ten and fifth nationally in punt return average (14.6).
- Named second-team All-Big Ten by the coaches and media as a punt return specialist in 2023. Was a third-team All-Big Ten honoree as a cornerback voted by the coaches and an honorable mention selection voted by the media.
- Earned the team's Bob Mitinger Memorial Award, recognizing a squad member who exhibits courage, character and social responsibility.
- Returned two punts for touchdowns (56-yard and 68-yard returns) against UMass (10/14/23). The game was Hardy's first lining up as a punt returner since high school.

PERSONAL

Is the son of Courtney Wilson and Darren Hardy. Goes by the nickname Dae Dae. Earned his degree in psychology. Names his mom as the biggest influence on his career. A two-time captain at Penn Hills High School. Has a Pocket Bully dog named Deuce.

IF YOU HAVEN'T HERD

TOOK A CHANCE AND RAN WITH IT

A week before signing day in 2019, Penn Hills grad Daequan Hardy took an official visit to Penn State. He left without a scholarship offer.

Hardy figured coach James Franklin and his staff had made up their minds. As signing day neared, Hardy silently committed to Buffalo.

He received a call soon after, however, from Nittany Lions cornerbacks coach Terry Smith — it was an offer to play football for Penn State after all, an opportunity that would change the course of Hardy's life and set him up for a potential NFL contract this spring.

"I was definitely kind of surprised at how late they offered me," Hardy said on Thursday in Atlanta ahead as he and the team prepare for Penn State's Peach Bowl game against Ole Miss on Saturday at noon.

"But I just took the chance and ran with it."

And sprint Hardy did — to the tune of a 4.32 40-yard dash — instantly defining him as one of Penn State's quickest players as a true freshman.

It took one season watching from the sidelines before Hardy became a staple of the defense in 2021, soon developing into a three-year starter at nickel corner.

(Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Seth Engle, December 28, 2023)

THE STAMPEDE

Favorite movie: Prometheus

Favorite food: Chicken alfredo

Favorite TV show: BMF

Bucket list items: Travel to all 50 states & buy my own island

Dream vacation spot: Castaway Cove

Favorite musician: Veeze