

# Hurst plans on reporting to camp

By Frank Dell'Apa  
GLOBE STAFF

SMITHFIELD, R.I. — Maurice Hurst plans to visit Patriots officials tomorrow and will report to training camp by next week, his agent said yesterday.

"We would like to set a meeting for Wednesday morning," agent Doug Sunseri said by telephone from New Orleans. "Obviously, the Patriots want every good ballplayer they can get, and Maurice would like to stay there and play.

"He has been working with [trainer] Mackie Shilstone and we've got 100-degree weather with 95 percent humidity down here, so I'm not so sure it's any easier for him here than it would be practicing up there, although it's different. But Maurice works out seven days a week, year-round, anyway."

Hurst is seeking a contract worth \$3.7 million over three years. He also wants incentives should he be chosen for the All-Pro team. The Patriots had offered a contract worth \$3.5 million, without incentives, but have since withdrawn the offer.

"There are not many people who have been in that organization the last few years who could, with a straight face, ask for the kind of money Maurice is asking for,"

Sunseri said. "In essence, he is getting penalized for the lack of success of other factions within the organization. If everyone played like Maurice did the last four years they would have been a better team. The problem is, he has outperformed his last two contracts, and that poses a problem for a team that hasn't won many games."

Should the Patriots not give Hurst what he is requesting, he will likely be offered a one-year contract worth \$495,000. By settling for a one-year deal at below-market value, Hurst would be taking a risk. However, should he play through the season without a major injury, he could recoup any perceived losses as a free agent.

The Patriots, though, have far less to lose. Since the expectation levels for the team remain low, they can likely survive and even profit without Hurst. But their latest depth chart lists only five cornerbacks, none of whom are considered among the best in the National Football League.

"There is not any bad blood between us, it's just business," executive vice president Patrick Forte said. "Maurice is not known for being to camp on time, anyway, is he? He just has to get into camp early enough so that he can showcase his talent. If he is only going to be here for one year, he has to make the most of it."

Should Hurst not be signed by the Patriots' second

exhibition game, the franchise could exempt him from the payroll for the first regular-season game.

"Before they withdrew their offer we were definitely within striking distance," Sunseri said. "We only wanted to be rewarded should Maurice catapult himself to becoming All-Pro. If the Patriots did not want him, I wish they would have let him go somewhere else, and we would have understood.

"But if it comes down to a one-year deal for \$495,000, he'll come in and play his behind off — he's that kind of player."

Hurst, 25, has been a starter in 60 games in four years with the Patriots. He has intercepted 16 passes. He was involved in a contract dispute before the 1991 season, then arrived in time to help the Patriots break a 14-game losing streak with a 16-7 victory in Indianapolis. However, Hurst strained a hamstring in the game, which caused him to break a streak of 33 successive games played. He has not missed a regular-season game since then.



MAURICE HURST  
Wants 3-year deal