

# New-look Nets reach for rebound

BY KYLE STACK • Special to amNewYork

The Nets will be nothing like last year's incarnation, with only four players back from that 12-win squad. ¶ This team has a new owner (Russian billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov), a new arena (Newark's Prudential Center), a new coach (Avery Johnson) and, likely, a new attitude. ¶ "I think the guys returning from last year's team probably have a lot of anger," said NBA TV analyst Brent Barry.



**NETS**  
SEASON  
PREVIEW

## FORWARD

Troy Murphy should have a big impact once he returns from a lower back injury early next month. The sharpshooting 30-year-old has averaged a double-double in five of the seven seasons he's started full time. In the meantime, rookie Derrick Favors, 19, could get major minutes. The No. 3 overall pick has been compared defensively to Tim Duncan. "He has all the physical tools, good instincts on defense," said Dennis Velasco, a writer for the Nets Are Scorching blog. "He's adjusting to the game. He's gonna struggle in the beginning."



Favors

Terrence Williams, 23, and Travis Outlaw, 26, provide the energy and athleticism at small forward that Johnson needs to implement a defense-first mind-set. "He can shoot the three," Velasco said of Outlaw. "He's a hustle player."

## ▼ CENTER

Brook Lopez is the Nets' centerpiece, literally and figuratively. The 22-year-old averaged 18.8 points and 8.7 rebounds last season, which makes a 20-point, 10-rebound average the next logical step.

"They need Lopez to shine," Velasco said. "If they don't get [Denver Nuggets forward] Carmelo [Anthony via trade], they still need a superstar. He has the most potential for that."

## SEASON OPENER

Detroit at Nets, Wed., 7 p.m. **YES**



(PHOTOS: GETTY)

## ◀ GUARD

Which Devin Harris will show up? The one who averaged 21.3 points for New Jersey in 2008-09, or the one who struggled to put up 16.9 in 2009-10? "I'm not giving Devin an 'out,' but last year was a very difficult situation for a lot of those guys," said Barry, who played in the NBA for 14 years.

Harris, 27, isn't durable, which means

backup Jordan Farmar could get the playing time he desired during his four seasons with the Lakers. The 23-year-old's athleticism enables him to lead fast breaks and play good perimeter defense. He's a streaky shooter, though.

Anthony Morrow, 25, gives the Nets a true sniper from 3-point range. He finished in the Top 5 in 3-point percentage each of his first two seasons in the league.

# Renewed Umenyiora wants his sacks to cause Dallas fumbles

Healed completely from 2008 knee surgery that created an awful 2009 for him, defensive end Osi Umenyiora is in the midst of a major resurgence.

And that should give Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo something to think about as the Giants try to improve to 5-2.

Not only does Umenyiora stand second in the league with eight sacks, but five of them were strip sacks that either created turnovers or wound up in major losses. Justin Tuck, who is playing well himself, has recovered two of those fumbles.

With the Cowboys fielding a weakened offensive line as left guard Kyle Kosier



Osi Umenyiora, sacking Carolina's Matt Moore last month, keys the pass rush for the No. 2-ranked Giants defense.

nurses a strained Achilles tendon, Umenyiora could have his third straight multiple-sack game. He's much

more interested in slapping the ball loose, however.

"A glorified tackle for loss," Umenyiora said of a

## NFC EAST RIVALRY

Giants (4-2) at Dallas (1-4), Monday, 8:30 p.m. **ESPN**

straight sack. "But if you can get the ball out, you can force some turnovers and put the offense in a good position. It's just something I do."

Romo has been sacked seven times but hasn't fumbled yet. There's always a first time, though, especially as the Cowboys struggle at 1-4.

"Osi has played well — well against the run and well against the pass," coach Tom Coughlin said. "We encourage him to keep it up." (AMNY)

# Enjoying bye, Jets aim to temper excess pride

BY ERNIE PALLADINO  
Special to amNewYork

The Jets have been enjoying their bye week, and why not? Coach Rex Ryan trumpeted his 5-1 group as the best team in the NFL before they scattered for a long weekend vacation.

Whether they stay up there is another story. Pittsburgh and New England will join them at 5-1 this weekend if they beat Miami and San Diego, respectively. So the Jets understand they haven't really separated themselves from anybody, either in the division or the AFC.

Also, the fact that the Jets haven't really dominated both sides of the ball yet

should keep them humble.

"It's too early," running back LaDainian Tomlinson said. "Right now, we're still putting the pieces together. We want to play our best football in December and January."



Tomlinson

Despite a shaky win last week at Denver, optimism runs high that this start is not a mirage. To temper any overconfidence, though, the Jets can recall the Giants' 5-0 start last year, which floundered to a playoff-unworthy 8-8.

So the players are putting any "best team" talk into perspective. "Even though we have the best record, I don't feel we're all the way there yet," said wide receiver Braylon Edwards.