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## Week two begins

**March 9, 2004**  
**by Mike Donnelly**  
**NFL Europe**

Re-energized following a solid intra-squad scrimmage on Saturday and well deserved day off on Sunday, the Thunder arrived once again at Jefferson High School's practice facility in Tampa, Florida prepared for a hard-hitting Monday to start off week two of training camp.



**The Berlin receivers continue to improve against their tough secondary.** photo: photo-stock.co.uk

From the get go Thunder players could be heard delivering fierce hits on one another as they met in drills where the offense and defense competed. The half-line drill during the morning session produced the most excitement on the day. In this drill, both sides of the ball match up with approximately five or six players on each side and play smash mouth football by focusing on the run game. Berlin's offensive line looked impressive during the half-line drill, pulling open several holes for running back Ray Jackson to blast his way through.

The afternoon session saw the defense look its best in practice together so far in camp. In eleven-on-eleven team period, the defense dominated with an aggressive pass rush and swarming coverage in the secondary. Cornerback Darrell Rideaux was all over the ball, jumping on wide receiver routes and utilizing his quickness to bat away several well thrown passes. Rideaux also made a big play in seven-on-seven drills on a flare pass to the slot receiver by shedding a block from the wide out lined up in front of him and stuffing the attending slot receiver immediately after catching the ball for a loss on the play.

"Darrell looked good out there," said defensive backs coach Rick Smith. "In practice today we stressed proper technique and the guys responded well. We also put in a new coverage and it caused the offense to slow down and make some mistakes."

The secondary was solid in run defense as well today. Safeties Keith Davis and Scott Farley frequently stepped up in run support and also made a few big plays in pass coverage.

"We've had our safeties working really hard during inside drill that focuses on aggressively stopping the run," added Smith. "We want our secondary to be the best run force in the league."

The highlight of the day came from cornerback Jermaine Mays who cut in front of a wide receiver just as the ball was released, intercepting the pass

for a score. Overall the defensive backs put on a strong showing in today's practice and it should set up for an interesting clash with the offense in their next meeting.

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