

Practice Makes Perfect

He's gearing up for his third season, but Greg Olsen is training like a rookie with something to prove | By Noah Isackson | Photography by Bob Cosarelli |

"Big guys aren't supposed to be able to run fast," says Greg Olsen, the Chicago Bears tight end who measures six feet, five inches and 255 pounds. "But that's all changing. We're in the day and age when players are redefining how big guys play the game. Over the next few years, I'd like to put myself in that group."

Others will say Olsen, 24, is already there. Last season, he blew past his teammates to lead the Bears in touchdown catches. His 574 receiving yards were second only to Devin Hester, one of the fastest, most athletic players in the NFL. Even better, Olsen doesn't seem remotely satisfied. The New Jersey native politely disagrees with anyone who calls last year his breakout season. "I'm just trying to build off of what I did," he says of his current training schedule. "I'm working out five days a week, three hours a day, starting at 6AM."

The sessions are run by the same trainer who worked with Olsen prior to the 2007 NFL draft, a crucial time when athletes compete for

million-dollar contracts and need to be in the best shape of their lives. "We got amazing results then," Olsen says. "And we're trying to do the same thing now."

Meanwhile, Olsen is hard at work on a no less important goal: establishing a foundation to benefit breast cancer research. Olsen's mom, Susan, has been in breast cancer remission for seven years. "We're going to host fundraisers, events, and team up with other charities," Olsen says. "The goal is to be helpful in any way we can."

A New Jersey native, Olsen now lives in Long Grove with his new bride, Kara, 23, his college sweetheart from the University of Miami. The couple lived in the same freshman dorm at Miami and dated for five years before they were engaged last Christmas. Olsen laughs and says he had just one job when it came to planning their March reception in Palm Coast, Florida. "I helped on the menu," he says. "I don't know much about the other stuff. But I do know good food." ■

GREG'S HOTS

country music, golf, fishing, Japonais, Joe's Stone Crab, Joe's Bar for live music, Hub 51, Bon V, Tramonto's in Wheeling

GREG'S NOTS

extreme sports, heights, artsy cuisine, restaurants that serve small portions, shopping, cooking



BIG, BAD BEAR
Chicago Bears' Greg Olsen kicking back at LuxBar in the Gold Coast.