Whitlock, Fisher released by Eskimoes

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EDMONTON — With only one ball and so many people capable of carrying it, a move was inevitable.

Unfortunately for Arkee Whitlock, he was the running back that drew the short straw, getting released by the Edmonton Eskimos late Sunday along with rookie receiver Ray Fisher.

"We have a very saturated backfield," said Eskimos head coach Kavis Reed. "It was a tough decision, a very difficult decision, but I think the coaches made a decision that we're very comfortable with."

Whitlock came into training camp this year as the Eskimos designated starter at tailback.

However, a hamstring injury kept the Southern Illinois product off the field until the fourth week of this season.

In two games, Whitlock rushed for 92 yards on 17 carries. He also had a couple of dropped passes and a pair of fumbles.

"I'd be lying if those (drops and fumbles) didn't play a factor, but it wasn't the mitigating factor that we looked at," said Reed. "It was the overall production that we had from the three guys in the previous three games.

"Arkee had two opportunities, and we felt that those other guys merited being here on the roster ahead of Arkee."

Whitlock had plenty of competition this season with Daniel Porter, Jerome Messam and Calvin McCarty also in the Eskimos backfield.

Porter was brought in last season when Whitlock went down with a foot injury and filled in well, rushing for 603 yards in six games.

Messam was acquired late in training camp this year, after he had worn out his welcome with the B.C. Lions, and has acted as the featured back for the Eskimos, rushing for 274 yards with a pair of touchdowns.

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Arkee Whitlock was the running back that drew the short straw in Edmonton.

McCarty provides Canadian content and has proven on numerous occasions he can take on the role of a starter.

"This is an opportunity for those guys to continue what they've started," Reed said. "They've had a very good start and we're looking to get our running game back on track and it'll be an opportunity to move forward with those guys."

Whitlock burst onto the scene in 2009, rushing for 1,293 yards with 12 touchdowns in his rookie season.

This, despite having a disastrous debut with a pair of drops in the end zone, a fumble that was taken back for a touchdown and a pass that bounced off his hands, was intercepted and also returned for a major.

Last year, the native of Rock Hill, South Carolina, was on pace to surpass his rookie rushing totals before a foot injury during the.

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