

Penn State University Football Media Conference

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James Franklin

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started. Coach if you want to start with an opening statement.

JAMES FRANKLIN: Like always appreciate you guys coming out and covering Penn State football and Penn State athletics. Obviously just over there at the sendoff for the basketball team, which was awesome. Been a big week for Penn State athletics. You got men's basketball and wrestling competing in the NCAA post-season. But there's really a ton of other teams within the athletic department that have had great years as well. Track and field, women's gymnastics, women's hockey, softball, men's hockey, men's volleyball, men's lacrosse, women's lacrosse, fencing -- I can go on and on and I hate to do this because if I don't mention somebody then someone's going to be upset. But there's so many examples of the entire athletic department and university thriving right now under Dr. Bendapudi and Pat Kraft's leadership. So that's been great.

We talk about kind of what we're trying to get accomplished this spring, talking to Coach Yurcich which our spring objectives improving the run game, increase our mental and physical toughness, improve our execution and communication, improve ball security, improve our explosiveness in the run and pass game. Then we got to identify leaders and empower them in the leadership positions.

Defensively with Manny, reestablish our physical mental, emotional toughness, create habits to play with relentless effort, master leverage and tackling systems, create havoc with all of the havoc plays, tackles for loss, sacks, PBUs, forced fumbles and interceptions. Develop fundamentals and technique, identify leaders and empower them, and then obviously figure out really in all three phases, but figure out who our 11 best players are and then how do we create as much depth as we possibly can behind them.

Then on special teams, continue to develop fundamentals and techniques for our special teams units, develop and identify top special teams personnel, our two-deep, again for all units. Identify leaders and empower them in

leadership positions and then cultivate special teams really kind of throughout our entire organization.

Obviously excited to watch the 11 new high school early enrollees and then also the four transfers that are on campus, excited to see what they're going to be able to do and how many of those guys will end up factoring in. Some of those we'll figure out right away. We'll see that they're going to have a chance. Other guys we'll go through the spring kind of feeling things out and then obviously we'll have a chance to truly compete in summer camp.

Some hires that obviously you guys are aware of, but Marques Hagans, I've been really impressed and pleased with how he's been able to come in and really not only build relationships with our players, but their trust and same with our staff. Obviously you saw the announcement of Deion Barnes yesterday which went over extremely well. That literally was decided yesterday. Deion found out yesterday, our team found out yesterday. So that's not like old videotape that you guys are just getting.

Calvin Lowry, another letterman's been awesome. Then I'm not sure if you guys are aware of this or not but Torrence Brown is now back with us as a graduate assistant replacing Deion's position. So it's great to have Torrence back. He was part of our initial recruiting class, was a defensive end for us. So really good having him back.

Then really kind of last note is just cool to have I think we have 10 lettermen now in the building. Obviously a ton of alumni as well, which I talked about at the board meeting in a lot of different roles. So I think that's been a real positive for us. So excited about the spring today will be our first day to get out there and be flying around and get some work done and get some evaluations. It feels like spring ball weather out there so that's good too. Look forward to answering your questions.

Q. About Deion, it seems by the response from your staff, the players last night it was a very popular decision. What do you believe are his strengths and why did it take so long to set, to pick him as the new defensive line coach?



JAMES FRANKLIN: I think first of all it depends on your lens, right. Long. Some people go a long time, we're usually able to move quickly. But the length of it I was hoping to be able to get done before spring break. I always want to be able to tell the players first, that's hard to do in today's business we've done a pretty good job of the players hearing it before it's leaked on the media. That's something that's very important to me. I think they deserve the right to hear first. So once we had not made the decision before spring break then I didn't feel like there was a rush to do it because my plan was to do it in person when we got back either Sunday or Monday.

But the other thing is, we ended up interviewing a ton of people for it. People that we had relationships with, people that we didn't have relationships with. To be very honest with you sometimes we go through the interview process for guys that we definitely are going to consider hiring and sometimes we're interviewing guys to get a feel for to see if they're a possible candidate in the future down the road. So kind of a wide variety NFL guys, college guys. And the other thing is a little bit like that was in that video, is although Deion is a letterman and although the players and former players felt strongly about me hiring Deion, ultimately I had to hire the right person. If that ended up being Deion, then great. It's a win on a lot of different levels. But I needed to make sure of that. And throughout that process it just became more and more obvious that this was the right thing to do. So did I answer both your questions? We got you muted now so whether I did or not.

Q. What are his strengths, do you believe?

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I think obviously Deion's got his collegiate experience here at Penn State and one of the things that I probably wasn't as aware of, he's done a really good job of taking everything in and being very intentional about it. I take time to meet with the GA's and analysts and give them my perspective on things that they should be doing. That's going to be important for their development, it's going to be important for the interview process. It's interesting we kind of went back and talked about, I remember I used to have interviews I remember with Joe Brady, either coming in early or staying late and doing kind of interview process with those guys and giving them feedback. We had a ton of guys that we did that with.

Deion was actually doing a really good job of everything we talked about, taking very serious and being intentional, and adding things to kind of his game. I think also kind of his background, he's played for really good D-line coaches, he's coached for very good D-line coaches, his time with Brent Pry I think was valuable, his time with Manny Diaz was valuable. And then I think the other thing that kind of

goes into this as well is his time of being a trainer. When Deion was coaching in high school he was training a lot of the high-profile defensive linemen in that region, whether they were from Philadelphia or New Jersey -- and I'm talking, when I'm talking about high profile, I'm talking about guys in the NFL, he was training all those guys. And I think what I watched with him over the last couple years is he's made the transition from being a trainer to being a coach. And there are aspects and similarities of those two jobs that are similar, but there's a lot of other aspects that go into it as well.

I also think his ability to relate to the players and recruits is also going to be a strength of his. He has the ability to be hard and demanding on them in a way that they respect and can relate to, which a lot of times younger coaches, they have a hard time with that. So I think obviously his ability to relate to the coaches, his understanding and fundamentals and techniques of the position. Then one of the things I was impressed with during the interview process is his understanding of the big picture, not only defensively, schematically. But then also in terms of all the other things. In terms of managing the room, in terms of setting standards and expectations of the room, in terms of academics and his role on being the head coach at his position. I think the fact that he's literally a paper away from finishing his Master's Degree, I think that sends a message. I'm not saying a Master's Degree in college coaching is a must, but I do think it sends the right message and it illustrates the right message. So there's a lot of things that we feel really good about Deion. Then I think, you know, whenever you can promote from within, which is what I would typically prefer to do across the board, he understand our culture already, he understands the defensive scheme. So when you go out and hire maybe a more experienced coach from the outside, you get that, but then that guy's got to spend time learning the defense and understanding the culture. So you could make arguments both ways. But I was very impressed with Deion and how he interviewed. The last thing I'll say, I know this is a long answer, but I think the other thing that really jumped out to me that I thought he did a good job in the interview process is you felt -- not only did you hear it, but you felt his passion for coaching D-line, you felt his passion for Penn State, and you felt his passion for this specific group of defensive linemen that he has a relationship with. So it was kind of all of that. It was all of that.

Q. Regarding the quarterbacks, how do you plan to cycle their reps among Drew, Bo and Jackson? How is that going to be different without a returning starter back?

JAMES FRANKLIN: You guys want to talk about the boot



and the scooter? You guys don't want to talk about that? That was like hot news and then two days later he's not in it anymore and I don't get anymore questions about it.

But from a rotation standpoint obviously we would like to keep it as even as possible and we kind of have it structured that way at practice, specifically with Beau and Drew, try to keep it as even from a reps standpoint as possible. But right now, we really have it structured in a way based on our depth right now that all three of them will get the same number of reps. I think that's really important in spring ball, that not just at the quarterback position, but at all the positions that everybody's getting opportunity to compete and develop, just like we try to do at the beginning of training camp, and then obviously at some point we got to transition and get ready for the first game.

So the plan is to split the reps evenly and then obviously as we start to get a little bit of bumps and bruises and have to adjust the practice, and it may be -- I think a few years ago you guys remember we were short with offensive linemen. Well, I talked to you guys about it's not just offensive linemen, it stunts the development at other positions as well.

So right now starting out even, reps across the board for all three of them, and then obviously specific to Beau and Drew really making sure that we protect those two guys' reps as much as we possibly can.

There could be some situations where Beau actually gets more reps by the end of spring because I think there's some things that we may want to do with Beau to take advantage of his skill set and maybe create an opportunity for him to get some more experience, not only during spring ball, but in games next year as well. So we'll see how that all plays out.

Q. Your defensive line --

JAMES FRANKLIN: You're very close to the camera.

Q. I know.

JAMES FRANKLIN: You don't have it back up. You're a handsome guy. You can pull it off. (Laughing.)

Q. Older than you, okay, but still handsome.

JAMES FRANKLIN: Are you older than me?

Q. A little bit. 53. Going to be 54.

JAMES FRANKLIN: You look much better than me.

Q. Thank you for this. You've always thrown me off my questions.

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah. Whenever I do this with you guys, you guys like are uncomfortable, you guys are physically uncomfortable when I ask you guys questions.

Q. It's like Thanksgiving all over again?

JAMES FRANKLIN: That was me and you? Yeah.

Q. Defensive line --

JAMES FRANKLIN: What's coming up, Easter? No?

Q. Yeah, it is kind of coming up.

JAMES FRANKLIN: Okay. I'll leave you alone.

Q. Your defensive line, defensive tackles, what can you talk about your depth there, what you expect this spring from those guys, how Deion's relationship can help immediately with, especially with the line, especially with the guys inside? Some people wonder about your depth there going forward.

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I think we feel good about the depth that we have there. Obviously you would like more, but when you talk about we got four guys that have played a decent amount of football, three specifically that have played a decent amount of football with Beamon, Durant, Alize, and van den Berg, those guys have all played. And then we've got two guys that we're excited about with Artis and Townley. And then Siafa is a guy that's just transitioned over there, so see what he's going to be able to do as well. And then we got Ty Blanding coming in in the summer, so we'll see how that plays out. You never really kind of depend or expect a true freshman to be able to play there, but you never know. Durant, Zane Durant was able to do it last year.

So we'll see how that plays out. But Beamon, Alize, Durant, van den Berg, those guys. Then we have some guys obviously, as you guys know, Izzard has played a ton of football. I'm not sure how much he'll be able to go this spring with some bumps and bruises that you guys will find out about obviously when you come out to practice. But when you factor him in, then you really got five guys that have played a ton of football at Penn State.

To me, if we can have a two and a half deep at every position, with guys that have played in games and showed that we can win with, then great. I would like us to be a little bit bigger at D tackle. I think there's some games where we're able to get away with it because of our

athleticism and our quickness, but to win the way we want to win we need both, we need size and quickness and athleticism.

I think Deion's going to be able to build off of what we've done the last couple of years, but I also think he's going to put his stamp on it as well. I know one of the things that's really important to him is effort, and I think now that sounds like a simple thing, but we think there's a little bit left in the tank to get our guys to play on a different level when it comes to effort.

I'm a big believer on both sides of the ball. You guys have heard me talk about this before, is the game starts up front, whether it's the defense or whether it's the offense. To your point, I think would he got a chance to be really talented at defensive end. I think we got a chance to be really good at defensive tackle. But there's probably a little bit more question marks there and a little less depth.

I also could see us maybe getting into some situations where in passing downs, we're getting more of those defensive ends on the field if they show that they're able to rush as internal players as well.

So I know Deion wants to put his stamp on it. I think we'll have a better idea for that after spring of what we did well, what we need to build on. But I think at the end of the day, it all starts with relationships. He's got really strong relationships. But I also think they need -- the players need to understand, and I know Deion addressed this with 'em yesterday, like, this is not going to be the same Deion, as much as he thinks he's going to be and as much as they think he's going to be, when you're in a complementary role compared to running the show and running the room, there's a transition that happens, and it's going to be fun and it's going to be exciting.

I also think we all got to play a part in that as well in supporting Deion in that room through this transition. That would be for whoever we hired.

Q. Based on what you said a couple minutes ago about the quarterbacks, it sounded like maybe you're considering the possibility of playing Beau and -- I realize it's March, I understand that, but --

JAMES FRANKLIN: You're going to ask anyway.

Q. Yeah, that's correct. Playing both of them and maybe using Beau as a change of pace, using his running ability, is that -- am I reaching or is that sort of obvious? Is that what you're thinking in terms of experimenting with, let's say?

JAMES FRANKLIN: Well, this spring is just to get those guys as many reps as we possibly can to be able to evaluate 'em, to create a competition, and to also create depth. I do think, if you look at last year, we had a very specific plan to get Drew as many reps as we possibly could to build that depth and to build that experience so if we needed him he was ready, but also to help us this year moving forward.

This year's a little bit different because we're back to kind of having a true competition again, and then not only the true competition, to somewhat answer your question, Beau has got some athletic traits that are desirable and maybe make sense for us to use if they give us the best chance to win.

But before practice has even started it's hard to say that. So we'll see how it plays out. I know you want me to give you the game plan for West Virginia today, but I understand where you're coming from with the question. But I do think there's a little bit different dynamic based on, I would say Sean and Drew's skill sets were probably more similar. They were different, but they were probably more similar, where I think maybe the differences between Drew and Beau may be a little bit more dramatic in terms of their skill sets.

Q. I know you got two guys coming in after spring, but depth at running back behind your top two guys, Nick and Kaytron, how much do you hope to develop there depth-wise in the spring? And do you think you have potential for that?

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, we'll get those guys a ton of reps, not just to develop depth, but also just to be smart with the other two, right? It's for a number of reasons. That's the exact reason why we ended up signing two running backs and it ended up being two high school running backs. But that was the whole idea of signing two because whether the third back comes from who we currently have in the program or whether the third back comes from an incoming freshman, that's what we got to figure out between this spring and then summer camp as well, for depth but also to make sure that we're not overworking those two guys either.

Q. We know a lot about your two veteran tight ends. I was wondering what are you kind of expecting out of Dinkins and Cross? Because we didn't see a whole lot of them last year. And in Meiga we looked at him weighing in at 269 on the roster. Is he going to be a tight end throughout his career or is that a guy that you may be looking at somewhere else at some point?

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah. So we were very transparent

with Meiga from the beginning. We had conversations about position flexibility, whether it was D-line, whether it was tight end, whether it was O-line, and he was open to that as long as he was going to be given the opportunity to come in and compete at tight end.

So with us all of our guys, we have open conversations with 'em during the recruiting process about how we see them. I think you saw it a little bit with Driver last year. So we'll see how it plays out. The thing I have heard from the players is he's got really good hands and he moves well out on the field, you know, talking to the strength coaches and watching him in the winter workouts and then again talking to the guys.

So he could be one of those kind of exceptions where he's just a massive tight end, maybe more of a true Y. We'll see how that plays out. But he is big. He did have an injury early on when he first got here, which I actually also think limited some of his training and development in terms of putting on muscle. So I think he's going to continue to grow.

But you never know, he could be the exception. We saw a couple of those guys at the combine that are 280-pound tight end. You never know. We'll see how that plays out. Dinkins and Cross, Dinkins is a guy who is obviously been in the program now and I think understand the expectations and the standard. And has got a lot of skills to work with and has shown some really good flashes last year. Theo and Tyler Warren got some bumps and bruises and some ways it's a blessing in disguise because Dinkins Cross and Joey and Meiga are going to get a ton of reps this spring. So I think it's really valuable because in some ways we know who Theo and Tyler are. Dinkins has really shown some flashes this spring will be really important for him to take that next step and just be more consistent.

Then Cross was a guy that got an injury early on in the summer last year and it limited his opportunity to be able to compete. But he really handled things well. He's worked his tail off. So those guys will get a ton of reps. Really all four of those guys will get a ton of reps, Dinkins, Cross, Joey and Meiga. So we'll see how that whole thing plays out. But we're excited to watch 'em. I think we kind of know obviously what we have with Theo and Tyler, but it's going to be really good to figure out kind of where we are with this other group. Are any of those guys ready to truly compete with Tyler and Theo or is it truly a competition to figure out who is going to be the third tight end next year, which I think you guys know is a big part of our offense and what we do. One of the things I do really like about this group is we got a chance to have more depth where last year if we had an injury or two at tight end we had to really get away from some of our packages. I think these guys

are going to allow us to have the depth that we're not really worried about losing a package based on not having enough proven versatile tight ends.

Q. Is 15 practices a lot, not a lot, how do you attack this from a how much can you get out of spring practice and how much can a player rise on the depth chart through 15 practices?

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I think a guy can make a significant move in spring ball. Very rarely will it be kind of the deciding factor for next fall, because what I love about spring ball, it gives the player and the coaches a really good indication of where they are and what their strengths and weaknesses are. And then I think you guys know, I'll have my end of the year meetings with all of them and I'll sit down with each player on the team and give them specific feedback. So now they can say, okay, from spring ball here's my strength, here's my weaknesses, these are the things I need to work on all summer leading to training camp so I got a better chance to help the team and I got a better chance to compete. So I think there's a tomorrow of value with it.

I think 15 practices to me is kind of the sweet spot. It really -- we try to mirror spring ball with training camp. So although it's probably much better from an installation standpoint because you're able to go meeting one day, practice the next and stagger it that way. Where in training camp it's every day. So I think from a learning perspective it's probably more valuable, but then my point is, really our 15 installs in spring ball will be very similar to our first 15 practices in summer camp. So it's almost like, okay, now they have been through it once, now they get it the second time during summer camp. The other thing I think will be helpful is it's again it's early to say this, but based on our numbers right now we anticipate going back to a traditional spring game look we've had in the past. I know a lot of people have again away from that. I think there's value in it. I also think that we're one of the unusual schools where when 75,000 people show up to watch a spring game I would like to be able to give 'em a spring game. And I'm not even sure the number, I know Poorman's big number guy, like tailgating, like I have no idea how many are out there. But we're one of the unique places, we're going to have more people at our spring game than most people have for a regular game in the fall. So whenever we can create a spring game atmosphere we want to do that for the fans. But I also think there's value. There's value for me in seeing the guys play under the lights, technically, I guess not technically, I should say, but under the lights and in front of the fans and with the media there and with everybody's eyes on 'em and watching. Because some guys rise to that occasion and some guys feel the pressure and anxiety from that. So figuring that out is, there's value

in that.

But then there's also some value in my coaching staff too. I like to break the coaching staff up. I like to give opportunities for other guys on the offensive and defensive side of the ball to call a game. So when you're able to break it up into a one s versus twos, I don't typically have Manny and Mike calling the offense for both sides, I'll give other guys opportunities to do that as well. I think that's a really good professional development opportunity too. So I think spring ball is really valuable, especially the way we try to do it.

Q. Two for you on your offensive line. The plan right now going into spring to replace Juice. Who are you looking at? I would imagine Hunter is in that discussion. Also, you didn't really have the left side of your offensive line for the stretch run Olu and Landon I think were both hurt. Can you kind of give us an update where they are going into spring?

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, good question. So Olu will be full go. Landon I think will be full go by practice 3. We got a number of guys, they will come out the first two practices and do kind of more individuals and jog-throughs, individuals full speed. And then depending upon how they do with those, then they will have an opportunity by practice 3 to, the medical staff will determine, do we need to keep modifying them or are they in a good place. So it will be great to have those two guys back. Obviously proven guys that played a ton of football for us.

Then at center, yeah, I think Hunter, I think is going to be in a competition with Dawkins. I think there's some other guys, I think Vega will take some center reps. I think Wormley could take some center reps as well. And then Rulli and Harvey will be there as well. So it allows us to have -- you know, on paper a four deep from practice perspective. Which I think will be really valuable for those guys. But part of it is Hunter will also be one of those guys that starts out slightly modified for the first two practices to see how it goes. But it will be a competition with Nourzad and Dawkins and some of those other guys that we have listed as guards, but we'll also get them some center reps as well. Then Rulli's a guy that's done some really nice things that the staff's been impressed with. So we'll see kind of the step he's taken since the season ended.

Q. Where do you feel the expectations are going into this spring versus last spring, considering you had the rough end to 2021 and now you're coming off of the Rose Bowl win.

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, those things really don't factor for us internally. I think obviously externally, I don't kind of

try to concern myself with the external opinions or expectations and those types of things. We're approaching it the same way we've always approached it, where we got to get better. I think one of the things I talked about with the staff this morning is, we have to remember although this is a competitive environment, it's about Penn State getting better. It's not about the offense winning, the defense winning, it's -- now don't get me wrong, once we get to competition, let's get after it. But my point is, there shouldn't be any surprises, right. Like Manny should know what the offense is installing so he can have his players prepared for it. Mike should have a very good understanding of what Manny and the defense are installing so there's no surprises. Now once everybody knows and you can have your players prepare for what they may see at practice every single day, now it's competition, but we're not trying to trick each other, you know, in practice. It's, okay, this is what we're installing on offense, this is what we're installing on defense, and you need to be aware of that and how that impacts our offense.

So if it's a heavy install on defense, you know, do you want to have a heavy install on offense because it magnifies kind of the looks that the guys are going to see. So that's kind of the fine balance. I'm a big believer that that's important for the head coach to do is to manage that because when you're trying to teach and lay a foundation you really don't want to be getting exotic looks early on in training camp or early on in spring ball. I've been through that myself as a coordinator, I don't think that's the right way to teach. That's kind of the value from it. So our idea is to get better this spring, really at every single position individually, collectively, by positions, collectively by side of the ball and then collectively as a team and as a staff. And then obviously we'll take all that information and go into the spring and you guys will be talking about the end of spring and basically what you saw and what you liked in the spring game and what you saw and you liked from the seven minutes of practice that we let you come watch. And then obviously everybody will be writing articles and all those magazines will come out in the summer that I'll be sitting on the beach reading and seeing if I think they're accurate or not. And then we'll open against West Virginia at home, which will be a huge game and a huge opportunity for us that we're excited about. But right now we're just trying to get better as our program and our units.

Q. How comfortable are you right now with the state of the wide receiver position on the team and the guys that you currently have and ideally would that rotation look like last year where you have your three guys who tap out when they need to come out or would you rather rotate more organically?

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, I think in general you would love to have three guys that have separated themselves



from the pack. And they are in until they're tapping. Now there may be a situation where there's a fourth guy that won't allow himself to be separated and then to me I've always felt like it's really important -- say you have two positions, I constantly talk to the coaches about this -- say you have two defensive ends. I really think it's important that if you have 'em ranked one, two, three and four, your four needs to be behind your number one because that two needs the three right behind him trying to take his job every single day. Typically your ones should be an established guy that's going to work no matter what. Obviously you hope there's tight competition at every position, but my point is that two being behind that three is really important. So we would love to be in a position where we have a two deep where there's not a significant drop off. But you could also make the argument, if there's not a significant drop off then your ones aren't who you want them to be or need them to be.

That room we think there's the talent in that room to go where we want to go. I think we have to be tougher and we have to be more consistent. And if you look at college football and if you look at the NFL, the probably the area where you can change games the fastest in college football and the NFL right now is at wide receiver. I think it's something that we all from a common sense perspective have always understood, there's just more space out there.

So if you get somebody out there that can either run past everybody or catch a short ball and make people miss and go 80, that changes the game. It also changes the defense. So it's interesting, you know it may impact the running game as much as anything. Because if people are concerned that you have a guy that they don't feel like they can leave in a one-on-one situation and now you're having to have a safety over the top all the time, then obviously that's going to create opportunities in the running game as well. So I think the potential is there. We got to go earn it and we got to go show it and like I've talked to you guys in the past, I think the biggest word for me is consistency. And that's not at wide receiver, that's at every position. Pretty much everybody in that room is there for a reason. They have the ability to do it and they have shown flashes. It's about consistency.

Q. I wanted to ask you your philosophy about getting bigger at defensive tackle, because you're working with the players that you have on the roster, currently, some of those guys dropped weight, most of them stayed relatively the same size. So I guess from a big picture perspective are you willing to sacrifice athleticism in order to get that size.

JAMES FRANKLIN: No.

Q. And secondarily you mentioned effort, you want

some more effort out of your defensive tackles. Does that extend beyond plays on the field to stuff outside in this area, and generally how, what is your philosophy on how to get bigger?

JAMES FRANKLIN: So, no, we are never going to, we are never going to chase size for size sake. That's where Leanne, our nutrition and that's where Chuck Losey, the strength coach, all of our weights are based on body composition. So if you got a guy who is naturally a high body fat guy we're not going to ask him to put on weight because he's most likely naturally just going to put one more body fat. And we have a range really for every position based on not only our college experience but also if you look at the NFL draft what those numbers are. So we got a pretty good range of, are you in an acceptable range where you should be, and if you're on the low end then you should be able to carry more weight and we've obviously always want it to be lean mass. If you're carrying lean mass, it should actually make you more athletic.

So what you're trying to do is you're trying to gain weight and reduce body fat at the same time. Which is easier said than done. That's also why we're really putting an emphasis on doing it in the off-season because we don't want to be messing with it during the season. And that's where, if you can gain a pound every week or a pound every two weeks or every three weeks and just gradually put it on the right way throughout the season, that's what we want. But, no, it's not chasing size for the sake of size.

If you talk about like a baseball player, I think they say you got like a five-tool player, isn't that what they say in baseball? Is that accurate? It's the same thing like in football, right. Strength is a tool, speed is a tool, quickness is a tool, length is a tool. When you talk about football, the game of football, right, is about creating space on offense and taking space away on defense. And you can do that through speed, to cover areas of the field, you can do that with length to cover areas of the field, and hopefully a combination of both, of speed and length. Size, when we're talking about weight is also a weapon. But you would like to try to be able to have just enough of each of those variables to have the impact you want. But it's one of your tools. Your football IQ, your intelligence, how quickly you process information. There are all these tools and traits that we're looking for. And size is a weapon. It is a weapon. I think you guys like look at Vega, you're going to look at Vega and I think you guys see us we have him listed at like 359 or 369 pound right now. You're going to see him, if there is such a thing, he's the best 369 pounds you've ever seen in your life. He's just a big human being. And carries it extremely well. That's a weapon for him.

Let me preface this then I'll shut up. I'm a huge Aaron



Donald fan. Aaron Donald has hurt college football and defensive tackles in my opinion because every single one of these kids think they're Aaron Donald. Like, well, I'm going to lose weight and be more athletic. Well there's been one Aaron Donald in 50 years. At his size, to be as disruptive as he is and as strong and as quick and as explosive. The problem is, everybody thinks they're the exception and the reality is there's been a lot more 300-pound defensive tackles that have had great NFL and college careers than there's been the 275-, 285-D tackles. Don't get me wrong. If Aaron Donald wants to come to Penn State, we want him. But like our guys need to understand, that's the exception, not the norm. And we got to find kind of the happy medium between the two, if that makes sense. But everybody thinks they're Aaron Donald now. And that guy, you know, I don't know about you guys, there hasn't been many of them in the history of the game.

Q. About the boot and scooter -- no, just joking. Wanted to ask about your right tackle.

JAMES FRANKLIN: That's a good one.

Q. You didn't bite. I thought you might. I wanted to ask about your right tackles and specifically Drew Shelton. Is he somebody that you want to try on that right side, because obviously you guys didn't have him last spring?

JAMES FRANKLIN: Yeah, so back to kind of what I was talking about before, yeah, Drew will be at right tackle competing with Caedan Wallace. We're going to try and figure out if we can create a competition to figure out who is that fourth tackle or second left tackle, however you want to look at it, or are we going to be in a situation where whoever the third tackle is the backup at both right and left tackle or is he the third tackle and then somebody moves over. That's what we're trying to figure out. Obviously you would love to be in a situation where you feel like you got four tackles that you can play with and win at this level. Or it's like last year where we felt like Drew Shelton was that next guy. This spring and summer camp Drew will be competing for a starting job and that's what we have to figure out. Is there a fourth tackle on the roster. What I hope is there's five, kind of like we talked about, I would like to have a two and a half deep at every position. But if there's not, there needs to be at least a third guy that we think we can win with a fourth guy who is developing. If that makes sense. So right now Drew will be at right tackle competing. But there will also be obviously opportunities for him and others to get some work at left tackle too.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you, coach.

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