

# Chicago Bears Media Conference

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Kevin Warren

### Press Conference

KEVIN WARREN: Good afternoon, everyone. It's great to see you. First of all, I'd just like to start with really a heart of gratitude. I've been here as of next week nine months, and things have gone very quickly. We've accomplished a lot. I'm grateful for everyone in this room, the sacrifice you make to be away from your family, whether it's a day like today or during our games or away games.

I'm grateful to the McCaskey family, especially George and Pat and Brian, and also the Halas family, and then all of the staff members here, our players, our coaches, Matt, Ryan, and really our fans and partners.

It really has been very special to be here and to work with everyone here, and I'm excited about what the future holds.

You've heard Matt and Ryan address a lot of the open issues that you wanted to find out about, and as we said, we'll take some questions, but I just want to make sure that I reiterate what I said even in my opening press conference back in January, is that my whole approach to building this franchise, not only from a business operations standpoint, a culture standpoint, a stadium development standpoint, a football operations standpoint, is to make sure that we are extremely deliberate, that we're fair, that we're good listeners, that we take the long-term approach.

All you have to do is look at any business. You talk to any CEO, president, any leader of any organization, they will tell you that it's very important to make sure you're deliberate in your decision-making process. That's one of the things I've enjoyed most since being here is to be thoughtful, fair and deliberate.

As you build any organization, but especially a football organization in the National Football League, you have to ask yourself kind of where do you stand, where are you, what needs to be done to go forward, and do you have the right people to accomplish that goal.

I know for me, I'm a very quiet, impatient person. I don't voice my impatience, but I'm extremely impatient. I'm competitive. I want to win. But I also want to do it with



integrity and style and grace and class and humility.

That's something that's top of mind here. That's what the Chicago Bears stands for. That's what our fans deserve. That's what our alumni, our players, our partners, our sponsors, every employee, every coach, our ownership, that's what the National Football League deserves, and that's what we're going to continually do here is to build this program, this operation that we're proud of, that it's not a one-year wonder. That we don't have a good year and then disappear for 10 years, that we can build this from a long-term standpoint.

That takes time. I've been there. I've been there in St. Louis. I've been there in Minnesota. You're constantly in a perpetual state of evaluation, getting better, adding pieces, adding parts, and talent does matter, whether it's a coach, whether it's a player, whether it's a front office member, whether it's a fan.

We love the passion here. We love Chicago. My family loves Chicago. I am so grateful to be in this position, and we'll continually work extremely, extremely smart and hard and to take the approach that we're going to build this the right way, that it will be built to last for many years.

That's not pleasant, because we all wanted more. I didn't want to win seven games this year. I don't want to be at this press conference today when there's teams practicing around the NFL and playing in playoff games. That bothers me to my soul. I haven't been able to sleep the last couple nights.

So I look forward to make sure we have constant reminders that we are building an organization here that will be highly successful on the field. Our goal is to win the division every year, to represent the NFC in the Super Bowl, to represent the NFC not only in the Super Bowl, but to win a Super Bowl. That's where we are, and that's where I'm focused on making sure we develop that from a football standpoint to be a resource to Matt and to Ryan and every staff member here.

I also want us to be the best business organization, not only in the National Football League but in all of sports. I want people to talk about what we're doing here in Chicago, to come here to learn. That takes time, that takes people, and that makes sure that we build it the right way.

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Then from a stadium standpoint, I am focused on making sure that we build the most progressive, smartly priced, on-time, under-budget stadium development project that's ever been built in the National Football League. So that's what we're focused on every single day.

We will continually make changes, make upgrades, make adjustments to get to that point, but do it in a manner that's deliberate, that's decisive, and that's fair, and to always be focused on forward thinking innovation and forward movement.

So with that again, I really do appreciate your time, your attention to detail. I appreciate your fairness. It has been an absolute pleasure being here today.

It's been an absolute pleasure walking in and out of this building on a daily basis, and I'm looking forward that today continues part of the evolution process of building the Chicago Bears that we're all so grateful to have, that our fans are excited for, that our players are excited to play here, and I can reiterate what Matt and Ryan said. This is a destination that people want to come. I can tell you that from a business standpoint. I can tell you that from a football standpoint. People want to come to Chicago.

You have our word. You have my word that I'm going to continually represent the McCaskey family, the Halas family, every single employee here, every player, coach, staff member, every alumni, every fan, every partner and sponsor, everyone around the world who considers themselves affiliated, associated, or respects and loves the Chicago Bears, we're going to continually do it with style, grace, class, and humility.

**Q. Given the competitive impatience you just described, how do you wrap your brain around the changes that were made in the last 48 hours, the changes that weren't made, and giving yourself confidence that this is the right path to go down?**

KEVIN WARREN: I think the way I wrap my brain around it is that fortunately I've been here. You go back to my first job in the NFL, my first year in the NFL, we were 5-11 at the St. Louis Rams. Second year we were 4-12, then the third year we ended up going 16-3 and winning the Super Bowl.

I remember many of those days having conversations with John Shaw, our president, Jay Zygmunt, our executive vice president, and Coach Vermeil, is that the questions that I would ask them of making sure the worst thing you can do when an organization is making progress is to turn around too quickly.

You have to evaluate honestly. I just feel here with the people that we have in this building, the changes that we've started to make today, the people that we will hire, the core group of players that we have, the draft capital that we have, the salary cap situation that we're in, the free agents -- I mean, just look what is accomplished. I firmly believe, go back 12 months ago and look at the progress that we've made.

So once you feel like, yes, you're not where you want to be, we're not where we're going to be, but we're pointed in the right direction, the key is having the right people in the right places doing the right things at the right time for the right reasons, and that's what I'm focused on.

So this is reminiscent of the process that we went through in St. Louis. It's reminiscent of the process we went through in Minnesota, you know, 6-10, 8-8, 10-6, 12-4.

There were many a times that we were in meetings that and we would say we're not making enough progress too quickly and we would have to take a step back and say, but are we on the right track, do we have the right people and are we focused on the right things.

As I sit here today, unequivocally, I believe we have the right set of individuals, and my expectations going into this season are extremely high. They're always the same, that we need to win the NFC North. That's where we should be. We're going to do everything we possibly can to make sure that that's not word of hope but it also is reality, and it starts with making sure you have the right culture, but it also starts with making sure you get really good players in here, and I think everyone would attest to the fact that the acquisitions that we made last year in the draft and in free agency is really positive, and I'll tell you this: Having rookies play -- that's one of the things that impressed me about Matt, many coaches will not play rookies or they'll shy away from it, but having those rookies play you saw toward the end of the year, that is going to pay major dividends, not only next year, but also into the future.

**Q. When we talked to you on Friday and we were talking about the coaching staff that you were going to take a big picture, methodical look. How come that came down to not looking outside the building at any other options? I know Ryan said there was no call placed to Jim Harbaugh or anyone else. How did you arrive at the decision?**

KEVIN WARREN: I think the way you arrive at the decision is you start at home first. One thing about Matt, we know him. We've worked with him. We understand -- everyone in this society, everyone in business, everyone in



the NFL, coach, player, we all have blind spots, and there's areas that we can improve.

But I have confidence in him. I have confidence in Ryan and their working relationship, and so what you have to do is to make sure, as I said, can you create an environment, can we help each other to be able to pull together to create a bond.

Just think about the number of coaches each year that are fired and that are hired, and they all start off this is the right one. This is going to work. Then two years later, it does it again. If you look at the organizations in the playoffs right now, look at them right now, it took time to make sure that they really build that -- even in down times, they were building because sometimes in the tear down is really you're building up, so I'm focused on making sure -- it's not that we've become where we're relaxed, that we're focused on.

We want to be diligent. We're type A individuals. We want to win. We're impatiently patient, but we also understand the importance to build a champion, it does take some time. I'm not saying a lot of time, but I strongly believe that this third year going into this third year is going to be a critical time for us to take a major jump.

**Q. I understand the argument for stability, but next year you're going to have two different coordinators, have a coaching staff where more than half of them are gone from the previous year. Does that still qualify as stability and how so?**

KEVIN WARREN: Yeah, I believe so because the foundation is in place. The year we won the Super Bowl in St. Louis we had a new offensive coordinator there and we had co-defensive coordinators. That's the nature of the NFL.

I think and believe that as long as the foundation core elements are in place, then you can have a stable environment that people want to come here and people want to work together.

**Q. Is the property that the Bears own in Arlington Heights still the priority, still the goal?**

KEVIN WARREN: The priority is to make sure that we build a world-class stadium for our fans, so we still own the property in Arlington Heights. We're still in communications with the individuals in Arlington Heights. We have had meetings with individuals in the city of Chicago.

We're focused on, again, back to making sure you take the

approach of doing the right things. We want to make sure -- that stadium is a 40-year decision, and we need to make sure we get that right and that we're very deliberate in our thought process.

**Q. Do you have a timeline on when you think -- how many years down the road you guys might be able to have a new stadium? Do you have a goal in mind, what season you'd like to have --**

KEVIN WARREN: Ideally just from the way the market is, the longer you wait, the more expensive it is building any project, so I'm going to make sure I'm focused on not rushing but making sure that we are deliberate in that stadium process, because truly in that world, time is money.

I've said it all along, that the moment that a shovel goes in the ground, I'm confident that we will be able to have a building to play in 36 months after that happens.

**Q. How big of a pivot was that for you? It seemed like when you got here, there was a plan where the stadium was going to be built and then there seemed to be a change in plan. How big of a priority was that when you got here versus when you were walking into?**

KEVIN WARREN: Fortunately most of the issues I deal with now I've dealt with before. Any time you build a stadium project you have to make sure you explore all of your options. It wasn't necessarily that big of a pivot. Even before I accepted the job here I was always looking for what are the places that would fit, what would our fans embrace.

It wasn't too much of a pivot. We just made sure we have to keep our options open.

**Q. What do you see as your involvement in football operations, decisions that have to be made this off-season, some pretty big ones, where do you fit into that?**

KEVIN WARREN: I think one of the things that is special about this group is this is not an ego-driven group. This is a group that makes sure we're focused on getting to what is right, and so it's been an enjoyment to work with Ryan, to work with Matt, to work with George, everyone else in the football operations department.

I'm here as a resource. I just want us to win. My theory that every day from a football operations standpoint that I walk in this building, is there anything or anyone or any situation that I've faced in my career in the National Football League or even at the Big Ten that could help us



win.

I think when people come to the table with that mindset, it works. We don't agree on everything. But that's the good thing about it. We have a very healthy, respectful relationship, so my focus is on is there anything that I can do to help this organization win, whether it's one football game, whether it's to get contact to hire a coach that will help us move it along.

So I just look as a resource here to be able to help us win.

**Q. How are you at evaluating quarterbacks?**

KEVIN WARREN: In my next lifetime. (Laughing.)

**Q. What intrigues you about the south lot?**

KEVIN WARREN: It's not necessarily the south lot. What intrigues me about downtown is I strongly believe Chicago is the finest city in all of the world. I mean, very rarely do you get an opportunity to have such a beautiful downtown with a vibrant business community with an absolutely beautiful lake and the energy that goes along.

I always focus on what's a way that we could bring together the beauty of the lake, the beauty of downtown, the business community, all the art exhibits, to bring that together for an environment, because it's always about the fans, how can we create an environment that they really enjoy, and not only on our game days but also from art, from food, just from music.

I live downtown. I love the city. I just think we're blessed to be able to live in a city like Chicago.

It has many pluses, and so I'm just a big proponent of the Chicagoland area. I'm a big proponent of Arlington Heights, but there's something that's really special about downtown Chicago.

**Q. Does the city have minuses, and what are they?**

KEVIN WARREN: I'm one of those folks I try to stay away from the minuses or negatives. I believe that we're blessed here in Chicago. A lot of places that you live, you don't have options that we could be talking about Arlington Heights or Chicago. So we're fortunate. We have very good choices here.

But again, I think -- and sometimes I think when you recognize, when you travel away from Chicago, you can take a step back and realize that we are fortunate to have Chicago that is such a special place, so I want to make sure that wherever we build our stadium that we do it in a

manner that pulls our fans together so that we can create experiences that they'll remember for multiple generations.

**Q. Can you build the same expansive project downtown that you propose to do in Arlington Heights?**

KEVIN WARREN: I would say quite naturally anytime you have 326 acres you can do more, but it's amazing. These are the things that I'm constantly thinking about every day. I think about our football team, the ways we can get better. I think about what we can do from an employee standpoint here. I think about the stadium and development.

You look at U.S. Bank Stadium, that's not a real big footprint, but you've been able to create that environment.

Yes, there are things that an environment downtown that you can create that you don't have in the suburbs or things in the suburbs that you can create that you don't have downtown, and so I'm one of those individuals that not only do I look at life as the glass is half full, I look at the glass is full and it's pouring over and there's so many things that we can do together.

Absolutely we can build something that would be magnificent downtown.

**Q. When it comes to the offensive coordinator opening in the staff, to be able to have as wide a pull as you want, there are probably people who are going to want assurances that they won't be here just for one year if the current staff is gone. Are contract extensions being talked about right now?**

KEVIN WARREN: As of right now, we're three days removed from the season. I haven't had any discussions with ownership or anyone about that. But again, I can just attest to what's happened with the number of calls and outreach that I've had to me, the people that I know in the league.

People are excited about the Chicago Bears. They love the talent that we have. They love the draft capital that we have, that we have to be able to use. They love our salary cap situation. They appreciate the stability of the ownership of over 100 years.

So the perception of what people think about the Chicago Bears, this is a very, very unique opportunity. Even the stadium development project plays into that. I don't think we'll have a problem at all getting world-class candidates, not only from an offensive coordinator and quarterback coach standpoint and a defensive coordinator standpoint, this is a job that people are excited about, to come here.





We have a lot of talent.

It's always exciting to join an organization when you're on the upswing to be able to help take you to the top.

**Q. Can you tell me where your talks are with district 15, 211, and 214 at this point?**

KEVIN WARREN: We've stayed in communication. I know there's been some outreach that we need to follow up on to make sure we continue that dialogue, and again, this is just a long process, so I expect sometime here in the near future that our attorneys and their attorneys will continue to have dialogue, and so we've had a very respectful relationship with the districts.

**Q. Has that been a roadblock that you didn't foresee?**

KEVIN WARREN: No, I try to foresee pretty much everything. That's just the nature of it. That's why we're here. If everything was easy and if everything was in place, I said it even yesterday, if everything was in place here, we wouldn't be here. So I understand that.

Again, I don't look at it as a roadblock, I look at it as an opportunity for us to build relationships and do something special together, and I really enjoy the challenge of working through ideas to be able to come up with creative solutions that people can buy into and recognize that it's a win-win-win for everyone involved.

**Q. What are the most immediate steps you can take or what clarity do you need before you're ready to go in one direction or another with that stadium project?**

KEVIN WARREN: I mean, I think the next steps is just to make sure that -- it's a bunch of next steps. You really need to make sure that we settle on a location. You need to make sure from a financial standpoint that it not only makes sense. I'm neurotic about making sure things make financial sense, because it's important to make sure -- this is a large amount of money, so you can't enter in these decisions haphazardly and kind of decide as you go.

I think the key of it is just making sure we're very deliberate. So there's a bunch of different steps as far as location. I know with Arlington Heights getting the tax situation squared away, seeing what happens. You have an election year this year. There's always moving parts. That's what makes the ribbon cutting so exciting and special.

That's what makes playing in the stadium so special, because if you're blessed to build and be associated with one stadium in your career and now to be able to do this

again, I take this very seriously, and I just want to make sure that the legacy that we create for our Chicago Bears fans, that is something that they truly are excited about that then we're able to open the doors of our new stadium.

**Q. Do you have the property tax thing figured out in Arlington Heights?**

KEVIN WARREN: That's one of the elements, but there's so many factors that we have to deal with.

**Q. There's been a lot of talk about the dysfunction and the adversity that Matt was able to steer the team through this season. As president, how did you digest the adversity that was going on in your building, and why are you confident that those are missteps that will be learned from?**

KEVIN WARREN: You can approach life as this is a problem, or I look at it as an opportunity.

I watch everything. I had one-on-one meetings with over 211 of our employees, from practice, to walk-throughs, to games. This is my life.

You can feel it in an environment that is this environment cohesive, are people together, are they focused on the right things for the right reasons at the right time, and you just feel that it is.

Again, you think about it, he's been here for 24 months. I mean, it's difficult -- this job is difficult enough.

But if studying businesses, studying professional sports teams, studying especially even NFL teams, it just seems like that third year is a critical year to have things start to meld.

Especially, I commend -- I wasn't here then, but I commend Ryan and Matt and Matt Feinstein and other people here to be able to clean up the salary cap situation.

To have a clean salary cap and to not be heavy, burdened with dead money and to make trades for -- you think about two veterans, when in one year have you seen a team get someone of the caliber of player of DJ Moore and Montez Sweat. You might get one, but to get two of them and on both sides of the ball, that's very unique, and then to have the first and the ninth draft pick and to have our rookies play going into the off-season not with surgeries, those are all the things that give you momentum.

It doesn't guarantee success, but it puts us in the right position, that if we stay together, if we keep challenging each other, that we remain patient, remain focused, keep

our egos out of the door, and that we keep in mind every time we walk in and out of this building that we look at George Halas and the way he built the National Football League and this team, it's really important.

So I'm extremely confident and maybe so confident because I've lived this before. So maybe if this was my first time, it may be different, but I lived this before, and I understand how it galvanizes an organization, a football team, a city, a fan base when you're able to go through very difficult times and be deliberate, be fair, make good decisions, be forward thinking, have innovation and bring in the right people who can help you be a champion not only in the community, on the field, but also in this business.

**Q. To that end, when Alan Williams resigned, the response from the organization was very strange relative to departures. Not even we wish him well or hope he gets the help he needs. It was very cold. Frankly it was not a good look for the organization. I'm curious how you felt that whole situation was managed by the Bears.**

KEVIN WARREN: I'll put my lawyer hat on now for a minute. Sometimes when things happen, out of respect for an individual, you have to make sure that less is more, and I can say that. It was very important during that period to be respectful of Alan and his family. We do wish him well. He's a good man and we wish him well, but we just needed to make sure that we handled that in a manner that not only was respectful but that also we followed legal issues and a course of action.

I feel very comfortable with how we handled that. Those things are -- there's no playbook that you go in the office and say, turn to tab 10 and on page 225 and go to that. Those things are very complex, and you do the best you can. There's some things we learned from it, but I do feel, and I think if you talk to Alan, he will tell you that we handled that situation the best that we could with style, grace and class.

**Q. You lost another coach this year, as well. How do you feel about the work you guys have done to kind of look at these coaches, to vet them, and how will things change when you're doing these hirings this off-season?**

KEVIN WARREN: Yeah, we can always get better. I look at it just like in a football game. Sometimes things happen and you say that, okay, next time we run that play, we need to make sure this needs to happen. That's no different in business.

One thing about it, we're not a manufacturing company.

We deal with people, and people are beautiful, they're enjoyable, they're wonderful, but it does create complex situations. So because of that, we're constantly always creating an environment of saying, what can we do better.

Fortunately the leadership here, we're serious note takers. We evaluate what we can do better. You heard Ryan talk about as he goes back and looks at what we can do better, and when you get a group of people like that to say that we don't know everything, but I think the thing that I've enjoyed the most about working with George and Pat and Brian and James and Michelle, the McCaskey family that work here is that they always start with the question, what is the right thing to do.

So long as we start with that, things work out.

I feel very comfortable that areas -- do we have areas to improve in our organization? Absolutely. Are we focused on those? Absolutely. I feel great after nine months kind of where we are, primarily because we're focused on even getting better on and off the field.

**Q. Ryan mentioned those three high-profile losses that left him (indiscernible) a couple of those with two bookend losses to Green Bay. How do you scrutinize those losses from your seat as an overseer of the football side?**

KEVIN WARREN: Maybe this is just me. I don't like losing. I don't separate them as high-profile losses. At the end of the day, this is not gymnastics, and they don't do a 9.8 and you get credit; you win or you lose or you tie.

All of the losses, even some of the losses -- I don't look at it and say, well, that was a good loss because we got blown out. I look at it is that we lost the game and what can we do to be better.

They all bother me. Every game that we play. The good thing about the National Football League, the goal is to seek to win every single game.

The thing that impressed me -- I even go back when I was even interviewing for the job here. I came to the Philadelphia game last year as a fan. Bought tickets online, parked in the parking lot with my daughter and friends, went and sat in the stands, ate a hot dog, had a beer.

The thing that impressed me, even that game, it was a very cold day, is that this football team played hard. That's one of the things that I learned along my journey in the NFL is that you can look at the desire of the players. Our locker room is really special. We have not only talented players

but they work hard, they play hard, and I think when you see them come back this off-season, I think you're going to see a really focused group who's focused on being a champion.

**Q. Your seat, aside from the cultural things that have been talked about, the locker room unity, the vibe in the room, what do you think was accomplished within this season?**

KEVIN WARREN: I think the thing that was accomplished is that we went through and had to deal with multiple crisis situations because that's going to happen. I think you really can evaluate really the fortitude, the type of person that you have based upon how they handle crisis. That was my devotional reading today which is somewhat apropos.

It's easy when people are running around in practice and the music is playing and -- it's fun. But then when the tackling starts or in business when a player gets injured or coaches leave or things happen, that's when you really see the true character of people, and that's one of the things that I feel strongly about the group that we have here.

They have strong character. It's not perfect, but they have strong character.

But I always would prefer to face a crisis on the front end in a relationship, in a building process, because then you can understand what you have.

You talk to a doctor, you can understand the type of doctor you have by going to the emergency room, where the surgery is not planned ahead and they can look at the chart.

I always, whether it was at the Rams, we had crisis. We won nine games in our first two years, and they were ready to fire Coach Vermeil. They were ready to fire all of us. Then look what happens.

I still think today, the Ram team today, has been able to build off of some of that strength that we built there. Same thing in Minnesota. We had crisis situations. In business, in family, you're going to face a crisis. But the key of it is how do you handle it and can you pull together because either crisis will either pull you together or pull you apart, and I can say what we went through this year, it actually pulled us together, so I'm looking forward to this upcoming season.

**Q. With Ryan Poles, what has convinced you over your year working with him that he's your guy and he's the person you want to partner with even though you**

**didn't choose him originally?**

KEVIN WARREN: And I've thought about this. One of my early clients when I was a sports agent was Will Shields. Will was from Lawton, Oklahoma, he went to Nebraska, drafted in the third round to the Chiefs. Started every game. Danny Villa got hurt the first game, Will came in, started the remainder of his career, went into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

The reason why I say that, there's something special about offensive linemen, and Ryan is the same way. They're smart. They have a fire that burns within them. They're tough.

That's what Ryan is. I'm incredibly impressed with how diligent and thoughtful he is.

So I think you have a really good combination in someone like me who's been able to kind of walk over the mountain and come back and to be able to share with him things that he will see and really to be as a partner.

I like his attention to detail. He's absolutely brilliant. He's a hard worker. He loves his family. He wants to win. He loves the Bears. He wants to do it all and not get any credit.

So when you get people like that in the business, that's why Ian Cunningham is interviewing today, because he's hired people like that. So I just feel -- and he's been around it. He went through it in Kansas City. It wasn't all smooth there.

The one good thing about it, when you've been around success or you've been around successful players, you understand how they practice, how they play, how they run their life, and it makes it easier to know what we need to do here to make sure that we replicate that.

**Q. Did having the lot already purchased put you at a deficit in terms of leverage in negotiations with Arlington Heights, and have you been able to gain some of that leverage back through your due diligence and exploring other site options?**

KEVIN WARREN: I think honesty, I think credibility. I always approach every meeting, every negotiation as a fact that we sit at a round table. So many people go to a negotiation look like, well, who's the winner and the loser. There are times in the way I approach that that everyone wins, so I don't think we were behind at a deficit. I look at what's the right thing to do.

I actually spend more time learning about that person on

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the other side of the table as far as what's most important to them because if I can make sure that I solve for their issues, then my issues are going to be easy. I want us to walk away -- I want them to walk back to whoever they report to and say we made progress. I don't want to walk back and say, that Kevin Warren, he took my shoes and my coat and my wallet and everything because when you do that, you get a chance to do that one time, and I think one of the reasons I've been blessed to work on a lot of different deals is I walk away from it to say what can we do to create a win-win-win.

When you're dealing with good people and you're doing things for the right reasons, there's enough out there for everyone, so I'm looking forward to being able to work on it, on this stadium, and I count it on joy and a gift from God to be able to do it.

**Q. You talked about the importance of continuity. What were your thoughts watching the Packers game this past week 18 and knowing how important that rivalry is, how close are you guys to making that critical third year that you talked about?**

KEVIN WARREN: Anytime I actually -- I always look for what is the positivity. I actually thought that would be my preferred team to end the regular season with. It was interesting, the tab that they put on your briefcase when you go in from a security standpoint, I didn't cut it off until yesterday, and for that reason, because I wanted to look at it for a couple days and try to still get the dirt and gravel out of my mouth to say, that wasn't a good taste.

I even said it going in the elevator to a group of people. I said, the plan is that we're not going to have this feeling anymore.

I think it's good because playing the Packers is such a great rivalry. It's great for the National Football League. So I thought it was, in an odd way, I thought it was a good way to start 2024 as a reminder to show us what we need to do, to do better, and to come together, and to continually get better with our coaches, to get better with our players, and our fans are there.

I look at our fans every day, that they're ready and they're just waving us to say, come on, we're here, we're ready for you. I think about all of our partners and our fans and I'm looking forward to the day of doing all that we possibly can to make sure because we have an opportunity here with the Chicago Bears that is unlike any other team in the National Football League. This is a very, very special franchise. I'm excited about the challenge, and I'm excited about 2024, and I'm excited about seeing all this come together.