

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Bill O'Brien

Press Conference



Q. Could you talk about tonight, No. 1, why did you decide to go ahead and have the scrimmage, and No. 2 what did you think about Kenny and Michael Thomas leading the players there at the end?

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, we spoke with players and we just felt that, you know, relative to everything that's going on, we had some good discussions today. These are ongoing discussions. You know, as a team, we decided that we want to go out there and scrimmage, get something done. We play two weeks from now, so we felt like that was important. We also felt like it was important to give the guys time to talk about things. You know, like you said, Kenny and Michael and JJ and Deshaun and a lot of guys spoke there at the end it. Wasn't just two guys.

So I don't know what they spoke about, but we'll reconvene here on Saturday and we'll figure -- figure some things out moving forward.

I think it's a time, you know, I think that -- I always try to give you my honest opinion. I think Doc Rivers, what he said after the other night, what he said after their game really hit home for me. I think that's something that should be played on loop; it was so passionate and just so real. I just have a lot of respect for Doc.

I think Andy Reid had some great things to say. I would say the big word is "empathy" and how can we come together and -- and figure out how to put actions in place that create change. Partner par and so I think that's what our players are talking about. Our players are very bright guys and we have a lot of good pros on this team. They wanted to scrimmage and they also wanted to talk about what's going on. So we'll just keep working on it.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the football part, considering you did game like conditions what exactly were you looking for tonight and what did you get out of it from a football standpoint?

COACH O'BRIEN: I feel like we got a lot out of it. It wasn't, obviously we weren't really going live. We did a lot

of thud situations. We did get a lot of situations done. We had third down. We were in the red area. We had long drives. We got a lot of special teams work done. We were able to get a lot done. We were able to get a lot of guy on film, which was good.

We'll probably do this to some degree probably one more time, but I thought tonight was good. We warmed up like we would for a game. We had our whole routine like it was a night game for the day today as best we could. And so I thought we were able to get a lot done. Guys were very professional today and it's really a fun team to coach. It's really a good team to coach.

Q. Your impressions of the job Anthony Weaver is doing with the defense and throughout camp, how much do you think the impression -- that you're enjoying playing for him and his style of defense, which it looks like it attacks in a lot of different ways?

COACH O'BRIEN: Weave does a good job. He's really smart. He's got a real good rapport with the players. You know, he's played in the league. He's coached in the league. He's coached under some really good defensive coordinators when he was D-Line coach. You know, obviously Rex Ryan, Romeo Crennel. So I think he's taken something from all of those guys and he's able to put his own stamp on it and that's what he's trying to do. I think he's doing a good job. He works really hard. Communicates well with his staff. He's got a good staff underneath him.

So I think, you know, I believe that we're on the right track. We've got a long way to go. We've got two weeks till the game. We've got a hell of a team we're playing in the first game, and we're going to keep working but I think we've accomplished, for where we are right now, we've got some things accomplished, no doubt about it. But we've got a ways to go.

Q. Interested what you thought about Deshaun Watson, looked like he found a good timing and rhythm with some of his wide receivers .

COACH O'BRIEN: It was good. I thought he did some good things. He was put into some tough situations. He had fourth and goal at the three. He had different situations on third down. He was backed up in his own



end. I thought he handled it really well. He's had a really good camp and I thought, you know, a lot of the skill guys played well tonight. And so yeah, I thought we were able to get a lot done offensively.

Q. And how is Chad Hanson doing? Looked like he went down hard there on the hit.

COACH O'BRIEN: We'll have to see tomorrow. Yeah, I think he got hit. Lonnie is an aggressive player and Chad made the catch, Lonnie, we're trying to avoid some of those things but it's hard to avoid that in a scrimmage. We'll see how Chad is doing tomorrow. Looks like he came out of it okay but we'll get more of an idea about that that tomorrow.

Q. Did anybody jump out at you under the lights and playing on the practice field on grass?

COACH O'BRIEN: I think there are some young guys that have played well for us. I think John Reid has had a good many cap. I think Ross Blacklock has had a good camp for rookies. I think that there's other guys, there's other guys that have played that maybe they are not in their first year but they have improved a lot from year one to year two. And.

So you know, Charles Omenihu, that guy has had a really good camp for us. I think a lot of guys have really performed well in a situation where they haven't had an off-season and they have had to just really concentrate in training camp. We've got a ways to go, like I said before, but I think some guys are really trying to get better.

Q. A.J. plays a lot on special teams, what have you seen from him just as a defender in terms of where he's taken a jump from last year to this year?

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, he just is a guy that plays with a lot -- there's a lot of guys like this but A.J. plays with a lot of energy. He does whatever you ask him to do. He puts the team first. He's definitely DTS: He's dependable; he's tough; he's smart. He has a really good roll on our football team. He's improved on defense. He's improved on special teams.

He's a fun guy to coach.

Q. I know you said that you guys were talking about what to do in terms of what actions to take. Have you thought about what some of those actions could be? I know other teams are doing stuff, not that you want to compare yourself to other teams, but these players that get frustrated and have to live this every day, what can you say that, okay, we not only hear you, we're

with you, but we're doing, this.

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, I think that's a great question and I think that's what we're talking about right now, and I think there's a lot of great ideas. I don't really want to get into all the ideas but I do know that there are some ideas that our players have that they want to put into action. And it's not just, obviously protesting; it's more than that.

It's how can they really affect change and we have a lot of guys on our football team that are very bright, very passionate about what's going on. We have a lot of empathy on this team. I think that's a big word. I think that's a big word.

I think for all of us, if we can just really figure out what's the best way to implement action and try to create change and do it in the right way and understand that we're all equal and that we need to come together. You know, it's a tough time in this country right now. I'm not a statesman; I'm a football coach, but obviously it's a tough time and I think it's important to listen and to learn and to try to come up with some solutions and we'll see where that goes but we have a lot of guys that are putting a lot of thought into that.

Q. Can you just talk about the overall emotions of your players this evening? I know in light of everything that's going on, it could be hard for them to go out and mentally prepare for a football game.

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, our guys are pros. You know, we have guys that have played a lot of football in this league. They know that they have a job to do and they want to go perform their job at the highest level. Some guys are in different parts of their ramp-up than other guys and they are working hard to get back into football shape and all those other things. But guys understand that they can focus on the job at hand and when football is over, they can focus on social justice and what they believe and what's in their hearts and their minds when it comes to that.

I think we have a team that's mature when it comes to those things and knows when to really focus on football, which they did tonight. I thought we got a lot of things done in the scrimmage and as you guys saw, probably that were in the stands, they are talking and they are thinking about things that they can do to really put some things into action.

Q. When you look at the tight end position, are you feeling better now this far into camp than you did say at the beginning of the off-season? Do you feel like that's an improved position?

COACH O'BRIEN: I like our.

THE WITNESS: Tight ends, I do. I think that Fellsy and Akins have really played well. I think Jordan and Kahale have improved. The Stapleton kid has come in here as an undrafted guy and done some really good things.

I think we have some good guys and they work hard, they are well-coached, and Will does a great job with those guys. I think Fells is a good leader at that position, a veteran player who has been around and he's a very mature guy, very smart guy and he does a good job from a player leadership standpoint in that room.

Q. And Jacob Martin, the speed that he showed, your thoughts on him?

COACH O'BRIEN: Jacob plays with a lot of energy. He plays fast. He plays hard. He only knows one speed. He does everything we ask him to do in that regard, he's very similar to how I described A.J. more. He's DTS: He's dependable; he's tough; he's smart; he's out there every day working hard to get better. He's put some weight on. I think he's playing at a really good level right now.

Q. Was there any discussion at all about perhaps not doing this tonight, or was this just always just understood that the two guys are going to -- you were going to hold a scrimmage?

COACH O'BRIEN: No, we spoke about it. We talked a lot about that this morning with a group of players. You know, not every player; it's impossible not to talk to every single player. It's just hard to do that with 80 players.

But you know, a group of players felt like look at the end of the day it was push to get this in to night and keep building as a team and then also have the discussion about what to do relative to, like I've said, trying to put some action into place this they think is good and rewarding and so we have a lot of guys that are very thoughtful, a lot of guys that have a lot of empathy that care about the country that, care about a lot of things other than football, but they also are very focused on being as good of a football player as they can be. I think we got a lot accomplished today. I thought it was a good day for our team.

Q. Since the start, when you put on pads through tonight, A.J. Moore has made a lot of plays. Players love it when he makes plays. Is he better now than he's ever been and what is it about his knack for making big plays in practice?

COACH O'BRIEN: He's made a lot of plays. Look, is he better than he's ever been? I think he's always been good. He just plays with a lot of passion, a lot of energy. He's a

smart player. Loves football. He's got really good personality. You know, he's got a personality that people are drawn to and he just has a lot of fun playing. He's just a guy that he's in heaven when he's playing football. You know, so he's made a lot of plays and the guys enjoy playing with him and he enjoys playing on this team.

Q. What have you thought about how Dareon has come back?

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, I think he's working hard. I think he's improved. You know, I thought he made a couple plays tonight from what I can see standing behind the offense. I think he's working hard to get better and better and get himself ready to go for the first game. You know, he started -- like you said he started on PUP and he's come off PUP. It's a work-in-progress but I think he's definitely improving.

Q. It's been a long time since you have given up the entire offensive playbook. How are you dealing with that? I know you still have your input, but is it starting to be different and are you starting to notice different things now that you don't have to focus on the offensive side of the ball like that?

COACH O'BRIEN: Look, I have a lot of faith in Tim and the offensive staff. They do a good job. They work hard. You know, I'm still involved in all three phases. I think as a head coach, you know, you have to be involved in all three phases. I do my best to let those guys coach and then try to give them my vision for the team and for each unit and I think it's going well. I think Tim and Weave, and I just think they communicate really well. I think it's going really well.

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