

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Coach Bill O'Brien

Press Conference



Q. Bill, could you tell us, please, about what you guys wanted to accomplish tonight? Was anything different than the other scrimmages?

BILL O'BRIEN: First of all, I'd like to start off by wishing the Rockets and my friend Mike Dantoni good luck tonight, Game 7. Love a Game 7; Rockets got it all the way. Want to wish them luck.

Yeah, it was different. It was a little bit more controlled, but we worked the same amount of time. Last week was a little bit more gamelike when it came to substitutions. This week we controlled it a little bit more, but we still got a lot done.

Q. Did you do it again like a night game since you open in a night game?

BILL O'BRIEN: I think that was the goal to try to get two of those -- next week, really just based on the way we have to get the roster down on Saturday, playing Thursday, a lot of the practice squad guys won't clear until the next day Sunday, so we're going to be practicing later this next week. So we'll be doing it next week, too.

Really the roster cutdown for the Thursday night game, I guess it is what it is.

Q. Who are some players tonight -- I know you said it was a bit more controlled, but just some guys that impressed you, maybe jumped out, showed you some things tonight?

BILL O'BRIEN: Jacob Martin played good tonight. That was the guy probably that stood out. You know, Stevie Mitchell made a few plays. Scottie Phillips ran hard. No, but Jacob Martin, he's had a good camp.

Q. As you guys get down -- you said you've got a few days here. How tough are some of these decisions? These guys have been with you all camp and now you've got to -- some of them might make the practice squad, some might not, but how tough are some of

these decisions as you try to get down to the 53?

BILL O'BRIEN: It's always hard, especially like with a group like this that's really -- during such a crazy time has really bought into everything and worked really hard, but you have to get the roster down to 53 and then you have to get a 16-man practice squad, and we'll try to do that. So the majority of our team is here, but it's definitely some tough decisions over the next couple guys for Jack, myself and Matt.

Q. What's kind of unique about blocking for Deshaun for the offensive linemen just with the way he plays? And along those lines you've talked about the benefit of the continuity of the line. How will that continuity specifically help in that regard?

BILL O'BRIEN: You've got to block forever. Play is never over. Got to block to the echo of the whistle. That's what it's like when you're blocking for Deshaun. You've got to hold your block for a long time because he's going to try to keep the play alive, and that's who he is. Yeah, these guys have played with him now for three years, so they're used to everything. They're used to the way he plays, his playing style, his cadence, the way he calls a play. They're used to everything. I think that's a good thing.

Q. You mentioned Scottie Phillips. Since running backs can't break tackles, what exactly do you look for in training camp and practice?

BILL O'BRIEN: Well, yeah, a lot of it's not live, but you can see on tape, you can look at their vision, you can look at their cutting ability, you can look at their -- you can judge whether they would have broken that tackle or not. He ran hard tonight, Scottie did. That was good to see.

But yeah, you can tell. You've been watching it for many years; you can figure it out.

Q. When you think about your depth at inside linebacker, how do you feel about kind of your health there with Dylan Cole? Do you feel like he'll be ready for the start of the season? Do you feel like he could go out there and play against the Chiefs?

BILL O'BRIEN: He scrimmaged tonight. He was out there tonight, probably got about 20 snaps on special teams and



defense, which was good. Tyrell Adams has had a good camp, and then obviously Zach and B-Mac at the top. How many can you keep, know what I mean? Nate Hall had a good night. Nate Hall practiced good tonight. Like I said, we have depth there, and we feel pretty good about where that position is at.

Q. Can you talk a little bit more about what you've seen from this O-line? I know you said it's good that you've had some continuity, everybody is back, but from what you've seen to this point getting ready to head into the first week? Are you pleased with what you've seen so far? Can you talk about the O-line?

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, everybody has got a little bit of a long way to go. I think without off-season program, without preseason games, but everybody is in the same boat. I've said all along I like where this offensive line is at, I like the chemistry, I like the talent, I like the depth. Health is going to be the key, but they're playing well together for this time of the year, and we have high expectations for that group.

Q. What are you looking for in a third quarterback?

BILL O'BRIEN: In a third quarterback? You know, I think the key to any backup quarterback, whether it's a two or a three, is when they go into practice the practice is still able to function at a good level. I think that's the key. I'm not going to get into skill set and all those different things, but I think one of the things I talk to AJ about a lot is I say, look, when you go into practice, practice just doesn't fall off a cliff, that you can still function and that you can still have a productive practice. To me that's always the mark of a good backup quarterback, and that's how we'll always continue to try to find guys that can do that.

Q. Considering sometimes the third quarterback can be a developmental guy, is experience more important this year considering the circumstances you're coaching under?

BILL O'BRIEN: You mean experience for a third quarterback?

Q. Yeah.

BILL O'BRIEN: Yeah, I'm not sure. I think like there's probably some guys out there that have experience, but I wouldn't say that's the number one key for that role. I think it's more about, hey, does this guy have the capacity to learn, does he understand his role, is he a good guy, really fit into the quarterback room well. I mean, hell, who knows, we might bring Alex McGough back, who knows. I mean, it's a position that we'll look at and we'll figure it out, and right now we have two, and moving forward do we need

three. That'll all be -- we'll think about that over the next couple nights.

Q. PJ Hall, he's had some time with you guys after you started having practice, worked on his conditioning. What did you see from him now that he's had some scrimmages and what do you think about him?

BILL O'BRIEN: PJ had a good night tonight. PJ Hall, he's come in here, we've asked him to get in better condition. He's lost weight. He's shown up every day. He's worked hard in the weight room. He's trying to work hard on his diet. I thought he played well the last couple days, and I thought he played pretty well tonight from what I could see from the field level there. We'll continue to work with him and we'll see where it goes.

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