

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Nick Caserio

Draft Press Conference



Q. Can you just weigh in a little bit on Davis? Obviously an incredible recruit coming out of high school, don't have a lot of film on him, but Stanford's produced some pretty good quarterbacks and pretty good football players. So just your thoughts.

NICK CASERIO: Sure. Again, appreciate everybody taking some time here this evening sticking around. It's, before I answer the question, just, exciting time for the organization, opportunity for us to continue the team-building process, which again, it's not necessarily going to be about one draft, one player. It's going to be about a continuation of just continuing to add competition, just, what we try to do from day one is to create a culture of competition, selflessness, and toughness and add players. And you've seen through the myriad of transactions throughout the course of the spring what we're trying to do. And tonight was an opportunity for us to add more football players to the team that we think we want to work with and may have some future with us.

So specifically to your question, Davis played in a good program at Stanford. Coach Shaw does a great job with their program offensively. Has some of the attributes that a quarterback that we like and possess and played well with his opportunities when he was on the field, so it was a situation where we like the player, we spent time with him before the draft, did our research, did our homework. And, again, it's about trying to create competition across the football team, across all position. We talked about this on the pre-draft call a couple weeks ago. That's our philosophy and that's our mindset and we're going to continue to do that. So that was the rationale and the impetus for the pick.

Q. Did acquiring 37 players like you have give you the luxury of being able to draft a quarterback who will have time to develop? And how does the selection of Mills affect the Watson situation?

NICK CASERIO: Again, it's just part of the team-building process. I wouldn't say there was any one specific factor or any one particular thing that goes into it. What we tried

to do is evaluate the players and put the players in a position and on the board and then go through our process. There were several players that I would say that we were discussing in that 67 range, wherever it was. We had discussions with some teams kind of in both directions at different points. So, again, we take the information, look at the board, and I would say a lot of great dialogue, a lot of great discussion with our group. Liip, Matt Bazirgan, you know, Rob, Zique, John, so a lot of good discussions and when it came time to pick at 67, we felt that that was the best decision for our team at the time so it doesn't impact anybody. Again, our whole philosophy has been to create as much competition as possible and we'll continue to do that.

Q. I know there's a lot of variables that go into a draft, like you mentioned in your pre-draft call, but in an ideal scenario is Davis a future franchise quarterback for you guys?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, again, I think it's really just about adding players to your football team that you want to work with and have some of the qualities that you desire. So, again, I would say both players that we selected and I would say the players that we're going to hopefully select here tomorrow, however many players that is, have the qualities that we look for in football players. Again, we're trying to create a culture of competition, selflessness, and toughness, so who are the players that embody that along with their physical traits and characteristics, that's our responsibility to try to find those players and that's what we're hopefully going to try to continue to do. And, again, you have to be purposeful and you have to stay disciplined and just try to make the decisions that you feel make the most sense for your organization. So that's what we did tonight and hopefully we'll continue to do that each step of the way. Again, there's a lot of fanfare and hype that goes along with the draft. Again, I think it's just about, really the next step for whomever comes in here, and it's no different than the free agents that we have acquired, is to come in our building, learn our program, understand our program, assimilate to our culture, and just take it one day at a time and just be the best version of themselves and try to makes as much improvement on a day-to-day basis as a football player as they can and the competition will sort itself out. Again, it's not going to be what I think or my decision or what David thinks. It's going to be the players are ultimately going to determine who plays, what their role



is, and how big or small that is.

Q. What was it about Nico Collins that made you guys want to trade up? And if you would, tell us possibly where did you have him on your board, because, I mean, if you traded up, I figured he was higher up on your board. And how much did Pep Hamilton influence your, whatever your opinion was of Nico?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, couple good questions there. I would say it's all kind of combined. So I think when you're working through this process, again, you're looking at the players relative to supply and demand, number one, again, across all positions. And number two, what are your alternatives relative to if you don't get a player at a certain level, right, okay, then their next opportunity to pick, I think we were scheduled to pick at 109 right there at the top of the 4th. So as we started to go through the third round, I would say there were a number of players that we liked that we said, okay, like, they're starting to come off here fairly quickly, and so if we have an opportunity to find a player that we like that we have at a certain level relative to whatever our other options are, then it might be worth a discussion. So I would say that was really the impetus. Again, we talked about this on the call. Really, trades are always player-driven and it's not, and it's really about just the other factors that go into it, right? So do you, okay, we picked at 67, okay, if you wait until 109, how many players are going to be available, who are you going to lose, and what are your alternatives going to be. So that was philosophically the mindset. So, again, as we worked through it, some of the players that were kind of in that range were starting to come off the board and we said, all right, here's an opportunity with a player that we like, that we, to your second part of your question, we have some degree of background with, right? Between Pep being at University of Michigan and Ben McDaniels being at the University of Michigan. So, again, you take all the information, all the factors that go into the decision-making process. So, and again, we moved, I would say, marginally. You take a 5th and then the 4th next year, which we had two 4ths, so again, we still have, I don't know, seven picks next year, something like that. So when you do your kind of cost-benefit analysis relative to all the information that's, I would say, the reason that we made a decision that we did.

Q. You've coached wide receivers. What's his potential?

NICK CASERIO: Not very well (laughing). No (laughing). Believe me, I wasn't a reason, like, our receiving corps was any good in 2007.

No, I would say specific to him, he's got good size, he runs

well, he's got good hands, so he catches the ball well. He's got good playing strength. So, again, how is that going to translate into our system and into NFL competition? We'll find out. I mean, obviously, that's a big, I would say, X factor for all of these players. So I would say there's some qualities there that we like, and we talked a little bit earlier about this or just another question was asked, like, the receiving corps, we have added some players that had maybe a little bit more size relative to where it was. But, again, like Brandon Cooks is a really good football player, I don't care how big or small he is or isn't, right? So, again, you're going to need different types of people, different types of players, that can complement one another. So I would say, like, when you look at some of the different players at that position they're all kind of different shapes and sizes and, again, it's going to be about the competition and we'll let the players sort out like what their role is, how big or small it is or isn't.

Q. I know oftentimes it's the board that dictates you have the players rated and all that. Did you go in feeling right off the top you needed to get a quarterback and a receiver?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, again, you don't really ever go into it and say we need X, we need Y. You just take the information. You have players that I think you sort of earmark. I would say probably our volume of players that were on the board is probably a little bit smaller relative to previous years. Again, like, there's players at some point you're going to have to make a decision you're comfortable, not comfortable, for a myriad of reasons and if you have to eliminate a player for whatever the reason is, that's okay to do, and then you try to focus in on, say, a core group of players. So whatever the positions are the positions are. We don't dictate that. We don't control that. So, again, it's do your research, go through your process, take the information, put the players in the position as you see it. Again, it doesn't necessarily mean we're right. It just means like here's what we think we potentially could have based on our analysis and our assessment. And, again, like once they get here, we're going to get a lot more information, and then we'll see whether or not the information that we had or what our analysis or what our evaluation of the player was and we're not going to know that here for a little bit.

Q. Generally speaking, can you share what your priorities are for tomorrow?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, try to improve, I would say, our football team, try to create competition. Again, they will probably be, I would say, we're going to look at the board just like we did in the first few days, right? I mean, we'll try to follow it horizontally and just look at different players at



different positions relative to how we have graded them. So their role commensurate with their value and how that fits. So we'll try to stay as disciplined as possible. So, again, I wouldn't say it's about one position, about one player. It's going to be about a number of different things and that's how we're approaching it.

Q. Curious, the thought process, were you torn at all? There were some defensive players there that potentially could make an impact this coming season, like Joseph Ossai, for one. Were you torn with maybe someone who could make impact right away this season, to a quarterback that you had rated higher, so much higher than these other players?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, again, you just have to trust what your process is and, again, we had a lot of great discussions and I would say there's always going to be some players that you like more than other players. It doesn't mean that there's one way to look at it or, again, I think sometimes perception isn't always reality. So there's a lot of -- believe me, there's a lot of people that put a lot of time and effort, and a lot of people on TV talk about different players and, which is great, it creates a lot of excitement and a lot of information. But, again, like that's -- again, this is why we are here and we have to trust the things that we believe in and just try to make the decisions that we think make the most sense for the Houston Texans and we'll hopefully continue to do that each step along the way.

Q. Are you more excited now after day two of the draft than you thought you would be or this is what you had laid out?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah. No, I mean, it takes a lot for me to get excited. No, again, I think it's an opportunity. It's a great opportunity for us to continue to put players on our team that we want to work with. And, again, it's, the draft is a kind of a finite period of time, it's fixed and it's three days. And, again, the team-building process doesn't, won't stop after tomorrow, right? So there's more work to do. There's always more work ahead of us and I think it's really more of a workman-like mentality that we have. I mean, I'm not going to go home tonight and kind of rest on my laurels and grab a Corona. I mean, maybe somebody else will do that, but I'm probably not going to do that. You try to take it one step at a time and try to make good thoughtful decisions along the way and that's all we can really control. Again, focus on the things that we can control, which is getting ready for tomorrow and kind of turning the page, and then once we get through tomorrow, turning the page to the next day. So it's an ongoing process and I think that's, I would say where the excitement lies is that it's kind of continuous, it's very fluid, and it's not a fixed end point.

Q. When you talk about the scouts Matt Bazirgan, Jack, that room full of guys that you trust, what were they saying about the picks that you made and what did everybody else like about Davis and Nico?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, actually, before I answer that question, just for the record, I haven't seen Dodgeball. So just in case you're interested.

Q. Did you see my video?

NICK CASERIO: I did.

Q. How have you not seen Dodgeball?

NICK CASERIO: I'm not a movie buff. I hate to admit that. So, I mean, I know I'm kind of embarrassed, but I'm not a big movie person.

Q. That's okay. You need to see it at some point.

NICK CASERIO: Okay. Anyway.

No, again, look, ultimately, it's my decision, right? So, I mean, but you trust the people around you, so I would say like from a scouting perspective, I mean, our scouting staff, it's Liip, it's Baz, it's our national scouts, our area scouts. So they put a lot of time a lot of effort into it. They put a lot of information and process a lot of information. So, again, like, those are the guys that we're relying on. I would say Liip is a key component. It's the college scouting director and he's a big part of the draft process and there's a lot of people that are involved. We got a pretty good group of guys, good area group, Matt, Rob. So, again, ultimately, take the information and it's, you know, in the end, like, the reason I'm here is to make those decisions and that's my responsibility and I have a responsibility to our group and I have a responsibility to the organization to the ownership. So, again, it's, you try to make thoughtful decisions, try to take the information, process it, and just make a good decision and just keep moving forward. Again, and relative to picking a specific player or particular player, again, it's always relative to what your other options are and how you feel about those players and what your evaluation of those players are. So, again, it's not one factor, it's not one person, it's not one thing, there's just a myriad of things that go into it and in the end, like, that's my responsibility to our organization, to our coaching staff, and our scouting staff and maybe I can take the heat off their shoulders. You guys can blame me for everything.

Q. With the assets you used to move up those 20 spots to get Nico today and considering you don't have another selection for another 40 picks or so and



then another one in the 190s, if there's an opportunity to move up with what you have in the future draft capital and what you still have tomorrow, do you feel like you have the assets needed to move up if you're so inclined?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, it's a good question. I think there's a certain degree of maneuverability that could, you could do some things. Again, I would just say, I mean, I don't want to go out on a limb here, but it's probably unlikely that we would do anything relative to future picks. So, again, I think taking the five picks that we have positioned right now at 147, the 3, 6, and then the 7th, and whether or not we can maneuver within that framework, I mean, that's something that we'll look at. Again, it always goes back to what are your options and what's the alternative and what are you viewing in front of you. So it's always driven on that. It's not, okay, I'm going to wake up in the morning and we're going to say, okay, like, we need to trade this pick to get to this spot and draft Mr. X, like, we don't even know who we're talking about yet, right? So, again, does it preclude us from maneuvering around? Not necessarily. So we'll look at everything. Again, there's some things that can you do within reason, but we're going to be responsible. We're going to make good decisions and not put ourselves in a position -- again, it's really who you, what are you doing, who are you doing it for, and what's the cost associated with it.

Q. Could you tell us specifically what you like about Mills, the tangibles, as well as the intangibles, please?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I would say played in a good offensive system, played for a good coach, has pretty good size, fairly accurate with the ball, smart, makes fairly good decisions. So, again, like all these players have things that there are some things that they do well, but I would say all of them have things they can improve. I would say, honestly, some of the players that have been in our building over the last two weeks, they have areas they can improve and a lot of them have been in the league for however many years. So every player has physical attributes relative to the position that they play and there's always ways for players to improve and try to make them better and that's our responsibility as a staff to try to maximize whatever they have, and each player is different, some will make more progress quicker than others. But, again, there's no set formula for any particular player, so whatever they do well, whatever assets and attributes they have, that's a good starting point, but it doesn't necessarily mean anything until you actually put in the work and then just see how it manifests itself. And, again, this is a long process. It's one day at a time, one step at a time. Again, like the off-season program is two weeks old, like we have had some players that have been in the building since

February and those players have made a lot of progress. We have seen the tangible progress. So then the next step is to go from what they have done to go on to the field and let's see how that translates. So each player is at a different stage and our job is to kind of shepherd them as best we can and they have a responsibility on their end as well to try to become the best player that they can for our organization and that's all we can ask of the players.

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