

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Nick Caserio

Press Conference

NICK CASERIO: Take a couple minutes, talk through a couple different things and then we'll kind of get into a little bit of Q&A, but I would say first off appreciate everybody being here. A lot of work by a lot of people has gone into get us to this point. I would say the players are excited, the team is excited, the organization is excited and we're all excited to be here.

We'll see if we're able to maintain the performance throughout the course of camp here but we have done some things during the off-season, made some modifications to the facility as some of you may have seen, kind of online. Appreciative of the support of ownership and the capital commitments they made to the new locker room to give the players and staff the resources they need to be successful and give them the opportunity to go out and perform to the best of their ability.

So training camp is here. It's a great opportunity for us to get started. You know, a couple things I think are relevant right now, just I would say that we're dealing with, that teams are dealing with, I would say there's been a lot of discussion and questions about COVID, the vaccine, kind of that situation. I would just say the league has done a great job putting protocols in place with the goal and the intent to give every team an opportunity to be functional from a work flow standpoint, so that's the most important thing.

Relative to the vaccine I would just say what Joe Judge said about that yesterday, I think was spot on. It's not about picking sides. It's about educating the players. It's about providing them the information and the resources and the reality is, as we've all seen, COVID is with us. A lot of research, a lot of medical professionals have spent a lot of time on us and right now the Delta strain is as contagious as any strain that's out there.

I think it's important for all of us to maintain vigilance, be smart about how we are going to handle everything and I think we'll be smart relative to if we have to make some modifications. The building is set up a certain way right now. If we get to a point to where we have to make some



changes, then we'll modify and make some adjustments.

Our players have done a great job responding and handling the work flow and workload and again I think we're making some progress just on the vaccine front, so we are in a pretty good position. So again, it's not about picking sides, it's an individual choice, our job and our goal is to create, you know, as healthy a work environment and flow for everybody involved.

On the roster, as you all know, it's a pretty fluid situation, so just kind of comment on some of the things that have taken place the past few days, so we've made a few transactions, traded for Anthony Miller, a receiver from Chicago, and the corresponding move was to drop Mitch from the roster and dropped Moncrief who wouldn't be ready to participate in training camp. And we're working through a situation relative to Randall Cobb, there's a few moving pieces on that, so I don't want to comment on that without it being complete and come to fruition.

I would say the roster is a day-to-day endeavor. I'm probably going to give a little shameless plug for the guys at 610, maybe you can take a poll and say how many roster transactions are the Houston Texans going to have, over and under, between now and the start of training camp, and maybe I'll give a hundred bucks to the winner and handle that however you want it.

There's always going to be movement on and off the roster. We have 50 new players and it's an opportunity for everybody to get started. The goal for training camp is for everybody to establish a level of performance. We're not going to predetermine everything. Nobody has a defined role. We're going to go out there and let the players kind of take care of themselves, and that will sort itself out.

I'd say we probably have about 79 players that will be kind of working and that we had some other players and different categories relative to whatever their health status is.

Again we are not necessarily going to give a day-to-day report about who is doing what, everybody has a process and protocol that they are following and the goal is for everybody to get out there and perform to the best of their ability and give them a chance to compete for a roster spot.



One other comment, more personal but maybe for some of you here in the media on the tragic loss of Coach Knapp, I know Coach Knapp was here a little bit in Houston and some of you had a better relationship than others and it's a great reminder of the fragility of life. The reality is we are not guaranteed anything. We are guaranteed today but not much beyond that. Our prayers and thoughts to the Knapp family and the Jet organization.

Again I think it's just a great reminder for all of us, we can't take everything for granted, we are only guaranteed today and our thoughts are with the Jets organization and their family as well.

The DeShaun situation, I would say my comments are he reported for training camp the other day. I know the league put out a statement and made some comments about where they are in that process and from our perspective, it's a day-to-day endeavor. You know, we are going to take the information and we are going to process that, and we are respectful of everybody that's involved and so we'll take it one day at a time and do what is best for the Tuesday ton Texas.

There's been a lot of speculation about what the Houston Texans will do about a lot of different scenarios and quite frankly, a lot of it is speculation. I'm not going to comment about rumors, what we have done, what we're going to do, what the plan is. That's not my responsibility. The reason I was brought here by the McNair family was it do what's best for the Texans organize on a day-to-day basis and that's my responsibility to ownership and the players and coaching staff and that's how we are going to handle it.

So with that, we'll take some questions here for a few minutes and then we'll kind of get moving.

Q. Will DeShaun be on the field?

NICK CASERIO: Again I'm not going to get into an individual discussion about who is doing what. Everybody will go out there and whatever they are going to do they are going to do and I'm not going to comment about somebody what they are going to do on a day-to-day basis.

Q. You said it's not your decision to make but you spent five minutes talking about your the GM, so whose decision is it about what DeShaun Watson does with his team?

NICK CASERIO: Again, we're going to do what we feel is best for the organization on a day-to-day basis. It's a collective effort between myself and David Culley, we're going to talk about everything each day and then do what we feel is best.

Q. Is it in the best interests for the team for DeShaun Watson to be around the team right now?

NICK CASERIO: Again I'm not going to get into speculation about what's right, what's not. Again we're going to do what we feel is best and the most important thing is for the players to go out there and get themselves ready to play, so whatever that entails, whatever that looks like, that's what we're going to do.

Q. Watson a national story and you're not giving any update about his status with his team and he's on your roster?

NICK CASERIO: Again my responsibility is to the players first and foremost and the organization and that's what it's going to be.

Q. How much do you engage with the coaches?

NICK CASERIO: I'd say we've had conversations, I'm not going to get into the nature of those conversations. Again, he's here; he's been in meetings, he went through the conditioning test just like however many other players that we had that were here. We're going to take it one day at a time and do what we feel is best on a day-to-day basis.

Q. Will he be out here?

NICK CASERIO: Again I'm not going to comment about who is out here or who is doing. What we're going to go out and prepare for practice and then let's take it one day at a time, one period at a time.

Q. When did you learn he would be reporting to camp?

NICK CASERIO: Everybody had a reporting date and that was noted -- the players were notified of what the reporting date was. Everybody knew when they were scheduled to report so everybody knew what was expected on that front.

Q. Can you talk about the distractions that this may cause?

NICK CASERIO: You're players and staff have done a great job focusing on what they can control, which is their job, which is their individual performance, which is their skill development and their development as a player.

Again, kind of where we are with training camp and this week is kind of unique. We're in this ramp-up period, there's no pads. It's helmets, we're going to go through a practice like we normally do but the most important thing

for each player, each person, is to focus on themselves and the things that they can control. Again, we have 50 new players, whatever it is, you guys have done a count probably better than I have, but we have a lot of new players.

So their responsibility is to themselves, to each other, to go out there and just do their job and prepare themselves to play. Again, the roster construction what that looks like, again between now -- we play game in, what is it, 17 days or something like that, so we have 12 to 13 practices. So we have a lot to get done in a short period of time so the most important thing is for players to focus on the things that they can control.

Q. Did DeShaun tell you guys that he wants to be traded?

NICK CASERIO: I'm not going to comment on what's been communicated or what conversations we've had. I think that's more of a private -- respect everybody involved. I think that's the most important thing is to keep it between ourselves.

Q. What's his physical conditioning?

NICK CASERIO: I would say most of our team looks like they are ready to go. I would say most everybody passed the conditioning test which is one measure of their physical performance and says that they are ready to practice. The players have worked hard in the off-season to prepare themselves. Again are things going to happen on the practice field? Absolutely. The most important thing is getting themselves physically ready to play and the way the practices are structured and the way the league has put in place per the CBA it gives everybody an opportunity with some of the jaded and jagged off-season program.

So again where the team is now most players are in condition and most are ready to go. We'll have to monitor workload and level of performance and those types of things on a regular basis and that's what we'll do. But the players that are here are ready to practice, and then we'll take it one game at a time.

Q. What are the factors that you used in considering, was it to do with the DeShaun? What is the main factor that you're considering in terms of, when you talk about what's best for the organization, how do you come to that conclusion?

NICK CASERIO: Are you talking an individual basis?

Q. DeShaun Watson.

NICK CASERIO: Again it's not about one person or one individual. I think our focus is on our team and always doing what's in the best interests of our team and how we are going to handle it. I would say there's a lot that go into these things and every team is dealing with different things I would say when you look around the league so we are no different.

Again we talk about everything, David and I talk about everything on a day-to-day basis and we're going to go out there and each day just try to do what we feel is better than us.

Q. 85 percent --

NICK CASERIO: I'm not going to get into the percentage. What I would say is that we have made progress from the spring relative to where we are now, so we're making progress. Again, I don't want to necessarily get into the percentages because some of that is pretty fluid, just relative to the dates and the timing of when that actually comes to fruition. So I'd say we've made progress from the spring. We're on track. I think we're in a decent position. Each day we'll probably get more information as we go.

Q. Will Cobb be out here?

NICK CASERIO: I would not expect him to be out here, no.

Q. Is your returning starting quarterback the starter the first day of training camp?

NICK CASERIO: We have not talked to anybody relative to who is a starter and who is not. Everybody is going to get a lot of reps and we're going to mix-and-match the groups. This is our first time to evaluate our team. OTAs are OTAs so now we are getting into more, okay, individual, group drill, seven on seven and we're going to see more and have more information.

Everybody is going to get X number of reps and at some point we'll have to make a decision about who sits where and who goes where and I would say that day one is really not the place to determine that. It's not about our starters and it's not about whose role; it's about the players going out there and just establishing their level of performance, that's the most important thing.

I'd say with a lot of new players that have come in, their attitudes have been good. They worked hard. We had a four-week period where we were able to get some things accomplished. Everybody is here now in training camp. So we'll get a better barometer to where people might be. Just the construction of the team, as we sit here today, we

have a lot of guys that have experience in the league.

Between now that we are starting over, that's not as germane and relevant to all we can go is based off what we see here. The most important thing is for everybody to focus on what they can do and what they can handle.

Q. When it comes to a Watson situation or handling anything, how much does noise or distraction factor in? Or is that something they have to put to the side?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, it's a great question. I'd say just generally speaking, society, there's probably a lot of noise on an external basis. I think one of the things that we've been consistent about is trying to focus in on what goes on in our building and the things that we can't control which is our effort, which is our attitude, which is our meeting, which is preparing for practice.

Again our players and staff have done a great job. I would say the attitude in the building has been great kind of even going back to January when I first arrived. So again, like the most important thing is for us to focus on what's going on inside the building and again there's always going to be things externally that are said or noise as you're referenced but again it's not our job to get caught up with that and I would not be doing my job if I was worried about some of those things.

Q. Were you surprised DeShaun reported?

NICK CASERIO: Again, everybody had a reporting day and the expectation was everybody would report and everybody had their time that they were going to be in the building. We had however many players here right now, I think it's 88-ish, whatever it is, relative to the roster. So again, it's where we are for today and we're moving forward.

Q. About DeShaun, can you give us your 30,000-foot view, so much focus at that position --

NICK CASERIO: Again I think the performance, it's hard for me to sit here and say, this is what I think right now. We've assembled a team and added players to the team across positions with a variety of backgrounds and levels of experience. Again our job is to evaluate what we see moving forward. Again can't have any preconceived notions and we have communicated this to the players. Respectfully, it's not about what's happened in the past. You're going to be judged on what happens moving forward and I think the players understand that, and are going to hold themselves accountable for that.

Q. Emphasizing fresh starts and doing things in the

best interests of the organization you've mentioned several times, but is Watson as a distraction in the best interests of the organization at this point?

NICK CASERIO: I don't want to speak for anybody else but it really hasn't been a distraction. We don't think it will be a distraction. Again I think our staff and players have done a great job of focusing on the things that are germane and relevant to them which is their individual performance and individual job. Again I don't want to speak for too many people but I would say to answer your question, it really has not been a distraction.

Q. But is the fact that he's here, is that a message for the organization?

NICK CASERIO: Again we'll take the information each day. Again it's not a distraction for the team. Players have done a great job with their attitude and approach. They are professionals and they are going to handle things the right way which quite frankly they have done all the way up until this point.

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