

# Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

## Lovie Smith

### Press Conference



LOVIE SMITH: We've had a chance to have a couple of practices right now. You know, early on in the off-season, you don't get a chance to do an awful lot. Plus now I can kind of talk a little bit about some of our players and really kind of know where we see them fitting into our defense.

Very pleased with the installation. We've had a chance to put in different situations right now. The guys have been coachable. You want competition as much as anything in training camp to get a chance to see exactly who the players are. It does. It starts up front. We have some guys, quite a few guys that we want to see that we think can contribute.

The linebackers have been awesome, and the secondary is all kind of coming together a little bit, if you can say that after a week of practice. It's pretty important. We have a basic philosophy on how we want to play football. Yeah, we want to stop the run. We want to be sound and all those things. But they determine the winner by how many points you score. That's one of our goals defensively is to score as often as possible, just like on offense. If we can't score, it's about taking the ball away.

It's not a good defensive game unless you've done more than just make a tackle. So take-aways are important, and if you've been in practice, you've seen guys buying into that. Again, it's always good to get in pads, but can't wait to see where it goes from here. I'll take your questions.

**Q. You talk about how turnovers are an emphasis. The team last year didn't have a lot of them.**

LOVIE SMITH: First off, I think it's a mindset. You said turnovers, right? See, offense talks about turnovers. They turn it over. We as the defense can't wait for the offense to turn it over. You have to take it away. On defense, first off, the philosophy that it's a take-away. You have to take the ball away on the defensive side, and then you've got to practice it, simple as that.

An offensive person, when you have a completion, you say, okay, it's a good catch. For us if they catch it, it's a

chance to take the ball away. So it goes through that mindset, and then you just have to keep practicing it like you practice tackling, like receivers practice catching the ball, all of those things.

**Q. What is it like for you, a legend, an icon, a person who's known all over?**

LOVIE SMITH: Let me hear that question again.

**Q. What's it like being an icon and a legend all rolled into one when it comes to defense in the NFL?**

LOVIE SMITH: Well, I'll just say, first off, I'm sure you had a chance to talk a little bit with the offensive guys a little bit. If you start playing football early on, just defense in general, that seems like that's what football is about. I've had a chance to be around it for quite a long time and seen a lot of good defenses.

You know, Nick and David have done a great job of bringing in a lot of new guys too that are really hungry. As a defensive coach, you just kind of want guys to take coaching and buy into what we're doing. We're getting on the same page. It's been documented how bad we were last year defensively, but to have a chance to do something about that and to bring our Texans back is pretty important to us right now.

**Q. What are the challenges of turning that around?**

LOVIE SMITH: Well, challenges, I mean, you start from it all. We played the run well last -- I mean, that's a lot of discipline with that. We've talked about take-aways quite a bit. The good thing about it is you get to start over. It's new blood. None of us, things that happened last year, as a team, that wasn't us. We get a chance to start it over again, and we've seen signs of improvement.

**Q. One or two guys stand out for you so far?**

LOVIE SMITH: Yeah, and I hate to talk -- what is this, the second day of pads? I'll just say this, I haven't been displeased with anyone. I feel better about the guys that I see eventually making plays. You can point to some of the



guys, Justin Reid, Bradley Roby made some. We like some of the depth, Eric Murray back in the secondary have stood out. Linebackers -- you know, this is a linebacker friendly system, and Zach Cunningham is an excellent football player. I'm not telling you anything you don't know.

Getting Christian Kirksey here, to have our quarterback on the defensive side, has been big. And then up front, we're going to play multiple guys. We don't just play the starting four. We have great competition there, and you see them making plays throughout.

**Q. (Inaudible question)?**

LOVIE SMITH: All of the positions are important, but our three technique, it starts with him. He's the closest guy, pretty much to the center that can really make plays. Maliek Collins can play that. Ross can also. So I feel like we have at least a couple guys. D. Walker has gotten back there too. So we have a little bit of depth there.

Back to your question on Maliek. He can rush the passer. He's an athlete, which we're looking for. He's been in the system quite a while, pleased with what he's done so far.

**Q. Individual up there you think (inaudible)?**

LOVIE SMITH: We see good competition. Omenihu, I've been asked about him a few times. We have a couple of guys that have position flexibility. He's one of them. You see him lining up for us, has a three technique in more passing situations. For second down, six technique. So we have a few guys with position flexibility that will help on game day. We'll let him go.

**Q. What about Roy Lopez?**

LOVIE SMITH: He's a flash. He's flash is what he's done. He will be playing the nose guard position for us, but he's a nose guard with a little bit of three technique athletic ability because he has a little bit of wiggle to him also, strong, compact. He's done some good things. You need to be bringing young players up through the system. Like what he's done so far.

**Q. Everyone in this off-season on pretty much every level of the defense has talked about being able to use their instincts.**

LOVIE SMITH: I hope that's the case.

**Q. How do you coach that, and what's the value of that?**

LOVIE SMITH: Well, our defense is based on that first off.

We're not going to have a million blitzes and things like that. We want to be able to put guys in position, first off, get good talent, put them in position, let them use those instincts to make plays. Eyes on the ball. But we'll have a multiple package. I was asked a little while ago about the Tampa two. Our defense is not a Tampa two defense. We're going to play a little bit of cover two, but it's so much more.

As they talk about instincts, it's about eyes on the ball seeing that's where the take-aways come, and we'll be doing quite a bit of that.

**Q. After being everywhere doing so many things, what is it like for you to be back in your home state coaching, working here, being part of the Texans?**

LOVIE SMITH: I think everybody can, when you say back home, we can all kind of identify with that a little bit. That part has been great. Everywhere I've been. I've been gone a long period of time, but I was never that far away from Texas.

Last time I had a chance to really be on the football team was at Big Sandy High School, which was before most of you were even born, probably, I'm going to say. But it's good to be back and to have a chance to coach our professional team, the Texans, that's pretty special.

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