

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Lovie Smith

Press Conference



LOVIE SMITH: Even though it's been over a week since we all lived through the tragedy -- the massacre, whatever words you want to use, of innocent children down in Uvalde, whether it be a church, a grocery store, or a school, just seemed like some places should be safe havens for us. And whether it be young White children from Sandy Hook, older Black grocers in Buffalo, or young Brown people, children.

Just seems like something has to be done. I don't have all the answers to what needs to be done but maybe it's just bringing awareness to gun violence and I'm not trying to make a political statement on what side of the fence, you know, we should be on but we should all be on the same side of safety for our young people. That definitely should be something that we concentrate on.

Our football team, a bunch of young men. I wanted to make some type of statement. You know what can you do in tough times like this? You can try to make people's lives a little bit better. Our football team got together, led by them and raised over \$200,000 to try to help the people, the community and we'll be giving that to the Rob Memorial fund down in Uvalde. Our organization, led by Cal and Hannah will match that.

So we'll be donating \$400,000 to the community of Uvalde and just again, money can only do so much. But as much as anything, we're going to bring awareness to gun violence. You see a lot of us in orange tee shirts today. I think back in like 2013, Hadiya Pennington was killed south side of Chicago, and her friends, young people wanted to do something to bring awareness to that and they started the wear orange foundation to bring awareness to it

For people that are Hunters, orange is supposedly a color that says safety. So we could talk an awful lot about it and you know, our country, we found a way to live with COVID. There's a lot of smart people here. Seemed like we should be able to find a way to deal with gun violence, also.

Football-wise, you know, we love what we do. It's a great country where we get a chance to do it. Our football team

getting better. For the most part, we've had most of our guys here. I think the NFL season is about 89 days away. It's coming up on us. As you can see, there's great work being done. I made the statement, starting positions aren't given in the spring but you could start getting in the front of line in the spring when you show up each day and we can start forming opinions. And before you know it as I told the team today, also, the coach practice today, also. So we're not only doing one practice so we will continue to do it

Q. What have you seen from -- veteran rusher?

LOVIE SMITH: Well, a veteran rusher but a veteran player that's done it the right way all his career. I remember when he came out of college at TCU, and he's played at a high level. To play at a high level, you have to take care of your body. You have to be a pro. These are all voluntary days and he's out here leading. You can't tell he's a rookie trying to make his first team and we need that in our program, veteran leadership like that.

Q. What did you like about the way the linemen on the defensive line -- obviously you have coaching on the staff what did you like about what they did there?

LOVIE SMITH: Well, we are familiar with -- first off, there's a group. There are 3-4 teams, there are 4-3 teams and there are some that come up in our family of defense. Jock was one as a coach and Mario Addison, we signed him when I was up north with a former team, the Bears. I mean, you know, over ten years ago. So we know what they bring to the table. And they know what we are trying to accomplish down here, too.

Some guys like to play in this system and we think they can help us as much as anything. You can never have too many good defensive linemen. We'll continue, if there's good defensive linemen out there, we'll continue to bring them in and look at them.

Q. When you look at a guy like Charlie, short reps -- what have you seen from him and also his growth from last year to this year?

LOVIE SMITH: Progress. Charlie, you know, we're going



to have two starting defensive -- offensive tackles but you need a lot more. We like our tackle position. There's depth there. Eventually, you know, Tunsil will be in and tight us Howard was done an excellent job. But you need more than -- we want to be two-deep the every position on our football team. That's what we are trying to get accomplished and I think we are headed down that direction.

Q. What have you seen from Marlon?

LOVIE SMITH: When we look at players -- some people are like, let me see the bad plays. I like to see the good plays. When we are coaching up a guy, let's see his best and Marlon has been a productive player in the league and we look at his best years he's had. Sometimes you need a change, change of scenery, a new team. I know he's fit in well with our group. We feel like we have a plan for him and we like the running back position -- just not him.

Q. Fabian Moreau --

LOVIE SMITH: Six feet, corners, that like to tackle, that can jump, run, catch all that. We love. We have a place for them, too. Fabian has played well. High pick for the Redskins. Played well. Started every game with the Falcons last year. Again, we weren't pleased with how we played at the corner position, so we'll continue to look at guys there. But we like our group. Nelson has done some good things. We know Derek Stingley is going to play for us this year and will be a great player for us, so that position is getting a lot better.

Q. You as a defensive coach, not played defensively as well as you wanted to, how much better do you feel about what you have now?

LOVIE SMITH: No position group on our team played as well as we need to last year but we feel like we have improved every position on our football team. We've talked about the secondary. We like what the safeties are doing. We like our linebacker group. There's a depth there. The guys have played a lot of football. We'll be a better ball club this year. We'll for sure be a better defensive team, also.

Q. What are the benchmarks that John Metchie has to hit in terms of his recovery?

LOVIE SMITH: We'll just keep getting him a little better each day and eventually he'll be ready to go and we'll put them out there at the end. Close enough.

Q. What would you like him to do in the meantime?

LOVIE SMITH: Not trying to run away from your question but you see him out here working every day, right. He's staying in the again mentally and that's what we are asking all of our injured players to do, stay in the game mentally.

Jonathan Greenard has not taken a live team rep yet. So we have injured guys but they are right on track to eventually be out there by most -- by training camp and that's when it really counts.

Q. You talk about getting one position linebacker, Garrett Wallow --

LOVIE SMITH: We've seen him get better. Garrett is one of players that hasn't missed a day, I think since we drafted him. Every day we practice, Garrett Wallow has been out there.

So if you do that and you have ability, he's a football guy. We'll find a place for him. And we have quite a few players that way. I keep track. Even though it's voluntary, we keep track every day of who shows up. And there's something about some players have never -- every day this building has been open, they have been here. That says an awful lot. He's one of them.

Q. Does that play a factor in in finding a role on special teams?

LOVIE SMITH: I think it plays a big role of availability, being seen, getting reps every day. Eventually doesn't matter how long you're here, you have to perform. But the way to perform and to get an opportunity is to show up each day.

Q. You said players got together. What does that say about goes that you have here?

LOVIE SMITH: Well, it said exactly what we know on the inside. We have real quality men that pay attention. I want our team to be involved in what's happening in our world, in our country. That's the way they show it. You know, seemed like some of us older people can't get some things done but seemed like the young generation, you know, they can. They are about action and our team did that. Guys, a lot of our players -- they are parents, grandparents. So it means something to us. But that's what we expected and for them to follow through that way says a lot.

Q. What is it you're looking at from the wide receivers from this time?

LOVIE SMITH: That's pretty much what we are looking for is just individual improvement. Some of the guy, Brandin



Cook, we kind of know who he is and what kind of player and what he's going to do for us. But there's so many other guys that we don't know, and then we're a new coaching staff. So it's just us all getting on the same page. Offensively we have a new offensive coordinator. So there's a lot of different things we're going through and we're getting to know each other. The way you get to know someone -- I've been married 42 years and you know, time together helps an awful lot. Same way with guys showing up each day, time together, that's helped us an awful lot, evaluate, to figure out exactly who we put on the field.

Q. Is there an aspect of the team that's surprised you?

LOVIE SMITH: No. Because I knew that our guys would come to work every day. I knew that they would take coaching. I knew we had good football players and I knew they were going to be excited about going through the process. There's no miracle pill. We can't skip a step or anything like that. So that's what we're going to do.

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