

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Lovie Smith

Press Conference



LOVIE SMITH: Getting better. Every practice counts. So we're taking advantage of them. It's winding down a little bit. You know, we finish up OTA practices this week and then next week we have our three-day mini-camp and then we take a break. I'm kind of looking forward to that break just as much as the players are. But take your questions.

Q. Secondary seemed to be flexing a bit today. How much have you seen them progress as OTAs and who sticking out to you?

LOVIE SMITH: They are getting better. The secondary is. You had different guys making plays. Defensively you have to show up. It's not about covering and tackling. It's about taking the ball away. We're able to equity the ball away through there and punching the ball out quite a few times today. That's good. In my defensive coordinator's role, and the head coach's role, it's not a good thing. It's about ball protection, security, all of those things.

Q. Anything early with Justin --

LOVIE SMITH: I'm sorry, one you saw was a non-contact injury and the other, when you have is 11, 22 bodies out there, sometimes you step on someone but hopefully it's nothing serious for either one.

Q. When you look at the composition of your team, do you feel like you're bidding depth at the offensive line?

LOVIE SMITH: I feel like we are building depth at all positions. It's just the off-season but you want to feel good about a couple guys at each position in the rotation that we have and based on what they have done in their careers, too.

What we know about them, we are feeling better at the least two-deep throughout our football team.

Q. What about the rookie class in general, now that you've had some OTAs, their comfort level, are they starting to settle in?

LOVIE SMITH: Yeah, they are, the ones that can go right now, you're not here every practice but Pitre, he's been outstanding. Knack for the football. Has done a lot of good things. You can say the same thing about Kenyon. You saw today Christian Harris was out there with the ones a lot of the day. The young rookies are progressing the way we want them to.

Q. Someone who has been in the game as long as you have as well as Romeo, what are things you've learned from him for a defensive perspective?

LOVIE SMITH: I feel a lull with that question, you said Romeo, 50 years. I'm up there with Romeo. One more time.

Q. What have you learned from him from a defensive perspective?

LOVIE SMITH: You say with him throughout the career? Well, there are some coaches that when you've been in the profession that long, I mean, some of the basic principles on how football should be played, you see it and that's who they are, fundamentals of football.

I got a chance to be around Romeo quite a bit in a different role when he was more of an analyst position last year, whole wealth of knowledge and not just on football but on how he treats people. Anybody that's played for him, they all say the same thing about him.

When you're done, you want guys to feel like helped you grow as a man, that's definitely the case and as a football player.

Q. Green has played, he's in with you guys now as a free agent, what have you even from him in his early time with you guys?

LOVIE SMITH: He's a big body, long, good size, good ability. He's a tough guy. Smart guy. You know, everything that you look for without pads, we've seen him do. He'll be in the mix for us. He'll have a role for us this coming year. I feel pretty confident making that statement.

Q. When you have a young team with a bunch of rookies and high draft picks, is it more pressure for them to step in and do more early, and how do you think they deal with that?

LOVIE SMITH: I think when initially when you come in, I let the rookies know, the veterans don't want to hear about you being young and you don't know what you're doing. If we as coaches put you out on the football field, they expect you to perform. They read papers, too. They know how you're drafted, guys coming in, and you're going to have to prove it on the football field and that's what these young guys have done. They seem like they never leave the building and when they get their buildings, they are stepping up and making plays.

Another part of being a rookie is keeping your mouth shut. I don't want to hear about what you've done in the past. Just come in each day and work and they will start doing more. That veteran leadership will start going off on them and that's kind of what's happening right now.

Q. How hard is it for you to separate being defensive coordinator and head coach?

LOVIE SMITH: Not hard at all. The more positions gets me involved with a lot more. As a head football coach, you can take point, C-O, but I like to know and in detail. I pretty much coached a position just about every year I've been a head football coach. So I like this role and the more the better.

Q. What do you like about Dorsett?

LOVIE SMITH: Well, his skill set, one of the fastest guys on our team. Has good movement. And you know, I talk to Phillip an awful lot about when you wear -- from the University of Miami, and you wore No. 4, I mean, I know one great player that wore it. Devin Hester wore that number.

So I'm always giving him a little bit of flak on that. But he has ability, he can catch the ball and he'll make you miss in the open field. The only thing that's stopped some of his growth in the league has been injury. But he's out there right now, if we can keep him healthy, he'll help us a lot.

Q. What are your thoughts on Johnson?

LOVIE SMITH: As a defensive coach, you knew that you had to know where he is and the offense was going to go through him. There's only so much you can do to help a corner out. He's a tough guy. If you YouTube him a little bit, there's one player I can think of where he tells you kind of how tough he is. But just a special guy. You get to

know him even more. For me to just talk football about him. Again, when you're the greatest player in the history of a franchises, that kind of tells you everything you need to know about a player.

Q. When you entered the off-season, how important was it to get a running back like Marlon Mack in the building and what have you seen him, injured a couple years ago, what's he look like?

LOVIE SMITH: We felt like we were needed -- we were trying to upgrade all the positions but running back was one that we thought there were some players out there that fit what we wanted to do. And Marlon, I'm going to say that about all our running backs, even with our rookie, we have depth at the running back position. You need that. They will all have a role. We have a fullback -- odds are we'll have a fullback on our roster so it was a commitment to the run and with a commitment to the run you need running backs and we feel like we have a few that can play.

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