

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

Lovie Smith

Press Conference



LOVIE SMITH: You know when you're a young franchise, you don't have a lot of throwback uniform jerseys, but for us to introduce this battle red helmet, like the look of it. And of course I know we're in Houston but it's kind of H-Town to us a little bit, so it's good to give a little bit of different flavor to practice today.

Good things continue to happen, both sides. Offensively, I like our ball security.

Now defensively, that's not good enough but offensively I really kind of love what we are doing with some of it. We continue to put different things in. Yesterday was third and short. Third-and-long game plan today. Take a day off tomorrow and then Monday, two-minute, and red zone. So we are starting to get a lot of our situational football in. Not a whole lot of injuries, which is a good thing. Again, guys should be able to rest up tomorrow and get ready to go Monday.

Q. We saw Stingley for a little bit catching punts. Can you talk about that?

LOVIE SMITH: Yeah, Stingley can do a lot of things. Punt returner is one of them. Now I'm not saying that he for sure is going to be our purpose punt returner but the more things you can do. You probably noticed Garrett getting more reps today. We'll continue to bring him along at the pace that we had set up before camp started. He gets a little better each day, too.

Q. How good to see Justin Britt back in there today?

LOVIE SMITH: Same thing, Justin Britt, Jonathan, Grugier-Hill, all those guys are not necessarily on a play count but we have a plan as far as when we are going to let them rest a little bit.

We are different with Justin Britt out there. It all starts with our center. He does an awful lot for our team. He's a good player but our offense will perform a lot better with Justin out there.

Q. The offense with Brown and Green --

LOVIE SMITH: Seth Green made a few plays. As a young player, coming in, you want to do something to get noticed. Brown, the other players we have, Anthony has a knee injury right now so he'll be out a little bit but tight ends is going to be a big part of what we do and we have those packages going today.

Q. Can you talk about what you see on the O-Line especially from Max?

LOVIE SMITH: Max has been around awhile and he just started tackle position. We feel like we have two of the best tackles in football. We just talked about Justin Britt, AJ, we know eventually Kenyon Green will get into the mix.

But you need more backups, too and Max has done that well. When we have asked him to step into the play, he's done that. So we feel like Hicks, we have some depth at that offensive line position we need.

Q. Working on third-and-long today, how did you feel about the passing game and some of the things y'all were working on?

LOVIE SMITH: First day to install it but eventually, there's going to be some third-and-longs we are going to have to convert. It's about third downs keeping the chains going, series going, and we are going to have to convert some of those. Starts with good pass protection up front first, and just giving Davis enough time that we can find the receivers.

Q. What have your interactions with Garrett Wallow been like in the off-season?

LOVIE SMITH: Love everything he did last year. Lower round draft pick that was able to play all three positions. Just, you know, normal second-year growth. We have a few players, every time we've opened up the building, they have been in it, and Derek is one of those players. He'll have a role for us and excited about his progress.

And I'm going to say the linebacker position, there's depth



there with quite a few of the guys.

Q. The coverage --

LOVIE SMITH: Going to the other side of the ball, it's all coverage, how about that.

But that was the case, I mean, whenever you see a -- most of our -- we don't have a whole lot of design check down but when -- down the field routes are covered, you want the quarterback, you don't want them to force it. You want them to take the check down, the safe throw and peace that is right of Davis's growth also. That was definitely the case and that's good on both sides.

Q. Inaudible.

LOVIE SMITH: He's of course a little banged up. Training camp. As a general rule, training camp, skill guys, they are going to have nicks from time to time. Nothing serious. Eventually, hopefully soon we'll get him back out there.

Q. What have you seen from Brandin Cooks --

LOVIE SMITH: Well, we did. We went to Brandin Cooks a lot year and we definitely plan on doing it a lot this year. One receiver got to get him the ball. We have a plan for -- but that's just it. Keep him involved. One-on-one matchups he's going to win at the majority of the time. Great leadership from one of our best players. Just good glue for the team.

We need Kyle (ph) to be that complement to him, body type, big target, catch, go up and jump that, could be a good combination, also.

Q. What have you seen from Kyle?

LOVIE SMITH: I talk a lot about Davis Mills, rightfully so, but you just never know, when it's the backup's time to step up. Kyle has played a lot of ball. He's mobile. He's accurate and that's why we brought him here; a guy that if we have to call on him, he knows our offense and we feel like he can run it.

Q. You've always been all-in since you became a coach and yesterday you spent several minutes with the fans out there taking pictures and signing autographs. You just love this, don't you?

LOVIE SMITH: Absolutely, I mean, first, I mean, love being head coach and they are asking the head football coach for the Houston Texans to give an autograph, I can handle that. It is good. Last year, though, COVID, fans were a little bit farther away and now that they are here

and when people take the time to show up, we talk about our team showing up, showing out, it's about the fans, too, get involved. Some of the story, someone drove 12 hours yesterday to watch us practice. Coming down from Canada, the least we can do is that.

Q. Can you talk about how great it is to have him back and the expectations?

LOVIE SMITH: You know, eight sacks and limited action, Jonathan is a limited outside defensive end in the league. I'm anxious to see how far he can go. Being banged up and missing a lot of off-season work, put him behind a little bit but you see we'll continue to give him more and more reps. Big part what have we're going to do this year.

Q. What have you seen in Damian Lillard so far?

LOVIE SMITH: Different play route style but he's a tough guy, you see him work in return team and run a little in tackles and it make you miss in the open field. We have about six running backs in the mix. Anxious to see, you try not to get too excited. We're in underwear, we're in shorts right now. Monday should start telling us a lot more.

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