

# Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

## Lovie Smith

### Press Conference



LOVIE SMITH: See little signs of improvement each day. We continue to play situational football. Our quarterback continues to take care of the football. We are getting better but of course we have a long ways to go. The goal as much as anything is to let guys get on video, reps, before we start playing games and right now we are getting a pretty good look at players that we need to really evaluate. Each day we get a couple of Nicks, but no major injuries, which is also a good thing.

#### Q. Can you talk about the play by Nico Collins?

LOVIE SMITH: That's tough duty for a defensive back. The one play that you're talking about, defensively, Steve Nelson is in pretty good position, but when you're 6-4, most corners around six feet, that's a pretty good match up for us. Nico Collins is an excellent football player. We expect him to make plays like that.

#### Q. Pass rushing injury -- what did you see from them and how that's progressing?

LOVIE SMITH: That's how both guys have been throughout. Jonathan coming back from a major injury. But Jerry Hughes, we brought him here for his veteran leadership and a lot of those things but he's still a legitimate pass rusher on the outside and once we get in positions where we can let him go, we expect Jared to win more than he's going to lose.

#### Q. How would you describe him and what he could potentially do for you?

LOVIE SMITH: I kind of see, instead of talking, I see a confident guy. First off, you don't talk unless you feel confident about who you are as a football player and what you can do, and sometimes it takes that leader to get things going a little bit. It's training camp, you know. It's not like it's the wedding night and everybody is excited and all that. It's training camp. So you expect those kind of things from Jonathan.

When you talk, you need to be able to make plays, and he

can do that.

#### Q. When you look at a guy like -- really stepped up, maturity aspect and he's been so versatile. Have you seen him just take that extra role?

LOVIE SMITH: I think linebacker is one of our deepest positions. Jalen has done some good things. The other group, the guy that's probably come from nowhere is Blake Cashman, another guy. You saw today, we were working with Harris with the one group a little bit, so we'll keep those different combinations going.

#### Q. Talk about the running backs.

LOVIE SMITH: Running backs just in general, we have six that we're going to play that we're playing a lot. They will sort it out. But if you play running back for us, you need to be able to catch the ball on the outside. You need to be able to split out, matchups. It's a lot easier for a wide receiver or a running back to maneuver in an open field as opposed to coming out of the backfield. That will be a big part of what we'll be doing.

#### Q. More consistency today --

LOVIE SMITH: I think it's been that way. Our starting quarterback will get the majority of reps and our backup has to be in a position where when he does get reps, you don't see a big drop-off. Kyle Allen can play winning football and we love having him here.

#### Q. Inaudible -- his progress?

LOVIE SMITH: I would say normal rookie progression. He needs to get in there. You know, first, it's about getting in football playing conditions and he's working on that and now we'll continue to let him go with the ones, too. We know he's going to play for us. It's just about getting him looks, as many looks as we possibly can and that's what we're doing.

#### Q. You talked about Nico Collins going back-to-back and seeing multiple players. Do you feel that was one of the better days from Nico?



LOVIE SMITH: Yeah, I think he's had his moments throughout. But you can isolate on him and everybody can notice him a lot more when you get in a more condensed area down in the red zone. But you know, he's a big guy. He can block. He's got good speed. As you can see, he can jump. You want a guy -- he's a perfect complement, also, for Brandin Cooks.

**Q. The chart --**

LOVIE SMITH: That's how he's been throughout. He's made plays. It's about ball security, first. Quarterback protecting the football. He has done that throughout camp, and once it gets down there now, you've got to push it past in the end zone and it was good to see him do that today.

**Q. Cunningham, only a few days in, left tackle what have you seen?**

LOVIE SMITH: Eventually once we really start getting into pads, you'll be able to tell a lot more. For those young guys, showing up every day, when you get your opportunity, blend in, first, then really kind of show out a little bit. He's been an end and we like what he's done right now.

**Q. Can you talk about the combinations right now?**

LOVIE SMITH: Well just I'm talking about just -- he's our starting tight end and he's a wide tight end. He can block, big body, you see him make catches every day. We'll have a big role for him.

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