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Thomas Booker

Press Conference



At the end of the day what matters is what you put out between these lines, and that's going to show up again on game day, so I think he's preparing the right way and doing everything to a high standard.

Q. (On making progress).

THOMAS BOOKER: Yeah, I think I'm definitely making some progress, obviously a lot left on the bone. I think in terms of my get-off, which is what I emphasize as being aggressive and getting off the rock, I think I was pretty good with that, but I want to come out with lower body attitude, be a more natural pass rusher, be able to see those run-pass keys a little bit quicker so I can make more of an effect on the quarterback on a consistent basis.

It's somewhere to start out from, but I think a lot of my teammates were really encouraging, letting me know this is really just an extension of practice; what you do here, the habits you're installing in yourself here, are going to show up big time in a big way on game day.

Q. Did you say "lower body attitude"?

THOMAS BOOKER: Yeah.

Q. Can you define what that is?

THOMAS BOOKER: Yeah, so for me, the thing that I do a lot of times is I'll get out low my first step, and then once I get contact, my pads will raise sometimes. So being able to drill myself on being able to keep that lower body attitude in that way, that's what the word means to me. I don't know if there's a formal definition for it. That might have just been a little catch phrase that I just made up. But yeah.

Q. I know you don't play the same position, but having Derek Stingley on your side of the ball, what's it been like watching him from where you sit right now?

THOMAS BOOKER: You said Derek Stingley? Yeah, I think he's a guy that works extremely hard, obviously physically talented and a guy that just goes to work. Doesn't say too much. He's just focused on his craft, so I always respect that because I try to embody that, as well.

Q. What are some tips that you get from a veteran like Maliek Collins?

THOMAS BOOKER: He's a physical freak. The way that he moves, the smoothness of his pass rush, the way that he always chains moves together is something that I really want to get to at some point and that I'm working for.

I think the big point for me that he's given is just don't think as much. Just go. This is a defense that prioritizes penetration and disruption, so the more you're thinking, the less you're going to be penetrating and doing that. So that's a big point that he's given me. But all the vets, Ross, Derek Rivers, all those guys have given me really good pointers to help me progress my game quicker.

Q. How different from college -- I see you doing a lot of hand work and rip moves and stuff. How much more importance does that take on here in the NFL?

THOMAS BOOKER: Yeah, so I played in a different system partially in college. I was playing in a 3-4, I was playing a lot more 4I technique, so I was head up on tackles. So in a system where I'm more of in a shaded technique, either 1 technique or 3 technique, that handwork of being on the edge is so much more important to be able to maintain your gap and everything. Kind of melding the hands with the get-off and all that and being penetrative and disruptive but also controlling O-linemen, that's a big, big, big thing, versus when I was in college where I really just had to come out and hit people with my hands already. Big point of focus for me coming from college.

Q. Talk about going back to the West Coast.

THOMAS BOOKER: Man, it's nice. So Cal is a different breed than northern California. I'm sure that southern California people will tell you that. But I'm super excited to get back out there. Played a couple games down there at



the Rose Bowl and all that, so it's always a great place to be in sunny Southern California.

Q. With your background (indiscernible) at Stanford, how much does the academics that you did help you as a football player?

THOMAS BOOKER: Yeah, so I think the big thing that I've taken, so throughout college, both football wise and academic wise, I had like an iPad that I would write on with notes, so I kind of carried that on to the league. I treat all my meetings like classroom sections because that's kind of what it is. You're studying yourself. I try to keep those study habits the same way, so during our meetings I take notes on what everybody is saying, and then when I go back to the hotel room or whatever, I go take a look over the tape again for like 45 minutes to an hour and just go down and write everything that I could have done better.

Q. Is there a sample note you can tell us, not strategy wise but --

THOMAS BOOKER: Yeah, so one that comes to mind for me is just, for example, when I'm rushing the B-gap, a lot of times I feel like I don't take enough steps on the field, so I'm not really selling that guard on the fact that I'm going to be rushing outside so I can dome inside. So that's one of the things I write down a lot that I'm still working on. But to be honest, I probably write down like 10 to 15 things every day. I try to underline like three or four of them because I know that I can't focus on 10 to 15. I don't have that much mental bandwidth, but I try to focus on three or four.

Q. Did you learn that on your own or did you imitate somebody else taught you in terms of taking copious notes?

THOMAS BOOKER: No, that was a thing I did in college. I think once you get to the college level and the professional level, you've got to look for ways to separate yourself, and one of those ways is how you look at yourself, how you're a student of the game. It doesn't just come to looking at other people's tape and the opponent's tape, but it comes to critiquing yourself on top of what the coach is doing. Because when you're going into coaching sessions the meetings and all that, you're looking at everyone's tape, which is great, but you really have to dial down on your own stuff.

Sometimes when I have trouble with something I'll go look at Maliek and I'll go see what he's doing and try to implement some of that into my game. Yeah, just really becoming a student and critique of your own game.

Q. Maliek Collins?

THOMAS BOOKER: Yeah.

Q. Have you and the rookies that played in last Saturday's game, have you discussed or exchanged notes on what that whole -- what that was like playing in your first game?

THOMAS BOOKER: Yeah, yeah, I've talked to Kurt Hinish about it for sure and I think one of those deals where as a freshman in college before I got into my first game you have the jitters about will I be able to do what I did at the previous level at this one. I think a similar thing happens. I wasn't as nervous this time because you get your confidence on the practice field, so I think that I have progressed day over day, week over week with the help of all the guys on the D-line throughout that time. So just tried to come out there and treat it like a much more formal version of practice. You're doing the same thing, you're applying the same technique, don't let everything go out of the window just because you're playing somebody else with different colors on.

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