

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Nick Caserio

Press Conference



NICK CASERIO: I'd say a fairly busy and productive last 24 to 48 hours. You know, a lot of work went into this effort with the team. I know Lovie has talked about this. The players did everything that we asked them to do from the beginning of training camp until the end point here.

Yesterday, just kind of going through the process, we knew there were some players we were going to have to move on from, that there was a good chance that we would bring them back in the building here in some capacity. The way we view it, we view it as 70 players. It's really 69 plus one, including Dayo, and really it's just trying to build as comprehensive a roster as possible and realizing that we're going to have some depth on the roster, we're going to have some depth off the roster, and essentially every player that's on a roster, that's on a team, is available to play every week, so that's how we approach it.

We don't kind of separate the 53 and the 16 players on the practice squad. We kind of look at everything in totality, and really, everybody earns their opportunity regardless of what that is, regardless of how big their role is going to be, and the players understand that.

I would say yesterday was an emotional day for a lot of different people. I would say there's sadness, there's joy, there's anger, but I think how we try to handle it, we just try to be honest, try to be sincere about how we see the player, how we view the player, and essentially the players earn their opportunities. We don't tell them what it is.

I think players are respectful and receptive to the way we handle it. I would say for the most part, the roster is in place, but I would expect there to be some changes here between now and before we play the Colts. It's just the reality of the NFL. It's just the reality of the way this works, and we're no different than any other team.

I think for the time being, we're at 53, and 15 plus one. We have one open spot in the practice squad here currently.

A lot of the players, there's a fair amount of players that we moved on from yesterday that we've brought back to put on

our practice squad. We'll have a couple other moving parts here on the roster I would say over the next probably 24 hours, guys on the roster that are coming off the roster.

We'll take it one day at a time. I think the training camp portion is behind us. The preseason is behind us. Off to a decent start.

Now we kind of reset and recalibrate here, and it's time to get ready to play real football. Really our focus turns to the Colts, and that will be the first challenge in front of us next week. They've got a good football team. It will certainly be a big challenge in front of us. They kicked our ass twice last year, so we've got a lot of work in front of us, and hopefully we have a good week of work tomorrow. Players are off for three days, and then next week they'll come back in with the right mindset and get ready to play against the Colts and try to take advantage of the opportunity in the opener a week from Sunday.

With that, I'll take some questions.

Q. Could you explain a little bit the decision with Marlon Mack? He's back on the practice squad. What went into the decisions in the running back room?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, you can carry X number of players on a roster, so I would say Marlon has had a good training camp. He's a player we wanted to continue to work with in some capacity. There was an opportunity for him to come back to the practice squad.

He's had a good attitude. He's worked really hard in the preseason. He's been productive with his opportunity.

Again, this is about -- we talked about you can have X number of players on a roster. You can have certain depth at positions you can carry on the roster, and then you're going to have some depth off the roster.

All those players are eligible to play on a weekly basis, and that's how they have to approach it, and we also understand that it's not just veteran players but any player on a practice squad, whether it's for the Texans or throughout the course of the league, is essentially a free



agent. So that player can leave at any point to go to a 53-man roster. Whether it's Grayland Arnold, whether it's Marlon Mack, it's all about the opportunity and what the situation is.

We treat the player the same way. We don't look at them any differently. But Marlon has been good to work with, and we're happy that we have the opportunity to bring him back on the practice squad.

Nothing has really changed from his perspective or his mindset.

Q. A guy like Jon Owens, been on the practice squad 12 times, cut five times, he makes his first 53-man roster. What do you think about that?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, it speaks to -- the word persistence probably applies in that situation. Jonathan is a great kid. He's got a good attitude. He's always had athletic traits and attributes. When you look at some of his measurables I would say they're as good as any defensive back in the league. That doesn't necessarily mean you're going to be a good football player because of that, but he has certain traits and characteristics that are appealing.

Other teams had seen that, and really I would say he ran into some bad luck with injuries at say different points. He's had some serious injuries, had different injuries, but he never wavered. I'd say he stayed persistent.

Last year when he had the opportunity to play, even though it was a short period of time, he took advantage of his opportunity, played really well against the Chargers. Had a good off-season -- nobody trains harder than Jonathan Owens. Nobody works harder in the off-season program. I would say for multiple years since I've got here, he's been one of the most consistent, most diligent players in our program.

We're fortunate we've got a lot of good players with that mindset and that attitude, and Jonathan is certainly one of them.

This is something, again, like we talked about, Jonathan earned his opportunity, earned his role, whatever that's going to be. I'd say the most important thing for all players to realize, whether you're on a roster or on a practice squad, that things can change pretty quickly. So you have to go out there week to week and establish a certain level of performance and consistency to make sure that you continue to get those opportunities.

It's certainly a credit to JO, it's certainly a credit to Joe Danna and the work that he's done, and Lovie has had a

lot of faith and confidence in what Jonathan can do.

Again, it's a nice story, but the reality is it could change very quickly, but Jonathan has earned his role on this team, and it speaks to his attitude and his persistence of kind of staying after it.

Q. What are some of the expectations for the Texans in 2022?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, we don't really talk about expectations. I think that's more external. I think our expectations is try to show up each day, try to have a good day's work and try to establish a certain level of performance and a standard of performance on a consistent, day-to-day basis. In the end that's what it's going to come down to. It's going to be about working hard, it's going to be about doing the right things day after day, week after week, month after month, game after game. Where does that lead? I have no idea. Nobody really knows.

So are we a better football team than we were last year? I mean, I don't know. We'll find out here come Sunday or a week from Sunday. But I think it's -- as long as we get the right players with the right mindset that have the right attitude and go about work the right way, then we'll give ourselves a chance.

Then it's going to come down to execution and what we do on the field. Ultimately it's going to come down to probably eight or ten plays in each game, and those are going to be situational plays, and if we handle those the right way, we'll win; if we don't, we'll lose. That's just the way the NFL works.

There's a scoreboard at the end of the game, and that's our kind of criteria if things went well or they didn't go well. We're going to learn a lot about our football team probably in the first month, so we are where we are after about call it six weeks. We're going to learn a lot more.

So I think the expectation is just have a good day and then try to have another day after that and just try to be consistent with your attitude and your performance on a day-to-day basis.

Q. You talked about Ross (indiscernible). Presumably behind him (indiscernible) are you satisfied with the way the running back room has shaped up or is that a position you might target?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I think the players that are on the team, we're comfortable with them, otherwise they wouldn't be here. If there's an opportunity for us to improve the

situation, we kind of have to look at it in totality. It's not just about running back or running the ball or what that position entails.

Those players are in competition with other players on the team. You can only take 48 to the game each week, so you're either a starter on offense, a starter on defense or you're a starter -- you have a pretty significant role in the kicking game.

How do you build your depth on the team? That's what we try to look at. I think we've spent a lot of time over the last kind of 18 months trying to emphasize that. The kicking game is important. Those supplementary roles are important, so it's not about one particular thing. It's in totality. So if a player can do more things, it gives them an opportunity potentially to create a role for themselves on the team.

Understand that we're going to have to make anywhere from five to seven players inactive each week that aren't going to be able to play.

I would say we're always going to look at everything. If there's an opportunity that we feel makes sense, we'll consider it, and it's at what cost and in lieu of what player, and how does that affect the composition of the rest of the group.

Q. (Indiscernible) waver system (indiscernible) Tyler and your knowledge of him?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, has some experience, productive player at the University of Minnesota. Came from a good program, and PJ does a nice job, runs a good program. Fifth-round pick.

I'd say had some opportunities last season in Tampa behind some pretty good players down there, so I would say in their situation, I think they ended up keeping six or seven receivers. I think Darden has a role in the kicking game, Miller is a fast guy and they signed Julio, so it's kind of one of those situations where it wasn't an opportunity for him there. True would have an opportunity elsewhere in the league, so we don't really have a big commitment to him, but he has some size, has decent playing strength, he has decent run after catch, has decent hands.

When we get him here, we'll see what it looks like relative to the rest of the group. Again, it's about him taking advantage of an opportunity, and if it's good enough, he'll be around; if it's not, then we'll look for somebody else.

He's been a decent player. He's been productive over the course of his career at different points. Excited about the

opportunity to add him to the club.

Q. Can you just explain the decision to move on from Ross?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, that was a tough decision. I mean, Ross was a good player for the organization for a number of years, local kid, has a lot of good athletic traits and attributes. We had pretty good competition at that position, at the defensive tackle position, so we ended up keeping I think it was five, including Hinish, Dwumfour and Book and then Maliek and Roy. In the end we just felt that it was the best decision for the team, and there was an opportunity for him in Minnesota. They had expressed an interest, so we thought that it made sense for us to give him that opportunity.

Certainly wish him well, and hopefully he has success. I think Minnesota is putting together a good program with Coach O'Connell and Kwesi, what they're doing kind of collectively as a team.

Q. What did you see when you were scouting Dameon Pierce in college, kind of that draft process, and since you've had him (indiscernible) serious impact this year. What's stood out to you just watching him develop during training camp?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I think he's been consistent, like a lot of players. I'd say the rookie class in general for the most part has been a pretty consistent group.

I think Dameon has been consistent since he got here. He's got a good attitude. He's got a good work ethic. Football is important to him. I think when you go back and look at whether it was Florida, whether it was the Senior Bowl, whether it was the combine, our different interactions with him, it's been pretty consistent.

You know, he just didn't really have an opportunity maybe -- they split the carries at Florida. They had some good backs there. They had P-Ryan was there a couple years ago, DP was there. They had some different backs through the years here.

When we had a chance, he was productive with his touches. I think he has good lower body strength, good body balance, pretty instinctive, has good vision. You know, so again, that's been a small sample I would say just on the field, so I certainly think he's got a lot of work ahead of him.

Nobody has played a game yet. He's only carried the ball -- I'd say a lot of our players, nobody has played a full game. They've probably played maximum call it 30 to 35

snaps. We're going to probably play 65, 70 snaps.

Now, I would say I think one of the things that we're going to try to do, what we try to do when we put the team together, if we have depth, try to use it, so just try to maximize our depth because we're going to need it at some point. It's a long year. This is week one. But there's going to be 17 games there, so we're going to need everybody at some point.

Q. (Indiscernible) from this organization before you came here. Did you expect that big a turnover when you came here? Or is that just how it is in the NFL?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I think that's just the NFL. You could look around the league and say there's players that are drafted that get released, there's players that are drafted that stick, there's players that are drafted that move on to other teams, other opportunities, so I think you just have to look at your situation. It's a year to year endeavor.

I think that's the one thing that probably I've learned being in the league 20 some odd years. It's year to year. One year is different than the next year. And you can't just assume. So we just have to trust what we see, and we really -- all of us restart and recalibrate the next year.

Whatever happens in 2022 quite frankly is not going to matter. What happened in 2021 is not going to matter. We're focused on now. We're focused on what we need to do really to beat the Colts, and there's going to be change, and I would say there's consistent roster turnover year after year. 25, 30 percent of the team is going to turn over, so whether it's draft picks, whether it's free agent signings, whatever it is.

There's no one set way. There's no one set formula. We can't control that. The players ultimately control it with their performance, and then we just try to make the decisions that we feel are best for the organization.

Q. You guys have been acquiring capital since you've been here, draft picks and clearing cap space. Are you yet in position where you feel like you could make more of a major move to acquire another player or anything like that?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, there's no set blueprint, so how you accumulate assets, I mean, it's going to change year to year, so whatever you have, then you try to take that information, and you try to make good decisions. Any decision that you make, there's a residual effect on something else. So there's always a cost associated with doing something, so what's the cost associated with a player acquisition, in lieu of what, so does that make sense

for your team.

Again, we're always going to do -- I've said this from day one. We're always going to do what we feel is in the best interest of our team and try to make good decisions, and it's not going to be one person making that decision. It's going to be in conjunction with Lovie and the staff, and if there's something that we feel is out there that makes sense, we'll consider. If not, then we won't.

I don't want to make it kind of black and white or just make it very simple, but I think that's the reality of it. There's no blueprint that says we have to acquire X number of draft picks, okay, once you do that, then you can go out and trade for Mr. X. Well, there's always a cost associated with acquiring a player, so when you trade for a player and you give up draft capital, then there's usually going to be a commensurate contract that goes along with that. So then that's going to be at the cost of whatever else there is.

All those factors that go into it.

It's never going to be about one player. It's never going to be about one person. We're going to look at the totality of the game, and we're going to do what we feel is in the best interest of the organization, as long as I'm in the position that I'm in.

Q. What did you see from Davis Mills in training camp, and what steps does he still need to take?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, that whole group I would say, Jeff and Kyle included, like made a lot of progress during the course of training camp. I'd say for the most part, they all made good decisions. They took care of the football for the most part.

Quarterback play is about making the right decision at the right time under duress and just making sure that you don't put the team in a compromised position where you lose the game.

Davis is a smart kid. He works hard. He has good athletic traits and attributes. Again, he played, whatever the snapshot was in preseason. There's going to be a lot more snaps ahead of him. So I think the most important thing for all of our players is to take advantage of every opportunity, every snap when you're in there, and just try to take advantage of the play to the best of your ability and just try to do the right thing.

The quarterback play comes down to decision making, taking care of the football, accuracy and throwing the ball on time. If you can do those things at that position, you're going to have success, and it's not going to be about one

person. He handles the ball on every -- just 99 percent of the plays let's say, unless you run the wildcat or something like that.

That player is entrusted with a lot of responsibility, but it entails everybody else doing their job, as well, the offensive line, the tight ends, the receivers and the running backs.

Davis has an opportunity in front of him. I think he's excited about the opportunity. I think our team is excited about the opportunity. But the bottom line, it's about production and it's about going out there and playing effectively. That's the most important thing.

Q. I wanted to ask you about (indiscernible) edge rushers. What is it specifically you like about Jerry?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, to the first part of your question, what do we like about Jerry, I would say everything. I mean, this guy has been a rock star since the day he arrived. When you see a player from afar, you really don't know exactly sort of what makes him tick. He was a pain in the ass for us in New England, I would say almost more in the running game than he was as a pass rusher because of his ability to rip inside and be disruptive, kind of split double teams. He was hard to block, and he was always out there.

Here's a guy that's been in the league 12 years. There's a reason why he's made it this far. He's very diligent. He's very professional. He has good leadership. Players respect him. He can still perform I would say at a pretty good level. I mean, that's the most important thing, because it's about production.

But Jerry has done a great job. I mean, he's got a great relationship with Jacques, and I think that whole group has done a great job. Jacques is really -- Jacques is a really good coach. We're fortunate to have him. He's done a great job with that group.

Jerry was a player, we actually didn't sign him until after the draft, so we weren't even sure if we had him or not. I would say we had agreed with Mario before the draft, so we had kind of factored that in, and we had some other things that were going on, but again, it's about acquiring good football players, however we get them here. If we draft them -- just because we were signing X number of players, it doesn't necessarily take us out of drafting another player.

You can only draft one at each spot, so you just try to take the information and try to make good decisions.

But specific to your question about Jerry, Jerry has been awesome to work with. He really has.

Q. What did you like about Kurt Hinish when you signed him? Has he surpassed the expectations you had for him?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, kind of going to Brian's question, one of the things about Kurt, he's a very consistent player, so he's a three-year starter, a good program. I think everybody would agree Notre Dame has got a pretty good program. Played pretty good defense.

He was a pretty instinctive player. I'd say he's not the tallest, he's not the strongest, but he knows how to play football.

We're in the business of acquiring good football players, regardless of what they look like or how big or small they might be. But he does a good job using his hands, playing with leverage, and he was on the field. So those are some of the qualities that we liked, and again, he was undrafted, so it was about giving him an opportunity, but he had done enough -- I think he was a three-year starter, so I'd say different than Lopez, but I'd say some of the same conversations we kind of had about Roy even going back a year ago.

Roy got here, he was whatever he was, a sixth-round pick, and I'm not sure anybody was sure what we really had. I think Roy has probably exceeded that.

We'll see how it goes with Kurt. He's really played in the preseason. Now obviously going to be in a different situation. Nothing is guaranteed, but he's got a good attitude. He works hard. We've got a lot of respect for Coach Kelly and -- well, it was Coach Kelly, and the program that he ran at Notre Dame.

Kurt has done a nice job, and we'll see what happens here as we move forward.

Q. There's a lot of young players that are going to be getting a lot of playing time. Is that something you envisioned when you were in the draft boardroom?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, you really don't know how it's going to go. For every draft pick you have, every player that you select, how is it going to turn out. Quite honestly, you really don't know. You're taking a player and everything that comes along with it because there's some qualities that you like in that particular player. So what does that look like when they actually get here on campus relative to the rest of the group? You really don't know.

I mean, even if you look at the Colts, there's a good example. I think they kept two or three undrafted players, Denbow, the safety from SMU, who I'll tell you wasn't very highly thought of, but he's been one of the most productive players in the kicking game in the league. JoJo Domann wasn't drafted. So I would say all throughout the league, you look around, there's undrafted players, there's late-round picks that end up making teams.

You bring new players in every year. You evaluate your team. You evaluate your situation, and you try to make the right decision.

You really don't have a crystal ball about how it's going to go.

I mean, look, if a player gets picked higher than some of the others, there's probably a certain expectation and level of performance that you're hoping, but it doesn't always work out. I mean, we've seen plenty of situations, players around the league drafted in the first round, let's use Leatherwood as an example, there's a guy who's a good player, drafted in the first round, and he's cut. So it happens. So it's just the reality of what we deal with.

Bringing players into your program, trying to identify traits and characteristics that you like in those players, and then when they get here, everybody has an equal opportunity. It's equal competition. We'll keep the best 53 plus 16, however it goes, and then we'll have to do that I'd say on a year-to-year basis.

Q. When you go ahead and look at this year's draft class (indiscernible) what does that say about the maturity about how they've adapted to playing at the professional level?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I mean, I think it speaks to the coaches. I think it speaks to the player, and I think it speaks to everybody involved in the process. So they've been given an opportunity.

I think the rookie class in general, they've had a good attitude. They've got a good work ethic. They care. It's important to them. They're very competitive. It's not too big for them.

Now, obviously it's going to get a little bit bigger a week from Sunday, so it's going to be an adjustment, and they're going to be in a situation where they haven't been in before. Some of the players are going to play, some players aren't going to play, some players might play a little bit later in the year.

You have to be ready at any point, but I think it's a credit to

the players. I think it's a credit to the coaches. I think it's a credit to their teammates, as well, for embracing them and kind of giving them the opportunity to be a part of the team, and it speaks to some of the veterans in our locker room, a guy like Hughes working -- or Maliek, Roy, working with a guy like Hinish, because in the end, the players have to trust one another and depend on one another. There's only so much that we're going to be able to do sitting in the stands watching the game or standing on the sideline.

You know, again, we're fortunate and we're grateful for the players that are here. Hopefully we can go out there and turn it into tangible production and performance on the field, and we'll see where that goes.

Q. Can you talk about the decision to part ways with Chris Conley (indiscernible)?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, again, we look at every position the same. We evaluate in totality. I'd say there's a pretty good shot Chris is going to be back on the team. I think Chris has been a professional since the day that he got here. He's got a good attitude. He's got a good approach. He's well-respected by his teammates, well-respected by the coaching staff. I would expect Chris to probably be back around here probably sooner rather than later.

I think every position, kind of like we talked about in some of the earlier questions, are we comfortable with the depth, are we comfortable with the players at that position? If a player is here, we're comfortable with that player on the team, and they have to earn their role and create that role, whatever that is, on a week-to-week basis, and it's about 11 guys on the field performing at an optimum level and a consistent level. It's not going to be about one player, one particular thing.

Q. What was it like going through the process (indiscernible)?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, it was awesome. I mean, it was awesome. We talked I would say fairly regularly over the last, you know, probably five to seven days, but I think our job, and we have a fiduciary responsibility to each other, me to him, him to me - it's reciprocal - and I think he's very open-minded, and what we try to do is take all the information in from the staff, as well, because from a coach's perspective -- and I've been in that situation, you invest a lot of time and a lot of energy on a professional level, on a personal level with that player.

Their viewpoint, their opinion of that player, their interaction with a player, like that matters to us. It would be irresponsible of us not to take that information in.

Ultimately Lovie and I have to sit, we have to take everything in, and then make the decisions that we feel make the most sense for our team.

Lovie has been great to work with, I mean, since day one, not just going down, cutting the roster, but Lovie is well-respected. He has the attention of the team. He commands a lot from the team, and they've responded in favor. It's been good to work with him.

I'm sure there's going to be some things that we're going to have to deal with between now and the end of the season, and I think the only way you do that is you have honest, open communication, are respectful of one another, and ultimately we'll have to make a decision, live with our decisions and then move forward.

Q. As you try to figure out whether Davis is the long, long-term answer for this franchise, what type of things do you look at?

NICK CASERIO: With all due respect, I'm not really focused on the long-term. I'm focused on the next week and just trying to have a good week in preparation for the Colts. That's where our focus is as a team. That's what we're worried about, and just try to go out there and execute and prepare and get ready to play the Colts who are a good team.

That's where the focus is. I'm not worried about next year. I'm not worried about a long-term answer. I'm worried about the here and now and the present and what we do as a football team or about next year next year.

Q. (Indiscernible) one of his favorite plays was that I-formation. What do you think of him?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I mean, Troy is an interesting, I'd say, case or situation. Really he played defensive end and the line of scrimmage at CMU. Fire up, Chips, I was a Chippewa for about six months.

Anyway, I would say, not to toot the horn of one of our area scouts, but Najja Johnson, who was at the pro day at Central Michigan, was a part of -- and we put a lot on our college scouts during the course of the spring. When there's a workout, we evaluate the workout, what happened in a workout, what did you see, sending information back to us, and one of the things that he put in his write-up was Troy did all the drills at defensive end, he did them all at linebacker, then they worked him out as a fullback, and this might be an opportunity potentially to maybe develop a fullback, because obviously if you look at this position throughout the league, very few fullbacks were fullbacks. They come from another position.

So you go look at Ricard in Baltimore, the guy was a 290-pound defensive tackle, now he's playing fullback. We had James Devlin in New England, he played defensive end at Brown and we made him an all-pro fullback. Again, it wasn't about what we did, but playing fullback is about a mentality, it's about a mindset, and it's about a toughness, and I would say when you look at Troy, he has certain athletic traits and attributes that we thought potentially had the opportunity to translate.

Now, when a player never does something, then you really don't know. You can't say, oh, yeah, we're going to have potentially a starting fullback. I think it was a good example of the process and kind of how we worked through that process, and I think there was a hope and an expectation based on his physical attributes and characteristics that he would have an opportunity to compete in the kicking game.

So if you start with the kicking game, which I would say players have their best chance, especially early on, to make an impact in the kicking game, then you work backwards, then you try to figure out what their role might be offensively.

Troy has got a long way to go, but nobody works harder -- well, Troy works as hard as anybody. He's got a great attitude. He wants to get better each day. He wants to improve. When he's been on the field, he's had some positive plays, so we'll see if he can continue that moving forward.

Q. What are some of your thoughts on what you've seen from Derek?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I'd say all our rookies are probably about the same point. Like some of them have been out there pretty much a majority of the time. Derek was eventually out there. They've gone out there, they've performed at a certain level. I think there's going to be a big transition between I would say this week and into next week in preparation for the Colts and an opponent.

I think the most important thing is just focusing on your skill set, focusing on what you have to do, what your job is at that position. So from that perspective Derek has had a good attitude and a good approach.

Q. Can you talk about where you are with the offensive line, how you feel about the depth there?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I would say most teams probably have sort of eight to ten on a roster and then probably another, call it, two to four off the roster on a practice

squad. Again, however many players you have, like they're potentially available for you.

I think the players that we have on the roster and including off the roster, Jimmy Morrissey is on practice squad, Cedric to the practice squad, so those are players that were here that we have experience with, so however you have your depth, however you form your depth. I would say the players that are here we feel good about. Again, going back to an earlier question, if there's an opportunity for us to improve a position or we feel we can actually make it better, then we'll consider it.

But it's not just take a name, stick it there and all of a sudden we think it's better. Like there has to be something tangible behind it.

The players that we have here, they all work hard. I think the tackles, some of the ability to potentially swing from right to left, left to right, and then inside, being able to create some versatility, whether it's are you just a center, can you play all three inside spots, center, both guard spots, or just a guard, because you're going to take seven into the game, really eight, you can bring eight, but you have a backup for the edge, you have a backup for the inside positions, and your eighth guy is sort of a bonus or an extra just per the rules.

That's what it is each week. That's what it is for every other team in the NFL.

If there's an opportunity for us to improve that, we will. If there's not, like we feel comfortable with the players that are in the building.

Q. With the work you had cut out for you when you first got here to where you are now, what do you like about the way the roster has been shaped?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, it's really not about where I think the roster is. I think you just look at the totality of where our program is. We had a lot of work to do when I got here. There's still a lot of work for us to do.

I mean, if we want to be consistently considered one of the good organizations in the league, like we have a lot of work in front of us. If we're just being honest with each other, we've won four games each of the past two years, so it's not nearly good enough, so it's not nearly going to be good enough this year.

So I think the most important thing for us is to keep chipping away, try to make progress, try to bring good players in the building, try to bring good people in the building, try to be conscientious, try to be consistent with

our performance day-to-day, and ultimately we're going to be judged on what we do on the field.

Again, that's how I'm approaching it. That's my approach. I mean, it's on a here and now; it's not about next year, it's not about what draft pick we're going to use next year. That's not what the focus is.

I think we're excited about the start of the season. The preseason is behind us. Now it's time for all of us to recalibrate. The players are going to have a chance to recalibrate here Friday, Saturday, Sunday, take a deep breath, and then really it's time to get to work.

Q. To follow up on the question about Ross, you also (indiscernible) Max (indiscernible) who was a second-round pick. You also mentioned earlier that you have to earn your playing time here, it doesn't matter where you're picked. Is there ever a part of you that's thinking to yourself, well, other teams might have been a second round (indiscernible)?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I mean, that's a fair question. We don't grade by rounds. That's not how our grading system is built, so we really don't care where the player was picked or what round he was picked in. Specific to Max, that was a tough one. Nobody is as respected on a team as Max Scharping. He's done a lot of good things, started a lot of football games. He's smart, he's tough, he's played a lot of good football.

In the end, we just felt like this was the right decision for our team. He's going to have a good opportunity in Cincinnati, going to a good team. Again, we can't really worry about what other teams think. We just have to worry about the Houston Texans and what we think.

Max is a good player. This isn't about Max is not a good enough player. It's just where we were right now, we just felt this was the best decision for us, and that's how we handled it and that's how we approached it.

Q. What do you think about Kenyon Green?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, he's missed a lot of time. There's a lot of catch-up work anytime you miss 12, 13 days of practice, whatever it is. He had an opportunity to play the other night. I think the biggest thing is getting ready to play more extensive snaps. If he's going to be able to do it, build up your stamina, build up your conditioning, continue to work on your techniques, and we're going to face arguably two of the better interior defensive tackles I would say week 1 in Buckner, and Grover I'd say is probably underrated, Grover Stewart, relative to the rest of the league.

We've got two big-ass guys on the inside of the Colts' front that we're going to have to deal with, so we're going to have to be prepared to block them, we're going to have to be prepared to block the guys on the edge in Kwity and then Ngakoue, so we're going to have a big challenge in front of us. I would say we've still got a lot of work in front of us. Kenyon still has a lot of work in front of him, as well, but he's got a good attitude. He's got a good approach.

I think he is just in the stage of continuing to build on some of the things that he's done and try to stay consistent day after day, week after week.

Q. What is it that you have to see in Marlon Mack for him to be a part of the 53?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, everything we do, we're going to look at week to week, day-to-day, so we're going to look at our team, we're going to figure out what we need for the game, what makes the most sense. Mack is a good player. We're glad he's here. We're excited to continue to work with him. If there's an opportunity for him or anybody else on a practice squad or anybody else in the league that we can add to the roster, then we'll consider it.

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