

Houston Texans Media Conference

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DeMeco Ryans

Nick Caserio

Cal McNair

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right. Welcome, everybody. I love the excitement. I've had a smile on my face for two days. This is really cool.

I'm going to give you a brief rundown. We're going to start with opening statements from all three of the guys, and then we'll open it up to questions. If you guys have a question, somebody from my staff will be in the aisle with a microphone, so just flag them down. I will say we will not get to everybody, so this is the first of many spring availabilities with these guys. So if we don't get to you today, media, we will get to you at some point soon, and we'll take a couple of pictures at the end.

I'll open it up for Mr. McNair. Thank you, guys.

CAL McNAIR: Well, thank you for being here tonight. It's my honor to introduce you to the Texans' new head coach DeMeco Ryans.

(Applause).

Finished our search. Nick did a great job. Thank you, Nick. We worked together.

This young man exhibited everything we wanted as far as leadership, football knowledge, led one of the top defenses for the last two years. And he fits exactly what we're looking for to lead our team into the future.

I'm not the first to say, but let me say it now, welcome you and your family to H-Town.

DeMECO RYANS: Thank you. Thank you.

NICK CASERIO: Appreciate everybody being here. First of all, I would like to thank Cal and Hannah for their support throughout this process, and the reality is football is a people business. That's the reality of it, right? We're going

to win with people, and what better person to lead this organization, these players, than DeMeco Ryans. I think everything that DeMeco exudes a player, a coach, his selflessness, his toughness, his team-first mindset his charisma, and I would say we didn't really know each other, but the more and on more time we spent together, it was almost a no-brainer as who was the right fit for this team, this organization, this city.

He is one of our own. He believes in our program. He has been in this building. He has been in our players' shoes. He has been in this city. For him to come home for him to give us the opportunity to be a partner with him, certainly grateful and appreciative and can't wait to get started and work together. Thanks, DeMeco.

(Applause).

DeMECO RYANS: I would like to start by first thanking my family. Couldn't be here without the sacrifices that they endured for me to have the opportunity to coach. I know everything that they've been through, and I'm just so thankful for my family, first and foremost, for being here with me.

I would like to thank the 49ers organization for giving me the opportunity to grow as a coach, as a man. It was just outstanding. Six years there. Kyle, the York family, John Lynch and all the coaches, all the players that I had an opportunity to work with there, it was a special group. And I will be forever grateful to those men who allowed me to coach them and lead them over the past six years.

Now here with the Texans. I can't thank you enough, Cal, Nick. I can't thank you guys enough for believing in me, to give me this opportunity to lead the Texans, the team that drafted me here in 2006, I mean, this is just -- it's a surreal moment for me, and I'm thankful to God that He has just paved the way for me through everything that I've been through in life and for my paths to end up back here in my home in H-Town where it all started. It's truly a blessing. It's still for me I'm still trying to believe it.

But this is outstanding, man. To all my former players and my former teammates that are here, it's great to see all you



guys here. The work we all put in together here, it means so much to me just to see you guys here, see your faces. Man, for the support you guys have given me, it's been outstanding. I love you guys. Love you guys so much. Thank you for your support.

To the players that are here, the current players, I can't wait to get started. I can't wait to get started with you guys. Man, I'm fired up. Right? This is a young team. We're on the cusp. We have to add some pieces to what we're doing here, but I'm so excited to get started and get to work with you young guys, right, and to build a winning program here with the Texans.

I'm fired up. The excitement is real, and I can't wait to get to work, to get to coaching. We want to bring a winning team. That's what we want to bring to Houston. We want to bring you guys a team that you're going to be proud of as fans, right? We're going to fill up NRG Stadium, and we want you guys to make this truly a home-field advantage for us again.

All the excitement that we have right now, I'm excited and fired up, and our fans, we want to continue that excitement in supporting the team that we have here.

Everything with me and Nick, we're here to build this team together, build it the right way with the right people. Build it the right way with the right people. What we're looking for, what I'm looking for in the type of players that we're looking for are players who are looking to swarm. We want players that have a special work ethic and a relentless mindset in everything that they do. That's what you're going to see from Texans football. You're going to see fast, physical, you're going to see toughness. We want smart players that are dedicated to being the best that they want to be and guys who are coachable and guys that want to go win.

That's what we want to do. We want to do it in a first-class manner. We want to do the right way. I'm excited and fired up to get started with you guys.

(Applause).

NICK CASERIO: We have to take questions after that? He can't just walk out (laughing)?

Q. DeMeco, you could have gone to other teams. Why the Texans, and did you give serious consideration to the other teams? Especially Denver since you interviewed there. And how close did you come to going to the Broncos?

DeMECO RYANS: Thanks for the question, John. I'm

thankful for the Denver Broncos, and we had great interviews there, great people there. But when it came down to it, there is no place I wanted to be any more than H-Town. It was an easy pick for me. It was a no-brainer to be here, be home. It was a no-brainer.

It wasn't a difficult decision at all. It was very easy.

Q. I wondered, when did you first start thinking about wanting to be an NFL head coach, and at that point did you think it would appear happen this soon? And what does it mean to you to be one of only a handful of Black head coaches in the entire NFL?

DeMECO RYANS: When I first got into -- when I first thought about coaching, it was while I was playing. While I played, I was always interested into the development and the delivery of people around me. When I saw young Brian Cushion coming in as a rookie and being able to work with him and to help him alongside me, I wanted to make sure that Brian was the best that he could be because I knew if I poured into him everything that I knew and I helped him, if he was playing his best, I was playing my best, and we all played our best, then I knew we would deliver wins, and that's all -- that's how I've been.

I went to Philadelphia and worked with a young guy, Jordan Hicks. It was about me pouring into him all of the knowledge that I knew about football, about being a team leader and making sure he was his best when we played together.

It meant so much to me to see Jordan do the same thing throughout his career. Cushion do the same thing throughout his career, reach back and help others. The reason I got into coaching was to help players. That's the only reason I got into coaching.

I was able to get that opportunity out in San Francisco after playing. I sat out for a year, and I was able to go out there, and it was truly about just helping others. That's what I want to do here with our guys is just developing our young men, developing the players to be the best players they can be on the field, but also I want to develop men to be the best men off the field. Develop great husbands, great fathers, great community men. That's what coaching is to me. It's about the development and delivery of men.

To tie it all in, we want to develop a great team here that we can deliver wins to the city of Houston. We want to deliver a championship here to the city of Houston, and that's what it will be about.

And the second part, the second part of your question, all right, it is an honor. It is an honor to be a head coach in

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the National Football League. It's humbling. It's truly a blessing to just be one of 32. It's not a ton of these jobs, so to be trusted to lead this organization is something I take seriously, and I know the men who came before me and the sacrifices they made for me to be in this position leading the organization, I give credit to all the coaches who came before me to allow me to be here, and I'm thankful to those guys.

Q. DeMeco, welcome back. What does it mean to you that J.J. Watt said the Texans got it right this time?

DeMECO RYANS: It means everything. Everyone knows what J.J. Watt has meant to the city of Houston. And not just the football J.J. Watt. It's the charitable work that J.J. has done.

J.J. Watt represents the Texans. He is the Texans. For J.J. Watt to have the support of me, it means everything to me.

I was blessed to be able to see J.J. Watt play in his last game versus -- it was the Niners versus Cardinals in his last game, and to see him and the way he went out, he dominated. He had, like, two sacks and beat up on our guys a little bit.

But it was an awesome moment when J.J. walked off the field for the last time. For me to be standing on the sideline across from J.J. from when I was with him in his first career NFL game and to see him in his last NFL game walk off and see the applause, see the respect, see just everybody, and he was in the away stadium, but everybody on their feet applauding J.J. Watt because of the man that he is.

That's the type of team we want. We want to build this team with guys who have the character of J.J. Watt who have that athletic ability, right, that dominance as a player as J.J. Watt. That's the type of men we want in our organization.

Q. DeMeco, in every NFL juncture for you there was a first-time head coach. I mean, from the time you got here playing the Texans, Chip Kelly, and then with Shanahan too. From those experiences and even playing for a team that was still building something, what do you draw from those experiences as you become a head coach now?

DeMECO RYANS: As I become a head coach and I have been around a lot of different coaches, I always take what I learned from each place I've been.

When I first started here with Coach Gary Kubiak, he taught us what a first-class organization looked like. Gary

Kubiak taught us you treat players as men first, right? I learned that from Gary.

Moving on to Philadelphia being around Andy Reid, I learned from Andy Reid how to be a great teacher. Andy was an awesome teacher, but he is also a protector of his players. You'll never see me throwing a player under the bus. It will always be about protecting our players first.

With Coach Chip Kelly, what I learned from him, he was a master motivator, but he was also an innovator. Chip Kelly, he didn't waste -- he was always on the cutting edge, always looking for ways to get better with sports science, technology.

I take things that I learn from all these men, and that's how I feel like you build an organization, right? You build a first-class organization, you protect your players, be a great teacher, motivate them and do everything to be adaptable to change and make sure we have the best things for our players when it comes to sports science and technology.

Q. Question for Cal and Nick first: What in particular about DeMeco's interview impressed you guys most? Then, DeMeco, my question for you would be, what are you looking for in an offensive staff?

NICK CASERIO: I'll take the first part of that question. So when we interviewed DeMeco, it was interesting. It was a Friday after they just finished practice. He literally walked off the practice field probably 30 minutes before he sat with us, right, and they were getting ready to play the Cowboys in the divisional round.

You would have never known that. His passion, I mean, what was -- what do we like? Like, everything. It was one of the more impressive interviews, interactions that I have been around.

The thing about it he is genuine. DeMeco is who he is. He is sincere. He is real. By the end of the call, we kind of had some parting words. Do you have anything else you want to leave with us? He said, basically I want to come home. This is my dream job. Let's make it happen.

I think it behooves us to take that information and say, all right, let's figure out a way. Now, understanding -- (laughing) the rules and perimeters in place, like, they were playing, I don't know if it was Sunday, we couldn't talk to him basically until -- now, they won the game. Fortunately, they won. They beat the Cowboys. Everybody in Houston was happy about that. We couldn't talk to him basically for another week because they were preparing for the NFC Championship game.

I think part of the process was being patient and just understanding that this is a real dude right here. He was impressive in our discussion and interactions. We just had to be patient. We still had to go through our process and be diligent, but all the things that we felt were important for this job that a head coach needs to possess, before we went into this, we kind of had eight to ten different characteristics or traits or criteria that are important, and there are so many things that go into being a great head coach, and part of it's going to be learn along the way, but when we talk about leadership, you talk about strategy, you talk about tactician, you talk about the ability to connect and lead people, you start to put all those things together, and we got off the call. I mean, we all kind of looked at each other like, holy cow, let's go play football tomorrow, but it wasn't a facade. It was just that's who DeMeco is as a person and a man. I think that resonated with us.

We kind of had to wait and be patient and kind of wait our turn, but in the end, like, all signs led back to DeMeco, which is why we're sitting in this room with everybody here today.

CAL McNAIR: Yeah, I think you can see how impressive he is. This is how he showed up in the interview. It was on Zoom, but we've gotten used to Zoom over these last few years.

I do have a little bit of familiarity with DeMeco since he was drafted in '06.

As a leader, it showed up in Alabama. He was a leader of their defense, the captain of the team, and they called him Coach. So this has been in him a long time.

When we drafted him in '06, he took over the defense, stepped into the middle, called the plays. He was captain, and they called him Cap.

He has been a leader for a long, long time, and you see it here tonight, and we saw it on our calls, and it was very evident. So we're so -- I can't tell you how excited I am that he is here. He is going to lead this team where we're going to be really happy for everybody.

DeMECO RYANS: And for your question on offensive staffing, we're still going through that process. We want to find the best staff, right, that compliments each other and the best staff to support our players.

So we're still going through that process. How I envision the offense looking, right, we want to play with precision. We want to play with effort. We want to play with physicality. We want to own the line of scrimmage. We want to establish the run game first, but we want to be

balanced, right? We want to operate with play action pass.

We also want to be efficient. We want to have explosive playmakers who we can get the ball to. If it's not down the field, we want to be able to throw a checkdown and put it in the hands of an explosive playmaker and see him create.

So everything about our offense, we want to make sure that we're adaptable to the players that we have making sure we're playing to the strengths of our players, getting the ball in our playmakers' hands and letting them make plays.

NICK CASERIO: That's a pretty long checklist there. We have a lot of work to do (laughing).

Q. What about the job makes it a dream job for you, and what does it mean to see some of your former players come here and be here for your introductory press conference?

DeMECO RYANS: First thing that makes it a dream job is there's not many times, right, as players, we kind of get -- as former players, we kind of get put in a box of what we can and what we can't do. So it makes it a dream job to be a former player and to sit in these meeting room chairs and also to just show that, man, we're more than just players.

We can be anybody we want to be, right? We can accomplish any goals that we set out to be. I'm looking at a lot of my former players here. They are successful businessmen in the community, doing great things in the community, still being leaders in their own way.

And the same thing for me. It's my dream job because for me to be a head coach of a team that drafted me, I never could have imaged that ever, right? My coaching career hasn't been long. I've been coaching for six years, and for it to turn around this quickly and to be in this position, it's a dream job because I'm here at home in H-Town. That's a dream job, right?

I get to work with Nick, with Cal to build this team the right way. We have a young team. We have a lot of draft capital. We're excited to add even more talent to the team that we have, and it's a dream job because we can win here, and we're going to win here by collaborating, working together, building it the right way with the right people.

Q. DeMeco, your family is here. For those that don't know much about your family, how much did your mother's example and the things she did and if you could tell us a little bit about what she showed you growing up that kind of made you who you are? Then one question for Cal as well. Just, Cal, from looking at



everything and kind of the excitement, how much different is this feeling today than some of the other times in the past?

DeMECO RYANS: My mother, thank you for being here today, Mom. But my mother, she taught me, first and foremost, she taught me to have a relationship with God. That's the most important thing that she could have given me and instilled in me that I still carry with me to today.

Then my mother taught me what hard work, what sacrifice looks like. My mother is, we're going to get it done no matter how hard it seems, no matter how far-fetched it may seem. Like, we're going to get it done.

So those principles that I saw her whether it's working three jobs, whether it's allowing -- it's walking to work so I can have a car to drive to school, like, the sacrifices my mother made has just taught me, man, if you want it, you got to go work. You got to work hard. You got to work hard.

Maybe there are some sacrifices you have to make in life as well to make sure that the others around you are better, and that's what my mother taught me, and that's what goes into coaching, right? There are some sacrifices from coaching.

I can not be coaching, but there are some sacrifices that I want to make because I want to instill all that I have into the young men that I'm able to lead. I want to give them everything to see them develop and grow and be the best men that they can be, so those are the things that my mother taught me and I'm forever grateful for her.

NICK CASERIO: How is that for an answer?

CAL McNAIR: Nick, maybe you want to follow that up. That's a tough one to follow.

I do think we're in a different spot this year, and it's exciting. We have some draft capital. We have some salary cap space. We have a young team. We have a fine young coach here that believes in developing young guys, even a third round linebacker he developed into -- is he an All-Pro?

DeMECO RYANS: All-Pro. All-Pro Fred.

CAL McNAIR: All-Pro, and you did that and you enjoy doing that, and you embrace it, and that's one of the things we talked about, Nick, is he really embraced developing young talent and finding the -- understanding who the player is and bringing out the best in them, and that's what he did in San Fran, and that's what we're looking forward to

him doing here.

NICK CASERIO: I know we talked about Fred, but when you look at their defense, nine of 11 players were undrafted that are starters, and there were some players look at Hufanga. He had some strengths, and DeMeco and I talked about this, and we were going through some analysis of players. He had some things he did well, and there were some other things quite frankly, that were questionable, but DeMeco found ways to utilize his strengths and what he did well, now he is an All-Pro or Pro Bowl player.

Those are the things when you look at coaching that are important to us in terms of developing players. Coaching is teaching, it's leading, it's connecting and developing. When you look at that criteria, then DeMeco believes in those principles, so when we kind of look at our team, look, those are things that are going to be important.

All players can benefit from that. Young, middle veteran, veteran players. That's what football is about. What you have to figure out a way is how do we accentuate the strengths, get the most out of our players, and there's a multitude of examples that DeMeco has had experience with in San Francisco, and you see it tangibly on the field.

I would say that's something, Aaron, that we're certainly excited about as we kind of think about what our team is going to look like next year.

Q. DeMeco, I want to follow up a little bit on what Aaron asked you. Please forgive me if I don't get the name right. But it's Bessemer, Alabama.

DeMECO RYANS: Bessemer.

Q. Bessemer, Alabama. You know, a lot of praise has been heaped upon you as far as what you have done as a player and as a coach, but what do you say to the people back home being the example of where you have come from and where you are today? Did you start your coaching career when you turned the team around from 1-8 your junior year to 10-3 your senior year?

DeMECO RYANS: What I say to all the people back at Bessemer is, whatever you dream, if you believe it, you definitely can achieve that. All dreams can come true. That's what you see here today. This is a dream of mine, and it's coming true.

Whatever anybody, any of us, whatever we dream, we believe, we can make it happen by putting in the work, by hard work, by sacrifice. You can make it happen.

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From coaching, it's always been important to me. Really for coaching, I got inspired from coaching back in college. My college coach, Coach Joe Kines, he really inspired me. One day he put me on the spot in front of the room, and he asked me to make some calls and thought I knew what everybody else around me was supposed to do, and I didn't know.

At that moment I was, like, wow, I need to make sure I know what everybody around me -- what their job is and how I fit into this puzzle. So if he is trusting me to call on me, he believes that there's something in me that maybe I could be in the coaching shoes. From that inspiration from Joe Kines, it led me to truly knowing what every position around me, knowing what they had to do, all their assignments and technique. So if a guy needed help, I could help him out. That's where that inspiration of coaching started.

Q. DeMeco, with San Francisco you were just part of a team and a defense that showed how far you can go even if you are having quarterbacks who are kind of coming and going. I know that you know how important the quarterback position is, and everything is still new here. You talked about you have to figure out the offense, and you are going through that whole process, but when you were looking at this team, they have the No. 2 pick, they have a lot of cap space, they have a lot of potential moving forward. How do you view the quarterback position for this team and how important it is in time to really lock down that position?

DeMECO RYANS: We understand. We have one quarterback here on our roster, and we have to add more at that position. We know everybody gets excited about the quarterback. The quarterback is one piece to a team.

As I seen in San Francisco, what happens when you don't have that one guy, is the season over? Are you just booking it? No.

How do you build around, right, build around that quarterback? Yes, we want a great quarterback, but, no, we need a great offensive line to protect the quarterback. We need great running backs, great tight ends, great receivers. We need a great defense, special teams. We all play together.

That's the awesome part about football is it's not on one guy's shoulders to go out there and win the game for us, so it's all about building around each other and playing together. That's how we'll win games.

Q. DeMeco, have a two-part question. One, you talked about your mom. I want you to talk about your wife and your kids because I know family is very important. Then, if you will, talk about, without talking about who, what kind of staff you are looking to put together, what kind of people you are looking for?

DeMECO RYANS: My wife, Jamila, is here. So thankful for you. My wife -- she's a rock star (laughing). She's the rock star of the family. She's the one who really should be up here (laughing).

She's been outstanding, right? Again, when I talk about sacrifices, I know for her sacrificing her career and everything to work and to lead our family.

But she has such a big heart. My wife, she's willing to help any and everyone. She has a huge heart, and I love her dearly for it. She's always about somebody else or she forgets herself at times. I have to tell her. She has an awesome heart to help others, and just a beautiful spirit. God-fearing. I just love her dearly.

Three beautiful kids, M.J., Xia and Micah. They are beautiful. I just have a beautiful family, and just love them so much. Athletic family as well. See M.J. and Micah, they're ready to be Texans as well.

Xia, my little gymnast, she's ready to roll. I love my family, I couldn't do this without them and their support. They are my rock. I love them dearly.

CAL McNAIR: We'll have to have a futures contract on these two.

NICK CASERIO: You want him to talk about the staff after that (laughing)?

DeMECO RYANS: The staff. The type of coaches that we're looking for, of course, we want a very diverse coaching staff, and that's not only diversity in race, but diversity in experience. We want experienced coaches, some coaches not so much experience. We want coaches who are great teachers. That's the one thing we are looking for most importantly is great teachers.

We want guys who are positive, bring positive energy. We want guys who can connect with players. If you can connect with players, then you can lead players. But if you can't connect, there is no way you can coach those guys.

We want guys who are bringing energy, doing it in a fun way. Guys who are truly committed to working together as well. No egos allowed. No energy vampires allowed.

We want a positive culture. We're going to work together to make sure we're giving the players everything they need. With that being said, you want a diverse staff because players learn differently, so we want to be able to present things in a different way to different players to make sure when they step on the field Sunday, they're of clear minds. They're not thinking. They're playing as fast as possible.

Q. DeMeco, a number of you said, and you multiple times tonight, that this was a dream job. Cal and Nick said after the first meeting with you how fired up they were and ready to bring you in. When you look at everything that this organization has kind of gone through over the course of the last three years, what solidified the decision for you that told you this is the place I want to start my head coaching career?

DeMECO RYANS: Whether I look at this organization and all of the great men who have come before me to lead this organization, all of the great head coaches who have been here, right, it's an honor just to follow those men. A lot of great men.

When I look at this job and this opportunity, I look at it as, how are we going to move forward, right? The young players that we have, that's what it's about. The draft capital we have, we're excited about that. We're excited to give our fans something to be excited about, to fill the stadium up. We know we have a lot of work to do. We have to win, right? We want to build the right staff. We want to get the right players, so we can go out and win and compete. That's when the excitement continues, and that's what we want to bring.

Q. Nick, since you have been here, you have talked a lot about building a franchise that can sustain success. You referenced the Pittsburgh Steelers several times. With this hiring of DeMeco, do you feel like you finally have an opportunity to start laying the ground work to build a franchise that could be successful?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I think any time you look at any organization, you kind of have to look at its own entity. Even our own entity.

There's been a lot of work that we've put in over the last few years. And, quite frankly, there's been some things that haven't gone the way we would have hoped, but we're excited about the opportunity in front of us.

You have to start somewhere. You have to put your feet on the ground somewhere, and here's where we are today. So we have our feet on the ground. DeMeco's feet are on

the ground. Our feet are on the ground.

We can't wait to get started. We have a lot of work in front of us, but if we get the right people with the right process in place and then build it day by day, okay, week by week, month by month, that's how you build sustainable success.

It doesn't happen overnight. I know everybody kind of sometimes gets caught up in kind of the quick fix. You have got to have purposeful intent action and do it consistently day after day. Honestly, it's about doing simple things better.

If you do simple well, okay, it's like we talked about offensively, like philosophically. DeMeco has talked about it's simple, but you create the illusion of complexity, right?

So do something really well, kind of create the illusion of complexity. Whether it's your formation is a certain way, your motion is a certain way, you cause the defender's eyes to go a certain way. Figure out those things that we can do in the simple things and make sure our players understand that. And if you do it consistently over time, that's how you're going to build something that you can actually move forward with and have sustainable success.

So it doesn't happen overnight. We've been fortunate to be a part of really good programs whether it was coaching or playing or in my role. We kind of know what good football looks like. We've got to make it Houston Texans football. What does good football look like for the Houston Texans? I think we philosophically believe in a lot of the same things, so we have to put our imprint on it as we go. And I think that's what excites us the most.

Really since he took the job, like, we haven't stopped talking. Whether it's about staff, whether it's about the players, about what we're going to do. But it's about work, and it's about action. It's not going to be about words.

This is great. We're talking a lot here, but once this is over, I know Omar said we're going to have many opportunities to be available. That may or may not be true, but it's going to be about work, and it's going to be our action in this building what we do to prepare ourselves to go out there on Sundays against whoever we're playing and say, damn, we're playing the Texans.

We have a long way to go before we get to that point, but that's the goal, and that's how you build something over the course of time and make it about our program, not necessarily somebody else's program.

Q. DeMeco, watching you on the sideline as defensive coordinator, we see the passion come through. I don't

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know if there's a defensive coordinator anywhere that has had more fun calling plays. I love watching the reaction on the sideline. If you will, in fact, continue to call plays, there have been coordinators in the past become head coaches and continue to call plays either offensively or defensively, and then some of the head-coaching duties sometimes get a little mired down in the mud during the game. How do you plan on handling that if you are calling the plays as defensive coordinator, and also, stay on top of stuff as head coach?

DeMECO RYANS: We're going through that with the calling plays and the getting excitement on the sideline. That's just me. That's who I am. That's who I was as a player. It's just naturally, like, when you see guys work so hard throughout the week, within those 60 plays you may get for a guy to make that one play, that one interception or that one tackle for loss, one sack, we're going to be fired up about it because I know how hard or I know the hard work and I know how hard it is to make those plays.

So, yeah, I'm excited for my players because I know the work that they put in. When it comes to the calling plays, we're still working through that. Whether I'll call plays or not, haven't made that decision yet.

Q. DeMeco, you worked with several players, Nick brought this up, that were home-grown internally with the building and were able to get them to establish cultures. Guys like Dre Greenlaw, Fred Warner, Azeez, Damontre, Hufanga, players who ended up becoming All-Pros. Was part of the selling point for you to come back here was there was a young culture of players defensively like Derek, like Christian, like Jalen, like Thomas Booker, but even players like Jonathan Greenard, who could be here for the long run that you could establish a culture with?

DeMECO RYANS: For sure. That's what excites me the most is being able to work with young guys and young guys who are talented.

Stingley has outstanding talent. Scouted him the last year, and I know the talent that he has. I know the competitor that he is. Going to put him in position to make a lot of plays for us. Put him in a position where he can excel and showcase his talents.

Seeing Jalen Pitre, loved him coming out of Baylor. Loved the blitzing, loved just the play speed of Pitre. Just to see him come out this past year and five interceptions, the way he attacked the ball, man, Jalen, we got to continue to do that. We've got to continue to take the ball away.

Christian, linebacker, fast, physical linebacker. Those are the type of players we can build around. So that does excite me when you have the young talent that we have here that does excite me.

I'm most encouraged by seeing a player whether it's a Fred Warner or Dre Greenlaw, guys I've worked with who when people say, oh, they're not that good, right, they're not good enough, that excites me the most because I know what it takes. It just takes time. It takes belief. It takes pouring everything you have into a young man like a Fred Warner, who a third-round pick, no one thought he could play middle linebacker, but I saw something in him, I saw a leader, I saw a guy who loved football, and I saw a guy who truly just allowed me to coach him.

I coached him hard sometimes. It's a fine line. I coach them hard and love them hard. Going back and forth. Now to say that he is the best linebacker in the NFL, I pride myself in that.

Not only that, to see he is a young man who is married, has a beautiful wife, and he is doing the things the right way off of the field. Those are the things that excite me about working with young men, when I get an opportunity to mold and help them with things that they can take further along than when they're done playing.

We don't know how long our playing careers are, but man, if I can implement something into that young man's life or say something to him, give him a word that he can take after he is done playing, that's what excites me the most.

Q. It's funny, the answer probably works for the question that I'm about to ask. Obviously, you were a successful player, and you've had some success as a coach so far. What since you've been a coach have you learned about the jobs that you all do up there on the stage right now about the front office and player evaluation and talent evaluation? You obviously know football. What have you learned about all of that since you've been a coach and what are some of your takeaways?

DeMECO RYANS: What I've learned about this part of it, the head coach, what I have learned the most about it, it's all about collaboration, and that's what I learned the most. And that's what excites me to be here working with Nick and being able to truly be aligned and build a team together.

When we're scouting players, it's the scouts looking at a player, the coaches looking at a player, everybody having their opinion, but we all can come to agreement. If it works for us or not, it's okay. Everybody has a voice, and

everybody will be heard when we talk about players.

When I think about this position here and I think about building a team, it's me being in a draft room for my first year as a defensive coordinator. And I'm looking there, and I'm a former linebacker, and, man, I want to get some backers. I want to get -- this is my first draft. I want to draft some linebackers.

You know, we're at a point in the draft, sixth round, where we're there, and there are, like, two linebackers on the draft board for us. And I'm, like, oh, I really want a linebacker, but I also know that do we -- is this the right thing for our team, right?

So we look at a highlight tape and pop this running back up, and it's Elijah Mitchell. They pop his highlight tape up, and I'm watching him. I'm, like, wow, man, this dude is fast. This dude could help us.

I know I want the linebacker selfishly, but I see a running back that can truly help our team. So I say, Kyle, let's take the running back.

That's what I've learned about being in this position is it's not about egos, it's not about being selfish. It's about doing the right things for the team. When we do the right things for the team, that's how you build a successful program.

NICK CASERIO: Amen (smiling).

Q. DeMeco, I'm sure you have 1,000 messages from people after you took the job. Is there any one person or one word you got that touched you the most? Then, secondly, since you are wrapping this up, are you going to go ahead and predict the Super Bowl for us?

DeMECO RYANS: (Laughing) You can do that. You know, to answer your question, man, it's been an outpouring of support from so many people. So many people have reached out, I'm just thankful for. My family being here, so many former teammates. It's not one that sticks out.

The theme is everybody is just -- they're so proud of me. For me to be in a position to make others proud, like, that means the world to me to make others feel proud. That's the recurring theme of all the messages that I've gotten.

I just correlate to what do we want to do here for our team? Like, we just want to make the city of Houston proud. That's what makes this special, right? That's everything about it. We know our fans here are hungry for a winner. They deserve a winner. The same messages that I've gotten of people telling me how proud they are of me, I

want to reflect that in our team, and I want to instill that in our guys of how we go out there and play, how we practice, how we prepare. Man, we're expecting to make the city of H-Town proud, and we do that by going out and being our best every single day and winning, right? That's been the best message I've gotten is everybody being proud.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, guys.

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