

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

Will Anderson Jr.

Press Conference



Q. With a few practices under your belt, what is it like? What are your first impressions of being on the field as a Houston Texan?

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, it's been super fun. It's very exciting. The team has been everything I could imagine. The coaches are hyped and they have an energy and we just feed on that and we just keep going every day.

The first couple practices have been really great.

Q. Two separate questions. Have you had a chance to do anything around Houston?

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, right now just been all ball. Trying to focus on the playbook. Just meeting the team, connecting with those guys, so that's kind of where my focus has been at right now.

Q. For you, what do you anticipate when... (indiscernible)?

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, being at Alabama they kind of prepared us for a little bit have everything, hand in the dirt, you know, playing two-point stance, so just kind of made me versatile.

I'm very excited. However they want to use me, it's just going to be anything I've kind of did at Alabama, so I'm super excited.

But just to do anything they need for the team.

Q. Will, take us through getting here. Got into the facility. What was that like? What message did they have?

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, the message was super simple. Just coming from Bama, I kind of understood everything he was talking about. Being intentional, swarming to the ball, having that special relentless mindset and stuff like that.

Just being a part of the team and being family and being together, that's the biggest message that he's been trying to express to the team.

It's been kind of easy for me grasp that, and that's why I'm super excited to be a part of this team.

Q. How much has it hit that you've really achieved your dream now that you're out there practicing with the Texans?

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, it hit me, but I haven't arrived yet. I just got here. I haven't did anything yet. I got to earn it. I got to go out there and get the trust from the guys, keep connecting with them, and just paying attention to everything I'm doing and working hard.

Yeah, I'm here, but I haven't arrived to where I want to be at yet.

Q. With that being said, how much do you look at the fact that you and Coach DeMeco Ryans are almost, I don't want to say the same person, both come from small towns. I mean, if you didn't mention the racetrack a lot of people wouldn't know where Hampton, Georgia is, him being from, following in his footsteps to where you are today?

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, for me I was super excited. I think that's one of the biggest things that I was hoping and praying to God for, is just whatever head coach I get we have the same mentality.

God blessed me and I was fortunate enough to be in this program to share that with a coach who has the same mentality as me, the same grind, grit, and relentless mindset.

So it's going to be easy for me grasp what he's saying, what he's trying to get across to the team.

Like I said, I'm just super excited to be part of this. It's a big blessing and opportunity.

Q. Will, what was it like for you to see 2023 schedule,

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knowing that you will be a part of these games and your first game is going to be against Lamar Jackson?

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, I mean for us, right now just focusing on trying to get better every day. When that time comes I think we'll focus more on that.

Right now we are trying to building that team chemistry, making sure everybody knows what they're doing and we're having and energy and we're uplifting each other and having a good time doing what we love to do.

Q. (Regarding what worked for him at Alabama.)

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, most definitely. I think one of the biggest things for me is now going from college to NFL everything is way more detailed, so really just clean up the moves that I already used and making sure I'm perfecting those moves, all those moves.

So just dial in really to my technique and making sure that I'm detailed with my hand placement, footwork, and everything like that.

Q. Is there a goal for the year statistically? Is it more about being impactful?

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, the second part.

Q. Will, two parts: When you were at Alabama, Nick lined you up... (indiscernible)

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yes, sir.

Q. So when you were there, can you talk about the differences of hand placement and where you're going up head-on against a tackle versus the tackle versus the outside shoulder, and how you go at him with those matchups?

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, well, being at Alabama, you know, they played me very versatile, so when we go to any type of flex defense I was already playing a 5 technique, which I'm kind of used to playing on the outside of the tackle.

The 4 was a adjustment me, but my regular position was always hand in the dirt, 5 technique, and stuff like that. Keying the outside pad of the tackle.

So I'm kind of already used to that. I been playing that my whole life since high school. Alabama just used me in more different ways, differently, but I've had that experience.

Q. What was your reaction when you got drafted? (Regarding To'oTo'o) What can you tell us about him as a player?

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, I all I know is I picked up my phone super quick and he said, let's F'ing go. I texted it to him in all caps. Just to have a presence like that in the building, somebody that I played with, got to know, connect with, and I know the type of person he is, very smart, high IQ, he is going to bring his A game every day, but he is going to work every day and bring others long with him.

I'm really excited for him to be here, be a part of this, and to be playing with him again.

Q. Going to Alabama, there was a lot of pressure living up to being in that institution, playing for a coach like Nick Saban. Now the Texans brought you in, gave up draft picks to bring you in. Do you feel any pressure on you as far as coming into this organization, or are you just like, I've already been through this, going through the University of Alabama?

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, I would say two things: One, just going to Alabama, I experienced that at such an early age. Here, the coaches, do a phenomenal job, the GM, the owner, everybody. They made it very clear: Just come here and be you. No pressure.

Just come here, be you, have fun, bring energy and just be together. I think that's the biggest thing they harp on a lot that I'm really understanding is, there is no pressure. You've been playing football all your life. You're just going out there and doing what you love to do, and no pressure.

Just been doing everything since you were five years old, so that's what I really appreciate about the players and the coaches here.

Q. Why 51? How did you come to 51, and what was the thought process behind that? I know it seems like a small thing, but that's got to be a little bit of thought put into it?

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, really just the number they gave me right now for rookie minicamp. I mean, just being in Alabama and them giving me the No. 31, my coach told me just make a name out of it.

So if 51 decides to stay here, I'm going to do my best to make a name and just be me. Numbers really don't matter to me.

Q. So tap the brakes on buying the 51 then?

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WILL ANDERSON JR: We shall see.

Q. Will, can you talk about what the family texts have been like the last couple days? You talk a lot about your family in that text you guys have?

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, most definitely. My mom, because they're an hour ahead, so she's already up, so just to wake up to a text message saying, have a good first day of rookie minicamp, have a good day today, those are the things that keep me going, because we have such a tight relationship.

All my sisters been texting. I just left and they already, I miss you already, all this other stuff. I was kind of ready to leave, ready to get back to a team, and they understood that because they know how much I love the game and just knew how much I was ready to get back to being on a team.

So they understood. But my family has been super supportive since I got drafted to now, and like I said, I just have to give them a big shoutout because I love them and they support me so much.

Q. When we were with you in Kansas City, we talked about how excited you and CJ were to be the story of the draft, helping with the rebuild here. These couple days coach says it's like learning a new language.

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah.

Q. Talk about maybe the patience you have to have? Obviously the buzz is there, the fans are excited, but this is kind of just baby steps for a long process.

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yes, most definitely. Like I said, with the NFL everything it's more detailed. Like it's a lot more sacrifices to make to understand and grasp everything the coaches are telling you to do, the playbook, everything like that.

The difference from college to now is you have so much more free time, so you have to find a routine and get that routine and know what you're going to do at this time, this time. Everything is just detail, you know what I'm saying?

The biggest thing is learning the language, the verbiage, and understanding what they want and just understanding that.

So that's just kind of been the biggest adjustment right now.

Q. You were talking about your connection to DeMeco and that you're from Alabama. What about being from a small town? What of that makes you who you are right now?

WILL ANDERSON JR: Yeah, when people ask me questions it's crazy because like for me, I don't really be thinking about stuff like that, coming from a small town. My mind just be other places.

I mean, it's like now when people be like, where is Dutchtown at? I be like, well, Dutchtown is in Henry County now I be like, somebody out in Henry County -- it's more names. Dalvin Tomlinson, Trey Dean, all those guys. It's more people that came out of Henry County, but we all just doing something we love to do at the end of the day.

For us to get this platform and go back to our community and spread awareness to what our community is about, where we're located, and try to bring more people and athletes there and try to uplift the community, that's what it's all about. Just where you come from and being from a small community.

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