

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Coach Matt Burke

Press Conference



Q. How does that work on the field, in the meetings, game days?

MATT BURKE: Obviously now we're working through that process from the off-season. Again, I just keep reiterating, it's invaluable for me to have him around, and it's been really collaborative. Again, just having sort of been in similar schemes but kind of bringing them together, obviously out there, you guys were out there a little bit today, just being able to kind of lean on him for me, too, just in between periods, sidle up to him and talk about what he saw or some things I saw, things I'd like to change. It's been awesome for me to have that resource as we go through this installation and growth period here.

Man, it's been cool -- I didn't have a lot of personal history with DeMeco, so building that relationship as we go through this and obviously spending some long hours in the office trying to get up to speed has been really cool. I've really enjoyed it. It's been a collaborative process so far, so hopefully we just keep that going.

Q. You had a chance to watch Derek Stingley on film. This year when you're watching him at practice, he's added on some weight. Have you seen any difference in his fluidity, hip movement?

MATT BURKE: No, I haven't, and I'll be honest with you, I don't really look at the weight stuff much right now. A lot of those guys are heavy or fluctuating, working into it. That's part of what this off-season program is.

Sting has been able to do everything we've asked him to do. Again, another sort of position we're playing some different coverages and some different techniques than he played last year, and he's been good fitting into that stuff. I'm happy where he is, where he's been working.

Q. Describe to the fan base what your scheme is like. A lot of fans are just now starting to pay attention.

MATT BURKE: Oh, yeah? Hopefully keep paying attention; that would be cool. Yeah, so again, we're going

to base out of a four-down front, and I would just say if you wanted to do the whole pick one word, it would be attack.

We play our defensive line in a penetrating style, try to edge them up, play nine techniques, those sort of things to cause disruptions. Our goal is to be able to affect plays with our front by the style that they play, the attack mode they play in and penetrate and disruption and reset the line of scrimmage and those sort of things. I would say if you just wanted to bottle it up, that would be the main thing.

Again, the more that you can pressure a quarterback with four and not have to commit other resources to doing that, that helps kind of protect your coverage a little bit so you can play multiple coverages and change that element up if you can affect the quarterback and the offense with your front.

That's kind of the general approach and philosophy that I'd say we're taking.

Q. The fact that you were in Arizona (indiscernible) two safeties here have seen reps whether in college or at the professional level. What does that do for you defensively to get certain alignments?

MATT BURKE: Yeah, absolutely. I think obviously both those guys, and I would just say in general in the league, I think there's a trend towards more multidimensional players because they're going to be put in different spots and because offenses have running backs that can do a lot of different things and tight ends that can flex out and do all sorts of stuff. To have the ability to have some safeties that can match up with those different type of body types or different type of weapons on offense and then from, I guess, like a disguise standpoint where we don't have to flip certain guys or match corners over or do some of those things that if this progresses that we can kind of keep those guys if we feel comfortable enough with say Jimmy and Jalen and guys like that, being able to sort of match up whatever comes to our side. That's a nice piece for us because we can start sort of using -- our looks all sorta stay the same; we're not giving away certain things by having guys travel.



Again, those guys are working through everything we're asking them to do. It's been great. That's a good room. But yeah, that'll be hopefully a nice piece for us.

Q. Can you talk about your first impressions of Jalen Pitre?

MATT BURKE: Yeah, so whatever superlative you want. Great -- literally, I'm saying he's great. Doesn't say much like in the meeting rooms and stuff from like that point of view, but man, is super communicative on the field.

I would just say DeMeco has a team meeting pretty much every morning, kind of recapping some of the stuff that happened from the day before, and I would say Jalen sort of finishing and effort shows up on that tape probably as much as anybody. I'm not going to discount anybody else, but just the way he approaches finishing every play in practice, being in good football position. Again, as a deep safety sometimes runs in practice kind of squirt through. We want our offensive guys finishing downfield, but Jalen is always there like getting to a hip, finishing in good position. So just to see him train those habits consistently like that is just really cool.

I think that's what you guys saw obviously on the field last year, just like the fruits of those labors. Like he practices with intent and he's very deliberate in everything he does, so I think that's what kind of translates.

Q. You mentioned that Stingley will work through a lot of multiple coverages. What about his play allows you to do other things with the rest of the defense?

MATT BURKE: Yeah, he's just obviously -- hopefully he's a corner that we feel good about and whatever coverage match-ups we get to. Again, whatever that -- whether we get to the point where we feel good about isolating him or not, that's obviously stuff down the road that we'll get to. Right now we're just kinda playing our base techniques and trying to get him right, so we haven't really got into matching guys or flipping dudes or any of that type of thing.

Hopefully, again, we're just asking Sting to keep progressing and getting better at what we're asking him to do right now, and then I think those types of decisions are more made as we get closer to things.

Q. (On Jimmie Ward.)

MATT BURKE: Yeah, I think very good. He's been great in that room with, again, with a guy like Jalen, obviously working with him. You know, like I said, working with Jalen and kind of helping that growth along, the whole back end, it's great. Obviously just a lot of the guys or some of the

guys that we targeted to bring in from Jimmie and some of the guys on D-line that have a history in the system and familiarity, it just helps almost just keep the messaging going obviously in the locker room and those sort of things. Jimmie has been great, and he looks like he's about 25 right now out there, so that's been cool, too.

Q. I know we're very early in the process from a defensive standpoint, but what have you seen on the offensive side of the ball?

MATT BURKE: Oh, man, isn't Bobby coming in here next? I'll tell you one story, honestly. We did a two-minute drive at the end of practice sometime last week, and he threw into kind of a coverage we hadn't shown. It was the first day we put the coverage in, and he threw in, and kind of probably was a throw he probably wanted back, I'll just say it that way.

But the first thing he did when I was walking off the field was he grabbed me, said literally, "Coach Burke." And he spent about 10 minutes walking in off the field asking me about the coverage and just sort of what he saw and how we kind of set it up and talked through that.

So I think, just again, his deliberateness and intent to try to get better, and like he's literally grabbing everybody he can on the field. All those guys, Davis and Case and those guys, like during stretch lines I go hang out and talk to them a little bit about some of the stuff we're doing and the periods and just trying to get that back and forth.

So he's been very sort of intentional about learning and just learning defense, too, like what did you call there, what was that coverage or what did you do here. I respect that from him.

Q. Working with DeMeco, how has he organized teaching, like organized what you're going to teach and then bringing it to the players? How have you seen how you've approached that?

MATT BURKE: Yeah, I would say -- man, okay. I would say probably he's a very sort of specific to big. So in phase 1, we actually started phase 1 with a lot of almost individualized -- we took every player said this is what you can improve, just as an individual, a technique or something in your game that you can improve and work on through this first phase. Then when we got into sort of the second half of that in phase 2, it was very much like techniques, like it wasn't -- we didn't really even get to big picture coverage stuff. We were like, everyone is going to learn this technique, then we're going to learn this technique, we're going to do these drills. So he went from very specific to like kind of group settings to now obviously

team settings and putting it all together where hopefully the foundation of you're playing this technique and this coverage, so it's not necessarily knowing the whole coverage. They do know the whole coverage, but you've learned it from this technique up essentially, so you kind of always have that foundation.

So he's really good. It's been cool, like he's done a really good job of wanting to build a foundational aspect to what we do and understand the whys and sort of the intricacies, and we had that time coming through phase 1 and phase 2 to now it's like we're all together, we're calling the whole coverage, but within it those elements, that technique you've practiced since day one, and we talked about that technique and you're doing this and here's how it all meshes together. So he kind of went from specific to big picture, and it's been a cool process, I think, for those guys to go through.

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