

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Coach Frank Ross

Press Conference



FRANK ROSS: It's been a good spring so far. OTAs underway, and happy with putting the new guys into the schemes. A couple things we're working on for spring is obviously the fundamentals, especially in the phase 2 where there's not necessarily a person across from you but just working your technique, your footwork, your positioning, but then you also get a chance to work trial of new schemes, and that is really starting to put in now. Hey, don't like that, scrap it, we won't work on that, or double down in training camp and see if that could be applicable to who you're going to try and become or what new players you can promote their talents and just accent those things that we've already kind of used as part of what we think is our kicking game roles here.

It's been a good spring so far. Hopefully we can cap it off the next few weeks as we finish out.

Q. (Indiscernible), what do you see in them, and how close are they into transitioning to also contributing?

FRANK ROSS: Yeah, obviously we love a laundry list of depth at returners and just generally speaking game-day ball handling ability. Those two guys both are undersized in stature, got good quickness, ability to track it, set up blocks, cut on the move and wiggle in space. Like both their skill sets, and we'll see how many other guys can contribute, as well, whether that's Grayland, obviously Deshaun King has done a great job for us, and he's such a strong runner, Deshaun specifically. Everybody's play style is a little bit different, and then relative to down-and-distance situation, how the roster shakes out when it comes end of preseason down the road here. But we'll look into all those avenues.

Q. From the film, we're taking a lot of low returns sometimes called back. What's the commonality you see from all those spaces?

FRANK ROSS: Yeah, there's a God-given athleticism element, of course, where guys know how to just not spend too much time decelerating or it's just easier for guys to run as a smaller guy. He's got that quickness, that suddenness that hopefully he can translate to when he's

out there live with the ball in his hands.

Any of those guys who are back there you're looking to make a play, but guys, we all know this, the ball is everything, so we've put the ball on the ground -- I don't know, one is too many in the last couple years. The ball can't be on the ground, so whoever is back there handling it, security is number one. Get the ball back for our offense, start a drive. And then anything past the first down is bonus. When we get a chance to take it, we'll try and do that as many times as possible.

Q. What are your thoughts on the rules involving kicks?

FRANK ROSS: Yeah, I like to compete. I like to play every down we can get. When we get a chance to cover a kick, let's go out there with our hair on fire. We get a chance to return it, we want those guys to get shot out of a cannon and go.

I got it. I'm 100 percent in favor of player safety, so anything to elongate the existence of the NFL and our game, great, and player safety. I know a lot of guys make a good living playing on special teams, and I don't want the fabric of the game to change, so hopefully we stay within those parameters, and then whatever is out there, whatever the rules are, doesn't matter what game you're playing, you get three points for shooting it from this distance in basketball, everything else is two, free throws are one. Those are the rules, so we'll play within that scheme.

If that's going to save time, waving a fair catch, end-of-half situation or you've got to learn how to squib it and get it through, you've got to judge yard mark, what's the average return. That starting field position, you guys have known this, that chart doesn't lie. Every yard means percentage up on opportunity to score on the offensive end or defensive side to defend.

We'll play it accordingly. Yeah, I'm still -- I might be kind of younger but not really but still old enough to remember when things were different. We'll adjust as they come forward.



Q. There's so much that's influential in the game from special teams but also a developmental spot for the team as a whole. With that and potential change, how would you describe the importance of that for the team and where does that go?

FRANK ROSS: Yeah, you said the word "developmental," and in football you've got to have angular space awareness. Use the head on a swivel before; that way you don't get ear holed and cracked. So just feeling space, working off of, playing off of a teammate and feeling the block leverage, fighting pressure with pressure, running, blocking, tackling, holding on to the football, entry angles. That's just football.

So there's an element of the game that's going to be not compromised, but I would just say, hey, it's a new element we've got to adjust a little bit. It might be a little bit more schematically and situational more than anything, but we'll see, and I've got to have exact all the parameters. The rule was tabled and then just changed kind of recently, still tinkering potentially with the amount of players in the setup zone on an onside kick or whatever the case may be.

By the time we get back, hopefully we have that in black and white and we'll be ready to play it out accordingly. But yeah, foundationally, developmentally it's an important piece, so hopefully it's staying in the game.

Q. You gave a corporate answer about the new rule change. Now tell us how you really feel.

FRANK ROSS: You don't like the corporate answer? Just keep playing football, man. Keep just playing football. Let's keep football tough. Does that work?

Q. During a special teams drill, Amari Rodgers told us he's making his back back to return some kicks, and I think you told him, you're not supposed to be back there, and he said, Coach, I want to be back there and he went back there anyway. You needed extra players and you had two veterans willing at full sprint trying to get over there to help out. When you see that type of excitement and those players that are willing to do those type of things, what does that make you feel?

FRANK ROSS: Yeah, obviously everybody wants to be out there, and guys are working in certain drills and not just relative to load management or whatever the case may be. Obviously hopefully the culture is man, anytime you're in a line for receiver drills, I want to be at the front of the line, or line for the running back drills, I want to be at the front of the line. Hopefully that's the same in the kicking game and just guys are hungry to get any single rep they can. And at

our level, honestly, it's basically like saying you can't run kickoff after kickoff after kickoff or -- it's too taxing. Guys want those reps at high effort.

So when we do the drill work, you want guys to get good quality reps, and for people willing to step up if we're short on a number count or something like that, that's great, just showing that, hey, look, we got these important and invaluable reps. It might be an OTA day, but we've got to get that rep in, and hopefully everybody has that kind of mentality.

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