

# Houston Texans Media Conference

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**Nick Caserio**

Press Conference



NICK CASERIO: Get started here with training camp, kind of get ready to go, see what we can put together for the 2023 season.

A couple quick transactional items here as we go. With the handful of players that we put on PUP yesterday, sure there might be a question or two about that.

I would say the big thing with that, probably had about three or four players, it's really more short-term, more precautionary than anything else. I would expect them to be kind of ready to go here Sunday, Monday. Some of this is just their natural progression relative to what they've done through the spring and summer. Some of it, like I said, is more precautionary than anything else. I anticipate three of four of those players being ready to go here kind of Sunday.

I think this morning some of the reports came out regarding Tytus. Just say, not necessarily going to comment about the contract and everything that went into. I would just say Tytus has been a good player for the last number of years. He's a good kid. He works his ass off. He's tough, he's competitive.

Those discussions, some come together, some take a little bit more time than others. But it was good working with his team and his representation trying to get to an end point.

I know Tytus loves being here, wants to be in Houston for a long period of time. I would say overall we certainly put some resources into the offensive line over the last I would say year or two. But the expectation is that comes with performance. Now the hard work starts.

But Tytus has earned it. Some final things that we're working through, so I don't want to necessarily comment as if it's finalized. But expect by the end of the day to have that resolved in some way, shape or form. Wanted to kind of hit that here before we got started.

With that we'll take some questions. We'll start with John. You got a question? If John is not ready, we'll start with

Brooks.

**Q. With John Metchie, what do you expect from him? Do you expect him to play?**

NICK CASERIO: I don't think we're close to week one with anybody.

He's clear to participate here in training camp. I think there will be some players where we kind of manage them maybe during the course of practice or how we practice.

But John is ready to go. I know he had a little bit of a setback there in the spring. He's cleared. He's ready to practice. So kind of take him one day at a time. I'm sure he's anxious, anxious and excited, to be back out on the field.

Hardly anybody is really ready for week one. Hopefully we can kind of get through today and get through this week of training camp and kind of get ready to go.

It's interesting. Really 20 practices and three pre-season games before we play Baltimore. That's what's in front of us. The important thing for all of our players is to maximize their opportunities each day, whatever those entail, however many reps you get to kind of get yourself mentally and physically ready to go for what's going to be a pretty long season here.

**Q. You know how hard he worked. What does it mean to you to be able to see him back on the field?**

NICK CASERIO: I mean, look, it just speaks to John's I'd say mental and physical toughness, the way he's wired. I'd say he's a pretty unique person. There are not many people like John Metchie in this world, athletes that have had to endure some of the things he's had to go through. But it speaks to his perseverance, stick-to-it-tiveness, what he is made of, the people around him.

I would say our medical staff has invested a lot of time and energy. Think he's appreciative of that. That relationship is reciprocal. Been beneficial to both parties.

Excited about John. Excited about all of our players really getting out there and kind of getting started.

**Q. Tytus, training camp, what is the importance of getting that done now?**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, really like we talked about, we never put a timetable on anything. Those discussions, they take on a life of their own. Some take a little bit longer. We've had pretty open dialogue and communication with their camp all throughout the spring and all throughout the course of the summer.

Whenever you reach an agreement or resolution, whatever the timing is on it, today, tomorrow, a week after, some players at some point we talk about.

We've been pretty flexible and adaptable relative to reaching agreements or resolutions. When we feel it makes the most sense, we'll go ahead and do it. The fact it's right before training camp, I wouldn't read too much into that. I think that's just kind of the end point on it.

**Q. As you looked at the quarterback position, how do you feel about the quarterback room?**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I mean, I think at this point we're just evaluating the whole team. We're not going to put too much emphasis on one position. Like I said from the beginning, everybody has to reestablish their level of performance. The players are also going to determine who plays, how big after role they have.

Take it one day at a time. Try to focus on individual improvement. We've talked about this as a team. It's about incremental improvements, it's about individual incremental improvement, which leads to collective improvement, which hopefully leads to team improvement. That is kind of where we are. Not really going to get too much further ahead with that.

**Q. What is some of your evaluation process when you go into training camp?**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, there's a lot that goes into it. I would say, look, anybody's probably going to be able to go out there and put together one good day of practice. You will comment on the highlight reel plays, who did what in practice, this guy made this catch, this guy did that.

What you're looking for is consistency and longevity over the course of a long period of time. Then you combine what they do in the field, what they do in the classroom. Can they actually take the concepts that they are teaching, that they're learning, can they apply them on the field, can

they make the correction? And can they do that over the course of I would say extended periods of time. That's what we're trying to evaluate.

We know we're going to have to make some hard decisions. It's about getting the right players on the team, it's about getting the right players on the bus and on campus. We've talked about this extensively. It's 53, but it's really more than that. Try to get the right people in the building, on campus.

We're going to have to carry some people on the roster. We are going to have to carry some people on the practice squad. There's going to be a lot of movement. Omar unfortunately brought this to my attention in the spring. We have had more transactions over the last two, three years than any team in the league.

We're just trying to do what is best for the team. We'll continue that and try to get to an end point that we feel comfortable with. There's going to be some hard decisions we have to make, but hopefully we just make the right decision, utilizing the information that we obtain on a day-to-day basis.

**Q. 20 days of practice. What do you want to see? Stages along the way in terms of how you see that?**

NICK CASERIO: No, it's interesting. If you look at the way our practices are structured, it's kind of three on, one off. It's almost kind of in blocks. We have this pre-block before we play New England. So three on, one off, three on, one off. We'll have three practices, we play New England. One block. The following week, I'd say it's a different set of circumstances and challenges relevant to the Dolphins, the joint practice, it's another opportunity.

Really today, tomorrow and Friday will be very similar to the spring relative to wearing helmets, shorts, spacers, kind of ramping up, getting the players I'd say physically and mentally ready and acclimated to the climate and environment.

Okay, so really you're looking at it in two-week blocks or two-week increments. As we go through the course of the summer here, we'll have a better idea. I'd say the game will be another I'd say evaluation tool that we use. I think the joint practices are really going to be a good evaluation tool.

What a lot of teams have done throughout the league, sometimes your most competitive snaps and most competitive reps occur during the course of the week. Maybe you handle the game a little bit differently.

Ultimately, we will decide how we want to structure things. It's really kind of don't get too far ahead of yourself. It's really kind of one day at a time, looking at it in blocks, seven- to 10-day windows or blocks. Then once we get through one period, all right, what's the challenge in front of us the next week? How do we handle it? What do we need to do? What modifications and adjustments do we make?

We're probably going to lose some players along the way. That is just the nature of this unfortunately. So we are going to have to bob and weave here a little bit, adapt, adjust and be flexible, open-minded, ultimately try to put a foundation in place that we can resort back to because all good football plays start with good fundamentals.

Take scheme out of it, take any of that nonsense, this scheme. You can draw it up as good as you want, in the end can you run, can you block, can you tackle, can you play the ball, play with good body position? Those you the things we're going to focus on, we are going to emphasize with our players.

DeMeco has steadfast from the beginning about that. We talk about that extensively in our team meetings. Really ultimately that's where the focus is going to be.

**Q. The strength of this roster the last couple years, how much better do you feel...**

NICK CASERIO: Don't understand the question honestly. Have no idea. Hopefully we put together a competitive group. And ultimately the players are going to determine how competitive or how good it is or isn't.

We've invested resources and allocated resources in certain positions. But in the end it's trying to put together as comprehensive a team as possible, and trying to build a depth, your bottom of the roster, kind of middle of the roster we feel is important as the top end of the roster.

How are we 1 through 53? Then in conjunction with that sort of your depth off the roster, 53 to 70? All those players are important. Whoever's in the building, whoever's going to end up on the team, whoever's going to end up in the building in some capacity, ultimately is going to have an important role on our team.

I think we'll have a better idea. Going against teams like Miami, Playoff team. Going against a team like New Orleans, we have a lot of respect for their program. I think we'll have a decent idea of maybe where we are. I'd say at this point it's hard to speculate. Hopefully we've improved. But ultimately the proof is in the pudding. We will get a better idea here once we get into training camp and get a

little bit deeper.

**Q. On the joint practices, how important was it to get those on for your process? Does it affect how you would make decisions with the roster in training camp?**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, not necessarily. But it's just a different sort of evaluation tool. So we'll spend the next however practices and days working against our personnel. When you go against another team, you're working against a different group of players. Work against Jaelan Phillips, work against Christian Wilkins, work against Bradley Chubb. We're going to work against Howard Ramsey. Those players might be a little bit different than what we see from our players.

Ultimately this league, it's a week-to-week matchup game. Who you are playing, understanding the personnel, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of your opponent, what you can do as a player to try to exploit those things.

I'd say those are the benefits of that. I think you want to find the right team and staff to work with. Mike and DeMeco obviously have a relationship, a good relationship with Miami and their program overall. New Orleans I'd say a lot of respect for Dennis, kind of what we do down there.

It will just be another evaluation tool that we can incorporate. It gives you an opportunity honestly not only evaluate your players but evaluate their players as well. Been a part of those situations where we've actually either acquired a player, traded for a player, signed a player off of waivers because of an interaction that we had with that team because you're actually able to maybe learn something about that player that you wouldn't otherwise know.

There's always benefits about everything you do. It's all about your mindset, what you feel you can get out of it. We'll try to maximize our opportunities each day, whatever we're doing. We're excited about the chance to work with those teams when we get to that point.

**Q. It's hot here. With record temperatures, is there anything different you are doing?**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, you heighten the awareness. You try to educate your players as much as possible. I think we have a cool tent, a device around here over the corner in between practice, try to give the players the opportunity to reduce their body temperature.

Honestly, something as simple as the clothing you wear



outside. A lot of guys want to wear hoodies, sweatpants, because they want to sweat. That's not a problem here in Houston. You allow your body to sweat, not allow that heat to leave your body, you can potentially be putting yourself at risk.

I think the big thing is the education. Here is the reason why, here are some resources or tools that we can provide to you. Players are receptive to that. Our sports performance team, Ladd and the wellness team, do a great job of articulating that message, providing the players with what they need. Try to make smart decisions.

The health and safety of the players is the most important thing for our team and our organization. Whatever we can do to help the players in that respect, that's the most important thing.

It's going to be hot wherever you go, but you want to be smart. We're practicing in the morning probably for a reason. Probably makes more sense. Still get a lot of work done. We're going to play games midday. I don't know, eight, nine, 10 of them are going to be in closed doors. At some point you have to be out in the elements. But you want to make sure the players are mentally and physically prepared. Recovery is a big part of that as well. Educating them on the recovery, what you do.

What you put in your body. I know nobody wants to hear another nutrition analysis from me. But what you put in your body matters. All those things, when you stack them up, that's what we can do to help the players and make sure they are physically and mentally prepared for the rigors of what they're going to go through out here.

**Q. With the new offensive system, new to you, to the players, is there a learning process for you? Do you lean on anyone?**

NICK CASERIO: You say me personally?

**Q. Yes. You're evaluating the guys.**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, no, that's a great question.

I think what you try to do is understand the core elements of it, what are the things we're trying to emphasize. In the end there's only so many things you can do relative to how many runs you have, what is a design run.

I think understanding the intent and integrity of the play, what is the responsibility of players on those plays, what are they being coached to do, so when we're going through it, you kind of have an understanding. I think sometimes you jump to conclusions, something happens. This player

is...

From my perspective, I've enjoyed it, just learning. I think I like to learn, invest time and effort into understanding what's happening. It's going to help me personally. It's going to help I would say hopefully our entire group.

Kind of always viewed my position the bridge between kind of personnel scouting and the coaching staff. The more I'm well-versed in some of the things we're doing, I'm not calling plays, it is not what we are talking about. But if you have an understanding of the intent and the integrity of the play, what we're trying to do, what happened on the play, you can see is that something we've talked to the player about, is he an error repeater, something that continually show up? That I would say becomes a part of the evaluation.

I've enjoyed it. It's been a productive system, a productive offense. There's elements and roots of it kind of throughout the course of the league. Maybe it's a little bit different than the system I grew up in relative to New England. I've certainly embraced the opportunity to learn something new.

You're always trying to find ways to improve and get better. Hopefully can use that to my advantage here and to my overall football evolution and development.

**Q. Is it a thing where Bobby needs to call plays in pre-season? Is pre-season important because of logistics?**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, the pre-season is a good test for all of us, I would say a lot of position coaches. DeMeco was in that situation going from position coach to play-caller. Pre-season, practices, right? You're out there with the headsets getting the information to the players, calling plays. How do you react to certain situations? A lot of that candidly you're going to learn on the fly. A lot of us when we're put in positions are learning things for the first time. So that's part of growing and learning. That's part of a process for sure, absolutely.

**Q. Steve Nelson reported to camp?**

NICK CASERIO: Everybody has reported. Everybody is here. Everybody is ready to go in practice. Not really going to comment on the discussions we've had. We've had constructive dialogue with Steven. Respect Steven. I know he doesn't like my wardrobe selection, that's okay (smiling).

Steven is here, he's ready to go. We'll see how it goes here in training camp.

**Q. Further discussions at all to know what might have prompted that sort of response?**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I'm not really going to comment on anything. I think a lot of these times sometimes it's best to have a one-on-one discussion and dialogue, conversation. Better handled face to face.

Steve has been in this league for a long time. He's been a good player. DeMeco and I have maintained constructive discussions with him and his representatives. Take it one day at a time and see how the goes.

**Q. What have you learned to this point about DeMeco in the head coaching role?**

NICK CASERIO: I mean, you know, I've been effusive in my praise of him. I think it's well-deserved. His consistency day to day, his attitude, how he approaches it. How he articulates and messages the team.

Frankly, we kind of lean on one another. I've mentioned this, mentioned this a little bit in the spring. There are some things that are strengths of his, some that are strengths of mine. I have blind spots. We all have blind spots. We can hopefully work collectively together on getting to a resolution on some of those areas.

We talk regularly. We talk every day. He's receptive to ideas. Hey, what about this? It's very reciprocal.

I mean, I love every minute of the opportunity to work with him. I think those of you that have been around him from his time as a player throughout the course of his career, his time as a coordinator, I mean, that's who he is.

Who he is externally is the same person he's internally in the building. He's consistent. I think any time you're around people, you're just looking for a consistency day to day in what they provide, are they really who they are. That's absolutely been the case.

Definitely excited about the opportunity ahead in front of us. Look, it's not going to be perfect. We understand that. We're going to run into some bumps in the road, we are going to run into some situations we're going to have to deal with.

I think we can be open and constructive with those dialogues and kind of work. In the end, we've talked about this at different points, DeMeco has commented on it, I've commented on it, it a collaborative effort. This program, this team, it's not about one person, it's not about one individual, it's about all of us kind of doing our part.

Everybody has an important job. No job is more important than any other. That's how we approach and that's how we look at it. We articulate that message throughout the course of the organization. I think we have to represent that and do that and back that up.

Excited about where we are. A lot of work in front of us. Kind of take it one day at a time and embrace the opportunities that we have here.

**Q. A couple off-seasons here. Have you got a different interaction with fans or people around town this particular summer, the positivity that wasn't there at the beginning...**

NICK CASERIO: My trips to the grocery store have been about the same over the last two or three years. I love going to the grocery store. I know people probably think I'm a nut.

No, the fans have been great. Honest to God, it hasn't been easy. We've had to deal with some things. I mean, that's part of life. You're going to deal with some trials and tribulations.

Candidly, have the right attitude, have the right approach. I appreciate the fans. Honestly, they've been really supportive every step of the way.

Pretty low-profile, try to keep to myself. Those of you that have been around me, that's kind of who I am. It's always nice to hear the support we have, they appreciate what we're trying to do, they kind of see some of the fruits of our labor. I try not to get too high, too low. But it's always nice to hear that they appreciate what we're doing.

I think the city has a hunger and appetite for winning. In the end, that's what everybody wants. They just want to have a team that they can be proud of, that they can root for. Candidly, we probably haven't given them enough to feel that way. It doesn't mean that we've solved the world's problems to this point.

It's a great city, a great sports town. I know everybody was panicking when the Astros were sixth out. Now, what, they are almost in first place. This is the arc and the evolution of the sport. There are going to be ups and downs.

I appreciate the fans, the support they've shown, excited about where we are.

**Q. Has maybe your job changed a little bit or attitude?**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, not necessarily. Again, I've kind of



always taken the approach whatever we need to do to help the organization to move it forward, whatever I'm asked to do, how big or small that job is.

We have a lot of great people around me. We have a lot of great people in this building. Nothing has really substantively changed for me. Try to come in with the right attitude, the right mindset, work hard every day, do what we feel is best for the organization on a day-to-day basis.

Appreciate the opportunity ownership has provided to myself, DeMeco and the rest of our staff. Nothing has really changed on this end.

**Q. There will be a competition at the quarterback position. How important was it to have that good offensive line by locking in Tytus?**

NICK CASERIO: Team building is just about trying to get the right people in the building that you feel can help your team, wherever that comes from.

Every player is important. Everybody has a job to do. Everybody has a responsibility. No one else can do it for them.

I think the good thing is everybody's here, everybody's ready to work. In the end, that's the most important thing. The rest of it is just a bunch of fluff. It's kind of outside noise.

Our players are here. They got the right mindset. They got the right attitude. They understand it's going to be about work. Nothing is going to be given to them. It's all going to be earned. That's the right mindset they should have here walking in the door.

**Q. As an evaluator, do you prefer squad practices over pre-season? Are you a self-checkout guy in the grocery store?**

NICK CASERIO: I'll start with the second one first.

Self-checkout guy, even if I have a full cart. I'm one of those persons they're probably looking at me, This guy has a full cart. My oldest daughter is unfortunately a lot like her father. They help through the checkout. Self-checkout preference. We'll definitely go through the normal checkout process.

The first part of the question, I think it really depends on where your team is maybe in their arc a little bit. Again, each year's a little bit different. Just try to do what you feel makes the most sense.

I would say there's some players that have been here over the last couple years, we just work with ourselves. I've been a part of teams where there's been periods we haven't done it, then we kind of do it three, four, five years in a row.

Again, there's no set formula. I do think it's adds a little bit of umph and juice when the players have a heightened sense of competition because you want to compete, and you want to work against good players, kind of see where maybe you stack up relative to other players.

I think relative to this team and our situation, we felt it made a lot of sense, DeMeco was all for it. We talked about it in February, March, something we had an opportunity to do. Happened to come to fruition and work out the way it did.

**Q. Do you think you could make as much money on inter-squad practices, do you think there will come a day where that replaces pre-season?**

NICK CASERIO: Possibility. Again, anything's possible. Again, I think really a lot of those practices are about fan engagement, too. I think I was talking to some of our folks the other day, we've opened up the practices. We have eight open practices. They're sold out. Again, to bring eyeballs to the sport. Really, in the end the sport, the fans are a big part of it. If there's things we can do to enhance the fan experience, certainly something we're going to look at.

**Q. John's return, wide receiver, how do you view that position? Working through training camp, what's been your view of where that depth is, how important he is in that?**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, as you know, we'll always kind of look at everything. We'll have a heightened awareness of what is going on in the league. If there is an opportunity to add a player that we feel makes sense on a lot of different levels. It's not sometimes just cookie cutter, drop a name into the hat, add him to the roster. There are a lot of components that go into it.

We have players with varying levels of skills and experience and skill sets overall. Kind of be an interesting group to kind of evaluate as we go.

If there's an opportunity that we feel makes sense to add to that group, we'll look at it. If there's not, we'll go with the group that we have.

We're confident with the group that's here right now, then we'll evaluate as we go.

**Q. What is the difference between negotiating with a player versus with an agent?**

NICK CASERIO: No different. Negotiations, there's going to be give and take on both sides. A team and a club are going to have their position. The individual, agent, representation are going to have their.

What you are trying to do is kind of thread the needle, kind of find a happy medium. You never want to walk away from a negotiation where somebody leaves pissed off. It doesn't really accomplish anything. You just try to be honest and open and have candid discussions, be respectful of their viewpoint. Hopefully they're respectful of our viewpoint. Then we can arrive at a point that everybody's comfortable with. Then we can agree, or if we agree to disagree, it doesn't work out, we move on.

There's never hard feelings. You can never take it personal. I would say one of the things that we have to do, that I have to do is when you negotiate with an agent, probably a good chance somewhere down the road you're going to have to deal with him again. They're going to have another player, another good player.

If it was confrontational or left with a bad taste in your mouth, they're going to remember that, right? I would say my personality really isn't that way. Try to be fair, reasonable and try to be consistent. I think they usually appreciate that.

Try to take the same approach. Doesn't necessarily change that. But you just kind of want to be able to hear both sides. It's a human, personal interaction, a human dialogue. There's human elements. You can't lose sight of that.

**Q. You've been in the league long enough you've seen different seasons, pre-season games. What are the specific challenges from your perspective of how do you get the team together for 17 games and hopefully beyond?**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, that's the hardest part. I think you've kind of seen an evolution over the last two or three years, less starters play in the pre-season.

I think what is your philosophy? What do you think is best for your team to kind of get them ready to go for the first week?

Really we've talked about this at different points. The season, you kind of break it up into quarters, right? You kind of have weeks one through four. You got to know

what you need to do at that point. Five through eight, at that point you probably have a decent idea of where you are. Hopefully you're not too far out of the mix, within striking distance of being competitive later in the year.

I think you just have to be ready to adapt and you have to look at your team and say, What do we need, what is the best thing for us, understand where your team is week one. Probably going to be a lot different than where they are week 10, 11, 12.

The focus is on let's get ready for week one, let's focus on training camp, let's get ready for pre-season game one New England, then get on to Miami, New Orleans. We have that window there. Ultimately you have to get your team ready for week one. Get your players in the best position where they have an opportunity to go out there and be competitive.

The evaluation process doesn't stop, week one ready to play Baltimore. There's a good chance week one what the team looks like and how it's constructed is going to be a lot different towards the end of the year.

I think there's always challenges every year. I think if you have the right mindset and be proactive and productive with your opportunities, that's all you can really ask.

**Q. Is there a special challenge with the schemes and new staff?**

NICK CASERIO: There always is because you know maybe less about that team. But there's probably a good chance they have a track record.

So just as an example, with Baltimore, new offensive coordinator, Coach Monken, so you're probably going to have to go back and look at things he did in Georgia. They're probably going to do much in the pre-season, let alone if Lamar even plays, right? You are going to have to prepare for some things.

Week one there's probably the most unknowns. It kind of starts to reveal itself a little bit. Everyone is going to have a core, solid foundation of what they're going to do, then you're learning, adjusting and adapting as you go.

Thanks, guys.

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