

Houston Texans Media Conference

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

Houston, Texas, USA

DeMeco Ryans

Press Conference



Q. (Indiscernible).

DEMECO RYANS: With CJ, the things that stood out from the skills standpoint is as we all saw him, he can put the ball anywhere he needs to in a very accurate manner. He did a very good job of just his demeanor.

I think at that quarterback position when you have a calm demeanor and your teammates see that, it's a confidence. It's a calm confidence that kind of exudes throughout the entire locker room, and that's what CJ has, and I think those are the skills that allowed him to be very successful as a rookie and have one of the best rookie seasons for a quarterback in our league's history.

Very excited about what CJ did this year, but I'm also even more excited about the things that he can improve on and where he can get better, continuing to lead our team this next year. Definitely looking for a huge jump in his growth from year one to year two.

Q. With the amount of success that you all had last season, do you feel like you're coming into this next season as the ones that are being hunted?

DEMECO RYANS: Well, for me, every season you start over. Last year was last year. It was a good run for us. It didn't end the way we wanted it to end, but it was a good run for the 2023 Texans.

Now, for me, it's a clean slate. We start over in 2024. Now who are we going to be.

We have a lot of great match-ups versus a lot of great teams this year, and I'm excited to, first of all, build our team, again, the proper way, of guys who are just looking to compete, guys who have their relentless mindset, guys who want to go out and play for each other, guys who want to hunt, guys who want to play with relentless effort and finish. That's what I'm looking to build as we start this off-season.

Q. (Indiscernible).

DEMECO RYANS: Our division is definitely really good. When you think about the young quarterbacks in our division with the Colts, the Jags, the Titans, and us, we all have really young quarterbacks who all have bright futures. Four really good teams in our division. It's going to be a battle each and every week that we play each other.

I'm excited about it. You want to play against really the top competition to see where you stack up, and I'm excited to see our team develop and grow throughout the year and see where we end up.

Q. What did you think about (Devin Singletary?)

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, very pleased with Devin. I remember sitting in a free agent visit with Devin and just, man, his personality, his demeanor, it was a guy I knew I wanted to work with right away.

Devin is made of the right stuff. He's a hard worker. He's a leader. He shows up every day in practice with a great attitude, and the guys around him feed off of that. So Devin is a great guy. We'll see what happens in free agency, but we'd love to have Devin back just because of what he brought to our team. He was definitely a bright spot for us in that running back room.

Q. (On C.J. Stroud)?

DEMECO RYANS: When we talk about his growth, I think it starts with the coaches that you surround him with. So we surrounded him with some young coaches, young talented coaches in Bobby Slowik, Jerrod Johnson, also veteran coaches in Bill Lazor and Shane Day, who's no longer with us, but just surrounding him with the right guys in the coaching position but also in his room, having Case Keenum there, a veteran quarterback who's done it at a high level for a long time. Making sure that we have that balance around CJ.

So if there's any questions, any things that he may ask or things that he can lean on guys who have been there, done that, have seen that before, there was not a guy around him that he couldn't ask, he couldn't rely on who could give



him the answers and could share with him their experiences of how they seen other quarterbacks succeed in this league.

Q. What's it like to (indiscernible)?

DEMECO RYANS: I thought Bobby did a really great job. A first-year coordinator, everybody is kind of hesitant when you have a first-year coordinator, and nobody knows truly what to expect.

For me knowing Bobby and knowing how detailed he is in his preparation, how prepared he is, how he gets his coaches prepared, the way he teaches, it showed up on the film, and I'm happy for Bobby that he was able to garner the success that he truly deserves.

Bobby's success doesn't happen without the players, so I never lose sight of this game is about the players, and it will always be about the players.

As coaches, we're just here to assist the players and support them in any way we can, but Bobby doesn't have that success without getting the right players and the players performing at a high level.

Q. You mentioned that calm demeanor that CJ has. There were some early indications that that was his personality?

DEMECO RYANS: Well, it started right here at the combine when we were evaluating young players. You'd see CJ come into our room in formal interviews and just see he had that calmness about him in the room.

You can tell -- for me, I could tell instantly if a guy has what it takes.

I saw that in CJ when I first sat down and he began to speak to us about his background and his college experience.

Then you see his teammates and how they spoke about CJ. I remember being here last year, and every Ohio State teammate that sat in our room, they spoke highly of CJ and the type of leader he was and what he meant to them and the things that he did to those guys to help them.

You can't hide. Your true character always will show, and it showed that CJ was a really great guy, raised the right way, and he was the same guy throughout the entire year. He didn't change. That's a true testament to his upbringing, his family, his parents and the way they raised him.

Q. You guys already have (indiscernible) what are some of the qualifications (indiscernible)?

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, with the receiver position we're looking for guys who are separators, who can separate, who can find a way to get open. If you have that one redeeming quality that you can separate, that's what we're looking for, especially that shows up on 3rd down. How do you win 3rd down? How do you stay on the field as an offense and continue to produce and move the ball down the field? It's about 3rd down and being able to convert, and the way you convert is guys who are savvy enough to find a way to always get open.

Q. What do you think of the job Shane Steichen did? What stood out to you about his play calling?

DEMECO RYANS: Shane did a really nice job. I remember going against him our second game. He did a really nice job. You see a coach who's able to adapt even though he lost his starting quarterback in Anthony Richardson. The backup comes in, and Minschew does a really great job, and he was able to sustain that throughout the entire year.

I think that speaks highly to the coaching and the coaching staff and the guys you have around him. Credit to Shane. He did a really good job without having his starting quarterback, and we were able to come here in Indy and have a match-up there to make the playoffs.

It's really a credit to him. I've always thought highly of Shane. He's back in Philly. Going against him as a play caller, he's always done a great job of keeping you off balance and really attacking. Like what you give him, he tries to take advantage of what you give him and not always going for the big play, but he's very smart in how he approaches his game planning.

Q. You and Nick (indiscernible).

DEMECO RYANS: Well, bringing back Bobby and Gerard, I think it helps with the continuity of our offense, right. With a young quarterback, young players around him, you want to continue to build on what those guys did this year, so I'm happy to not go into a new season here and we have to worry about installing a new offense or learning new terminology.

Now we can hit the ground running. We can really build off of what we did, look at through our self-scout the things that we did well, things that CJ did well, and how can we continue to put him in those positions to succeed.

Q. Last year you and Nick really hit the lottery when it



came to drafting CJ and Will. How do you follow that up this year?

DEMECO RYANS: Well, that was an exciting draft last year to be able to get two of the top players in a draft class. Last year to get CJ and Will and two anchors for our team, for our locker room, that was very important for us to get both guys.

How do we follow that up this year? We continue to add guys who fit the Texans' culture, and that's guys who are made of the right mindset, guys who have that relentless mindset, guys who are true competitors, guys who love football, guys who love pushing their teammates to be their best, guys who want to be the best at what they do. We add those type of players to our locker room, that's how we follow up a great draft last year.

Q. (Regarding evaluation process.) Free agents you already have in the building. In the evaluation process (indiscernible)? How do you weigh that process?

DEMECO RYANS: Right. When you talk about free agency, when you have that firsthand of the guys who you've spent day after day with, you know them. You know their strengths. You know their weaknesses. You know everything did the player. You know how they are when things get hot and heavy, like how do they handle it.

So I think there is an advantage to I know exactly who this guy is, I know exactly how he will respond, as opposed to reaching for someone on another team that you may not have much info about. There's a lot that goes into it. It's like while we're here at the combine, we're trying to gather as much information on these players and their background, as much as we can to identify who they are as a person, and in the free agency process, it kind of gets sped up and sometimes you miss out on truly figuring out, man, who is this person that we're bringing into our building.

For me, it's always person over player and bringing the right person in is of high importance to me.

Q. (On Schultz.)

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, Dalton did a really nice job for us in the passing game on those two-minute drives where we were able to win a few games. Dalton really showed up, situational football, 3rd down, he showed up making big catches for us. We'll see what happens with Dalton in free agency, but I'm very proud of what he did for us last year.

Q. When you evaluate linebackers, Christian Harris (indiscernible)?

DEMECO RYANS: Sky's the limit for Christian. Christian is one of the fastest linebackers that I've had a chance to work with. Very explosive, instinctive player. I'm excited. I see last year was Christian's rookie year. I'm excited to see him build off of what he did last year.

Q. As far as scouting, keep up with the pipeline, high school coaches around the league, is that challenging?

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, it's challenging to keep up with the coaches, but I think with me and how do you evaluate those coaches, you really rely on those people that they've been with, coaches that they've been around, and guys they have experience with.

You just want to learn how they are as workers, like how dedicated are those guys to perfecting their craft. Are they guys who have no ego and they're willing to do whatever it takes to just help the team. I think that's how you truly define good young assistant coaches. I tell coaches all the time, are you the best at what you do. Are you looking to pursue something else in slight of doing the best job that you have. If you're coaching the tight ends, are you the best tight end coach, are you a QC, are you the best at breaking down information or getting information to the coaches. Be faithful of a few things and you'll get blessed with more.

Q. (Indiscernible) only way to do that? Is there a way to go outside of you know someone who knows someone who knows someone and be able to evaluate someone who might be really smart and hungry and want it but who doesn't know the same people and for you to know that they can help you, too?

DEMECO RYANS: I think it comes a lot -- also with coaching, it comes to our scouting department who's on the road. They go to colleges and they see coaches. They're at practices, so they see these coaches in action working with the young players. That's where I gain a lot of insight from our scouts, our college scouts who are on the road to see, man, how is this guy in his drills. That speaks highly to me, and I gain a lot of information from our college scouts.

Q. Obviously having such a successful season last year, do you think that more teams around the league are going to add former players to their coaching staff?

DEMECO RYANS: For me, with the success we've had, I'm excited to see more former players step into coaching and become head coaches. There are a lot of talented



players, former players, who have done it at a high level, guys who understand the game, guys who can connect and relate with players, and guys who can lead. So I would love to see even more former players step up and become head coaches, and I think you saw that in this hiring cycle with Antonio Pierce, with Jerod Mayo, guys are getting those opportunities, and I'm excited to see those guys be successful, as well.

DraftScripts by ASAP Sports

