

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Nick Caserio

DeMeco Ryans

Draft Press Conference



NICK CASERIO: Real quick, again, another productive day for us. A lot of good conversations in the draft room. A lot of work, a lot of effort. DeMeco and I were just talking. Feels like we grinded out a win. That's what we did today, is hopefully build the depth of our team with a lot of good quality guys. It's about competition.

I mean, that's kind of what this day is usually about, so you guys can go ahead and ask some questions, and we'll answer.

Q. DeMeco, when you look at what was accomplished in all three days, how do you feel about where this sets you guys up, the young men you brought in?

DEMECO RYANS: We're very excited about all the guys we brought in. Feel like all these guys are quality players that add to the depth, add to the competition of our team. So we're excited about the guys. We like all the guys that we were able to pick. We want to work with these guys. We're fired up about it.

Q. Nick, what type of insight has C.J. been able to provide on Caden?

NICK CASERIO: Honestly, as soon as a player comes in your building when you draft them, you can go back to a year or during the course of the fall, you always have different conversations about different players because they're always (indiscernible) of their alma mater, how they're doing.

Whether it's Patterson, Will, C.J., they know our team, the type of people we want in this building. They have insight, probably better insight than maybe we have.

I would say when you look a lot of our players, J.P. Will, C. Harris, C.J., they understand football and they're very perceptive so they can provide valuable insight. We'd be remiss if we didn't utilize that information. It's not the driving force, but it's helpful in the overall evaluation.

If we have a question, maybe it's something that we go to Patterson with and say, Hey, we're not sure about this. What are your thoughts on this?

Ultimately it's about the players. They're going to be sitting next to each other in this room just like they were at their alma mater. We will utilize the information wherever it is provided and try to make good decisions with that assessment.

Q. When you look at several of the players you drafted, you have position versatility but you have captains. What is the standout when it comes to the captain persona?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, leadership comes in all different shapes and sizes. I mean, there's a reason his nickname is Cap. That's important. When you wear that C on your chest, it's important.

We don't go out and say we're going to or we have to draft captains. It's usually pretty organic, part of the evaluation.

If you're elected captain, it says something about what your teammates think of you. It's not something where we're looking for a box and say we're going to just draft captains. If it works out that way, great.

Obviously they're respected by their peers, by their teammates. Look, we've talked about the type of people that we bring in this building absolutely matters. We're always going to put a premium on that.

Q. (Question regarding Jawhar Jordan.)

DEMECO RYANS: We really like the juice that he has out of the backfield. Think he can make plays with tremendous speed. We're looking to add some speed to our back field. We think he provides that for us. He also provides some special teams value, as well, as a returner.

Really excited about the role that he's shown that he was able to do at Louisville, and excited about seeing him come in and compete here.



Q. Do you feel like you addressed some needs that this team has?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, your team's never really a finished product. Between now and honestly training camp, now we're going through the evaluation of where the team actually is.

We may think it looks one way on paper, but when we get more information in the spring, we'll begin Phase II, the staff will be on the field with the players, so we will get more information. Then we get into training camp. There is a good chance for the most part the team will look the way it looks today. There might be something that pops up.

I'd say what you're going to find is there will be several players that are going to be available because of decisions or moves that other teams have made. Maybe there's an opportunity at a certain position. If we think we can upgrade the depth or add a player that has value at a certain position, that might be an opportunity to add that player to our team.

We're in a decent spot. We're excited about where we are. We'll probably have a lot of movement here between now and probably the end of the spring. There will probably be some players we move on from here over the next few weeks. That's just the transition that goes on this time of year.

We'll get more information as we go and make a decision that ultimately feels best for the team.

Q. (Indiscernible) Deshaun Watson. How much do you think all the assets that you were able to accumulate put you in position now where you feel like if you had to play a game today, you could go play a game today?

NICK CASERIO: No, I mean, yeah, honestly that's so far in the past. You guys are keeping track of that. We haven't spent one day, second, talking about here is the end result. We're just adding football players to the team with the opportunities that we get, regardless of what trade took place.

DeMeco and I have talked about this. We talked about it before the draft. If we had to go out there and play a game before the draft, we felt that we'd be competitive. In the end, each year you have an opportunity to add players to your team. However you acquire the assets, you acquire them. I mean, there's no specific formula.

That's for you all to talk about. Honestly, we probably haven't spent time on it since we did the trade however many years ago.

Q. Was there somebody once you started looking at SC that stood out, where you had them ranked on the board?

NICK CASERIO: Since they're both defensive players, I'll defer to the head coach.

DEMECO RYANS: Definitely starting with Bullock, you see just his ball skills, his range back there in the deep half of the field. It just stood out. He's an exceptional play-maker. Attacks the ball. That's what we are about on defense. That's what Bullock does. That's what we're looking for him to do for us.

When it came to Byrd, just looking at a guy that has the trait to play our style up front. He plays hard, relentless. He's a tough player. He has the skill to get after the quarterback. We're excited about him. At that point in the draft, adding a guy who had the skill set that we like, length, he can rush the quarterback.

Q. When it comes to a Kamari, what were some things you noticed about him that stood out? What can he provide to the team immediately?

DEMECO RYANS: Kamari provides toughness. You talk about energy and the way he plays the game. He loves football. It shows on the tape. It jumps off the tape. He's a versatile player. He can play inside, he can play outside.

Just talk about a guy who is a leader, a guy who works hard. He's everything that our team is about. You talk about being relentless and attacking. With the relentless mindset every single day, that's what Kamari brings.

Q. You'd like to develop talent, bring the guys in, build them up. How exciting was it for you to get that wealth of talent that you got today, a lot of good players available for you all?

DEMECO RYANS: That's the most exciting thing to me about coaching, is developing guys, seeing where they are. You select guys who have traits that you like, traits that you think will translate to helping us. Then as coaches, we have to help them, right, those next few steps to get them to maximize their talent and play to their capability.

That's what I'm most excited about when you see the growth of a player from where he is once you get him to the things you can help him grow as a player. That's why I like coaching. That's why I enjoy coaching, is seeing the

development.

Nobody is a finished product once we get 'em. But these guys, all the guys we selected, first off, their makeup, they're all really great people. That's one thing we pride ourselves on is adding great people to our locker room.

Then you get to the player, we add really good players with great traits. We're excited to work with all of them.

Q. What was the feedback out of Columbus in terms of work ethics toughness on Cade Stover?

NICK CASERIO: Whatever it is, it's elite. This guy is as tough, hard-nosed a player they had in the program.

Going back to the question and DeMeco's answer about developing players. Cade is a good example of a player that only played tight end for two years. He's certainly not a finished product. He has the mindset and work ethic to improve. How he was raised.

This guy is everything you want in a football player and then more. He probably played hurt this year. I think he had an MCL, an issue where quite frankly it would have limited some other players. He just braced it up and kept playing football.

I don't speak for DeMeco, but I think we feel the same way. This is probably one of our favorite football players in the entire draft, regardless of position, because of his mentality, because of his mindset.

He still is developing as a player. Two years ago he was playing defensive end in the Rose Bowl against Utah. Now he's played tight end for two years. Here he is getting picked in the bottom of the fourth round. We think his best position is tight end. That's why we drafted him. Blue-collar as they come. Makeup, traits, toughness, mentality, this is an elite guy.

Q. There was a moment where the cameras caught y'all celebrating. If it's okay...

NICK CASERIO: Which pick? We celebrated after a bunch of 'em (laughter).

Q. I think it was Bullock. What about that was so exciting?

DEMECO RYANS: I think it's all exciting, man. The draft is just such an exciting process. You go through and you study so many guys, right? You have a select number of guys that you like, guys that you want to work with. But you never really know how it's going to shape out. Nine

times out of 10, like, the other teams like the same player.

For us to get guys that we truly have kind of highlighted to start the process, guys who have always kind of stuck out in the process, for us to get guys like we like, like Stover, like Bullock, Lassiter. It's exciting when you know the guy you're adding to your team, you know the competitor that he is, you know the type of football player he is, it's exciting.

All of our picks we were celebrating. I don't think it was just one. We celebrated after all of them.

NICK CASERIO: Like DeMeco said, we have fun. We've talked about this. The beauty of it, my respect for him is massive, but we see football through the same lens. We're looking at a lot of the same things in players.

We may have a variance of opinion, but we talk through everything. This is a player that we had earmarked, talked about him maybe at 59 if we had the opportunity to pick him. I think we maneuvered, had to move up a few spots. We gave 123 to move up a few slots. We were able to get the player we wanted because this is a player we identified.

The number of teams that kind of reached out to us after the pick, I mean, there were a few teams that were basically saying they were getting ready to write the guy's name down.

It doesn't mean we're right or wrong. To DeMeco's point, these are players that if we have an opportunity to add them to the team, let's figure out a way to do it, let's be responsible, not egregious with it. In Bullock's case, that was the situation. I don't know who was more excited, DeMeco or Steven.

We enjoy what we do. We put so much time and effort into it. Like, we show that emotion. You've seen him chase officials down the sideline. He's faster than me.

Q. I think all of your sixth- and seventh-round picks were five-year college players. Byrd was six years. Is there a benefit to that?

NICK CASERIO: That's a good question. It's kind of the inverse of some of the players. They're all developmental players, but some have a lot of experience and have played more football, so maybe they're further along. But there's certain things technique-wise.

In Byrd's situation, five, six years, he's different than most college kids. He's married, has a relationship, has children. He's pretty mature for his age. That's certainly

important. This is a job. This is their job.

Some have experience in college that say the NIL to a certain extent has forced different people to have a different type of mindset. Maybe they have encountered some of the things they're going to encounter on a day-to-day basis when they walk into our building.

Byrd had a lot of experience. Henderson was a player that started, I don't know, 40 games between ASU and Michigan last year. You have players that are at varying levels of development.

Our job, as DeMeco said, as a staff is to get them to perform to their optimum level, get them to a point where they can perform and develop over how many years it is.

Q. Henderson spent a lot of time at tackle, spent a lot of time at guard. Is that indicating that there might be a fit you might want to do?

NICK CASERIO: I know that's something that's talked about quite a bit with Tytus. Probably that horse has been beaten. Tytus is a good football player, he's a good tackle. Hopefully have the opportunity to continue to play him at tackle.

We're just trying to get the best five on the field.

Specific to Henderson, he has experience more inside than outside. When he played at Arizona State, played some guard. He is probably a little bit different than Blake. When you look at them physically, they're a little bit different even though they might be similar.

We'll see how it goes. We think Henderson can probably play inside, bump out the tackle, like we talked about a little bit, tackle-centric and tackle focused. We'll see how it goes in the course of the spring, then in training camp, for sure.

Q. Obviously you like all the players you drafted today. Is there a person or area where you're especially excited about working with one of the draft picks?

DEMECO RYANS: All of 'em are equal to me. I think we've added great players on offense and great players on defense. There's not one player in particular. I love all our picks that we had. I'm excited to work with all of them. All our coaches, they're all fired up and excited to work with the guys that we picked, as well.

Q. When we talked to guys after each round, interviewed them briefly, many of them said they run

hard, they play hard, they love football. It seemed to be the same kind of theme. Is that what you were looking for?

DEMECO RYANS: For sure. That's what we were looking for. We are looking for players that want to SWARM. That's the mentality. That's how I see football. You only got so long to play it. You give everything you have. You play as hard as you can possibly play. Exhaust all the resources to be your absolute best. We're here to help all of our players reach their best.

I love that all of players say that because that's kind of how I tilt it. Those are the guys who stick out to me. You can see it on film, guys who love playing football, playing hard. They know what it looks like. We don't have to teach them that once they get here. Now we're focused in on just honing in on the fundamentals, techniques, getting technically better as a player.

Once that ball is snapped, we need every player playing with everything they have.

Q. With the guys who are veteran players, because of COVID-19, is it a case-by-case study where you don't want to say we're giving them this amount of time to see where they can improve, or you have a certain timeline of where you want them to figure it out or move on?

NICK CASERIO: You have to treat each player as their own entity. They're at different stages in terms of their development.

From our perspective, their ground zero is once they walk in our building. Regardless of their level of experience, what's happened previously, when they walk in the door in two weeks, it's really year zero. We have the opportunity to evaluate them. Every player has a different stage, timetable relative to their development.

I would say by the time we get through sort of one cycle, rookie mini camp, spring, training camp, full season, go through an off-season, we'll probably hopefully have a decent idea of where that player's arc may be.

If they have something that slowed their progress, which we've had a few players that kind of have lost a year, Metchie, Dylan kind of coming back, it's always case by case, it's always individual.

As far as the Texans are concerned, we're respectful of what's happened in the past, but really their clock starts once they walk in our building, then we'll see how far along we can take them with our development.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Q. What is the moment like when you can tell a player they're going to be a Texan, to help somebody reach their dream?

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, as you can imagine, it's a moment of you talk about excitement, you talk about, man, their dream is finally here, right? They're getting the call. It's kind of hectic making some of these calls because there's so much noise going on in the background, you can hardly talk to the player. They're full of excitement. They're just so happy to finally get that call.

It's an exciting moment. It's different for every individual. Definitely to make that call, to be on that side, to make the call to tell a kid their dream is coming true of playing in the NFL, I'm definitely grateful to be in this position to make those calls.

Q. After the season you have to go through the process of Senior Bowl, Pro Day, Combine. How excited are both of you all to get back to finally doing football? This is football, but just start getting back to putting things on the field?

DEMECO RYANS: Yeah, I'm excited to take my scouting cap off now (smiling), finally start coaching a little bit. I'm just in the office locked in, just watching as many guys as I can, studying as much tape as I can when it comes to scouting all these players so I know who we're looking at, know what we're getting.

Yeah, I'm excited that we got the guys we got and we're moving forward. Now we can get on the field, get outside. That's what I'm excited about, getting outside, getting some sun, coaching on the grass. I'm definitely looking forward to that moment.

NICK CASERIO: Football season starts Monday, on the field with the players, Phase II. The scouting part, he'll put on my head full-time. If there's any players still out there, it's my responsibility to make sure we get them in the building.

It's all exciting. I think we take a lot of joy in each aspect. It's an ongoing thing. It's 365. That's what it is, it's year-round. It doesn't really stop. The draft is over for this year, now we kind of transition to a different phase. Our scouts will start to prepare for the '25 draft. We'll start the spring scouting process. We'll take a break, but transition.

There's a pool of players we've probably evaluated already who chose to come back to school that are going to be eligible for next year's draft that we're pretty far down the road on.

It's ongoing. He tells me all the time just take a deep breath and relax. At some point I'll heed his advice and do it.

We're excited of where the team is, excited with the players that are going to come in here in a few weeks. It's football season. I know it's baseball season, which everybody is miserable all of a sudden, but it's football season for us, so...

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