

# Houston Texans Media Conference

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Houston, Texas, USA

## Coach DeMeco Ryans

### Press Conference



#### Q. What's the message of what you want to get done?

DeMECO RYANS: Yeah, going through our vet mini camp we keep it very similar to our OTAs. The idea and the goal behind these practices are for our guys just to compete for a chance to put themselves in position to have an opportunity to make our team in training camp.

So teaching a lot of techniques, fundamentals, calls just to make sure our guys have heard it before and heard it several times, so when we show back up for training camp our guys have some familiarity with what we're doing, they know how to do it, they know how we practice, what we're asking them, so what we can hit the ground running when we get to training camp.

#### Q. (Regarding Stefon Diggs.)

DeMECO RYANS: From Diggs, what I've seen is just a guy who I thought we would get: a guy who has made plays. Every time we have thrown him the ball he's come down with it. Sure-handed guy. Really good teammate. Great energy around the building, in the locker room, with the guys.

I'm excited to continue to see his growth and to learning our offense, how we do things. Couldn't be more pleased where he is right now.

#### Q. How are some of the rookies getting acclimated to being around the veterans?

DeMECO RYANS: Our rookies have come in and done a nice job. A lot of guys, they've had a lot of work to do to catch up, right? But they put the work in and guys are showing up. Cade, Kamari, Blake, they're all doing really good getting adjusted to how we do things, and they're showing up and making plays, too.

So I'm excited to see what they do over the break, over the summer break, and how they're preparing themselves to come back ready to make a push.

#### Q. (Regarding guys going to the ground.) What's your message to them? Do you care if they go to the ground in OTAs or not?

DeMECO RYANS: When it comes to guys going to the ground in OTAs, it's something that I do not want to see, something I do not encourage at all. I want our guys to stay up, compete in a healthy manner. At this time it's about keeping everybody up and safe.

You're trying to make sure guys make it out healthy. That's the biggest thing. So you don't want to see guys go to the ground at all. Guys get tripped up and we play fast, right? It happens at times when you play football.

But you continue to learn how to be a pro and learn how to practice, especially a lot of young guys have to learn how to stay up and still go as fast as you can possibly go.

#### Q. This team is real purposeful in keeping the offense intact, and adding pieces like Stephon and a few other pieces. Why was that the case? And going into year two for CJ, what do you expect to see from him for him to take the next step?

DeMECO RYANS: For our team, it's my job to make sure we're always improving our roster and giving ourselves the best chance to go out and compete. So every move that we make, it's geared toward winning games and putting ourselves in an advantageous position.

We want to get as many playmakers as we can, guys that can get after the quarterback, attack the football. As much competition as we can get, that is my job to do, and that's why we brought in the guys we did.

#### Q. (Indiscernible.) What's going to be the approach to making sure all these playmakers that you have are set to give you the best version of the offense?

DeMECO RYANS: Again, for all the guys we have, talk about playmakers, you talk about all the guys at different positions. At the end of the day, all the guys we have, they care about winning. Doesn't matter who is touching a ball. Who is wide receiver one, how many touches Joe gets.



Doesn't matter.

I always tell our coaches, what do we need to do that particular week to win the game. That's what we'll do. That's always been my approach, right, to game plan. What do we need to do this win that particular week.

**Q. On the defensive side of the ball, you're projected to have almost half the unit or more as new starters. When will you build the chemistry and how are you doing it without pads?**

DeMECO RYANS: Not new starters now. Phase one, two, everybody has been working together so nobody is new. Everybody knows what we're doing. They been operating really well together.

**Q. This wide receiving corps, always talk about Tank and Stephon and Nico. What have you been seeing from some of the other guys like Jaren Wayne and Jenkins?**

DeMECO RYANS: From the other receivers we don't talk about, talk about a guy who has improved a lot throughout the OTAs and mini camp, Metchie has shown up. He's looking more explosive this second time around. Jared Wayne has been healthy and been able to showcase -- big catch radius, long guy who can run, playing physical.

Hutch, Hutch is flying around full speed every single play. So I'm happy with what Hutch is doing as well. He is improving his route running and his ability to attack edges and get open.

All the guys we don't talk about, everybody wants to hear about the top guys. Our depth, we have a lot of guys who are working and they're gaining valuable experience from getting the reps they been getting.

**Q. When you look during practice today, Jacob Phillips pick six during team drill, what have you seen from him and how does he fit your game plan?**

DeMECO RYANS: Jacob has grown, improved day-to-day. We'll see where we end up come training camp.

**Q. We always talk about year two for these players. What about for coaches as far as Jarrod and Bobby is concerned?**

DeMECO RYANS: For everyone, when it comes to that second year, you always want to see growth and improvement. I think we have seen that from our offensive staff in general.

Like the looks they're giving us, stressing us on defense, making guys communicate, giving us some really tough looks, that's credit to Bobby and what he's done with the staff.

Each year we try to give coaches more and more responsibilities and allow them chances and opportunities to grow. That's what the off-season is about for us as coaches, in our meetings to try to get as many coaches up to talk in front of the group, give those guys that experience. So if they happen to get the opportunity, right, to lead the group, it's not their first time standing there in front of the team.

So give guys those opportunities, and I think that helps them in their development.

**Q. Are you comfortable with where Laremy and Titus are, and how valuable is it for all those guys, especially Blake, to get some reps?**

DeMECO RYANS: Yeah, for right now, when it comes to Titus and Laremy, those guys are battling back. Both had surgery, so they're in our return-to-play group and they're on the right track to be back and be ready for training camp.

That's when we'll see where they are.

**Q. You talk a lot about obviously the buildup and all really starts in training camp. What are you doing with these guys when they leave mini camp, what's the message to them in the in between time?**

DeMECO RYANS: The biggest message for guys is don't lose what you gained over the past nine weeks. Guys, you're in great shape. We've been practicing football. Don't just go away and do nothing and think you're going to pick it back up a week before or two weeks before training camp.

When you leave you have to continue to train and build on gains that you made. Want guys to stay on it, so you're a step ahead when you come back to training camp. You're not coming back to training camp and trying to use camp to get in shape.

If you have to use camp to get in shape, it's going to be a long camp for you, and that's when you're susceptible to injury.

My main this is stay on it. You're at a great point with your bodies. Stay on it and come back in the best shape of your life.

**Q. 2024 there was new kickoff rules for the NFL. Can you, plain some of that to the fans and how you guys have prepared for it?**

DeMECO RYANS: We been experimenting the new kickoff rule. Going to be new for everyone. I think the fans, it'll be exciting. They're going to get an actual kickoff, a play. I think that was the biggest thing of putting the kickoff back in. No more fair catch.

You're going to force a returner to run the ball. The distance is shorter, so guys aren't picking up as much speed when it comes to the kickoff team so those blocks are going to happen very quickly.

Going to be in a short area, so guys got to win with quickness, and I think you're going to see a lot of plays made on the edge of the kickoff and kickoff return, where I've seen where the kickoff returner is really -- it's going to be like a three-on-three game where you have three blockers, three defenders, trying to make a play.

If the returner is quick enough, probably split, so you'll see a lot of plays being made on the kickoff team and the kickoff return team this year.

**Q. In what ways have you seen CJ grow this off-season?**

DeMECO RYANS: CJ is continuing to grow just in his leadership. I think seeing him today, offense wasn't doing that great. To see him just stop it, try to bring all the guys together, settle them down, you talk about from year one to year two, you didn't see that last year from CJ.

That's what you love to see in your quarterback, him having an awareness for how a practice is going and having the wherewithal to step in, and let's course correct while we can, while we're out here on the field, and not wait until we get in and watch the film and come back tomorrow.

Let's stop it and do something about it right now. That's one area of growth I've seen, just his awareness to be able to step up and say something when it's not going the way it should go.

**Q. Juice Scruggs, have you seen a lot of progression from the off-season now to having a healthy off-season?**

DeMECO RYANS: Juice is looking great. He's been here for most of the off-season. Even before we started our off-season program Juice was here working out with our strength staff. You can see, right, the growth. You can

see he's a little stronger, looks better.

I'm encouraged where Juice is right now.

**Q. Talked about CJ's growth and leadership. One thing I think we've all noticed is his ability to connect with people from different walks of life. How valuable do you think that's been to the Texans and just being able to connect with anybody?**

DeMECO RYANS: When you talk about building a team and everything that it takes to build a team it's all about connection for all of us. We're all in the people business and we have to be able to connect to get the best out of each other.

When you're connected, right, you feel a heightened sense of urgency to get it done because it truly -- the guy to the left or right of you truly means something to you. That connection for me, when you're connected, you're a tight team, you have opportunity to go and do great things.

If you're not connected, you have no shot. So his ability to connect with many different people from all walks of life definitely helps him to win a locker room, and when your quarterback is your leader and he's connected with everyone in the locker room, not just the offensive side, but everyone, it just makes it easier for our team to progress and move forward much quicker because of his leadership ability.

**Q. With Christian Harris last year, midway through the season seemed like he got a lot better at a lot of things all at once. Was there a specific coaching point that made things click for him?**

DeMECO RYANS: For Christian, it was just all about just confidence. Just believe that you can make those plays. I think that -- and for me as a coach it's one thing, just continue to exude and push that confidence upon him.

Because he's a great player. He's talented. Has all the athletic ability. Now it's just him continuing to believe that. Once he crossed that threshold of believing, that's when you see him take off. He made play after play for us in crucial moments in games. He stepped up and made big time plays for us just because take the technique and all these things aside, you have to believe you can make plays in this league and believe you're a playmaker.

Now he knows that, and he's walking in that manner, and it's really cool to see him show up and make plays even still, today, making plays all over the field.

So, man, that's one guy I'm, man, proud of. So proud to



see his growth.

**Q. Was part of it trusting his keys?**

DeMECO RYANS: Yeah.

**Q. Was he second guessing himself?**

DeMECO RYANS: That's it. You know, you talk about being a great football player no matter the position, right? It's all about your instincts, right? If you have the instincts and you see it and trust it and go with it and you play fast, you make plays.

Christian never had a problem with seeing. Just don't second guess yourself. Just go and make the play. That's for every position. Guys who play fast, right, their instincts are taking over. They're not thinking. They are on autopilot. They're just rolling.

They know the techniques and how to do it. Now they let their bodies take over and make plays.

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