

Houston Texans Media Conference

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Nick Caserio

Press Conference



NICK CASERIO: Kind of working through some of the roster things here. I would say everything is probably in pencil here for a while, and then we'll kind of deal with it day-to-day. We'll look through the practice squad this afternoon or after practice.

We had a couple of good days of practice in here with three days off and getting ready to go next week for Indy.

I'll take some questions.

Q. You've had so far a busy running back room. (Indiscernible).

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, anybody that's on the roster has earned their way on to the team. Now, can you keep your spot on the team? So understanding that there's going to be multiple moving parts between now and the start of the season. It's going to be Week 1 throughout the season. We just keep the players that we feel make the most sense, understanding that they're here until they're not. We'll take it one day at a time, and we'll go from there.

Q. What do you feel like you were able to accomplish throughout training camp?

NICK CASERIO: I think we put a good foundation in place, got the team ready to play. Now the focus is on Indianapolis. What happened over the last six weeks, honestly it's in the past, so now the focus is on Indy. We're going to start preparing for a really good football team who presents a lot of challenges in all three phases, honestly.

Hopefully we've put together a decent team that gives us an opportunity to be competitive on Sunday each week. The first opportunity is going to be against Indy here in a couple of weeks or less than a few weeks, so...

Q. Is there any position that you're looking to add depth to as far as some of the players that were cut from other teams?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, we'll look at that. There was

almost 1,000 names around the wire here last night. We'll work through it. Teams have put together their practice squads. There might be some players that get claimed.

Typically there's about 30-ish, 30 to 35 players that get claimed, so call it one a team. Not necessarily one per team, but just from a numbers standpoint.

Then players that are claimed, there's going to be an offset, right? Somebody is going to get released. There's a good chance that that player is going to go to that respective practice squad.

Teams will put together a practice squad, ourselves included. You're going to carry some depth on the roster. You're going to carry some of your depth off the roster. Wherever our depth lies, whatever it is, every player that's in the building is preparing to play on Sunday, so that's how we approach it.

Like, we don't care where you come from, who gets ready to play. Whoever we think can help us win that Sunday, they're going to be active for the game. We're going to have to make five to seven players inactive each week. So we'll go through the process like we do every week.

Yeah, we'll see. I mean, there will be some movement. There will be some players that I'm sure that we'll look at, whether it's this week or next week or workouts or whatever it might be, but I think we have a decent idea about what's available, what's out there. I think you have to be realistic about if you are bringing just a name tag in or are you bringing a player in specifically for a particular reason that's going to fill a particular role?

We'll handle it. Our scouting staff has done a great job. I would say Liip, Chris Blanco, DJ Debeck, the pro staff, Steve Cargile, they've done a great job of going through the league, coming through their teams, knowing what's available, what's not, what's on rosters, what's going to probably be on practice squads, what are our opportunities. If there's something out there that makes sense, we'll look into it. If there's not, then we won't.

Q. The emergency quarterback rule being vetoed.



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How are you thinking about it?

NICK CASERIO: I think that whole story is basically a nonstory. We knew this in March. It's no different than last year. You either have two players on the roster, one player on the practice squad, or you carry three quarterbacks in a roster. Then you have the ability to make a guy an emergency quarterback.

Honestly, it's a nonstory. It didn't affect us. Maybe some other teams, but this isn't, like, any news to us.

Q. As far as that goes, Case obviously isn't going to play. What do you envision his role being this year, and could you see him being a coach in the future?

NICK CASERIO: That's a good question. Probably have to ask him about the coach part, but Case has been a good player for this organization for a long time. His leadership, his toughness, his intelligence.

It's unfortunate that he's not going to be able to play football this year. Hopefully he's around the team and around the building. He can be an asset to the team, to that room.

A lot of respect and appreciation for Case, what he's done not only over the last year or so or year and change, but over the course of his career. You're talking about a guy that went undrafted that's basically made it 12, 13 years, whatever it's been. So it's a credit to him.

It's unfortunate. Difficult situation. I'm sure there's a lot of emotion involved. I don't want to speak for him, but as far as what he does moving forward, ultimately that's going to be his choice. I think whatever he decides to do, he's going to be really good at it.

Q. On British Brooks, what did you see from that North Carolina? What did he show you out of the field this year in preseason?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, consistent, dependable, tough, good size, good playing strength, smart, can handle multiple roles, offensively and in a kicking game. So British just shows up, doesn't say much, and does his job, which the more people like that we have around here, the better for everybody.

He's earned his opportunity. He's earned his way on to the team. We'll see if he is able to stay on the team, but he's here for a reason. Credit to him. Credit to DB and the work that everybody has put in with him.

Q. As you watch what happened on kickoffs

throughout preseason, how did that impact the roster?

NICK CASERIO: Not too much. I think everybody probably played it pretty close to the vest. I think honestly there was a big outbreak of long returns it seems like this last week up to that point. There were a few returns that popped.

So the rules are the rules. It doesn't sound like anything is going to change drastically. I think the private equity discussion was a bigger discussion in the kickoff return discussion yesterday.

There will probably be a little bit more strategy that goes into how do you want to handle the return element? How do you set up the return? Who do you put back there? I would say what you are going to see, you're going to see different body types, respective to different teams.

Like, as an example, I wouldn't be surprised if Indianapolis uses the defensive tackle from Northwestern on kickoff coverage. He's an athletic guy. He's a big ass guy, 285, 290 pounds. He runs good and is athletic. Could potentially create some problems.

How do you compensate for that? How do you prepare for that? We may not have an equivalent player. You might have to do something else. I'm just using that as one example. Whether or not Indianapolis does that, they can make their own decisions, but I wouldn't be surprised if that actually happens.

So we'll look at it. We spend a lot of time in the spring and in training camp. We've talked in the building about some different things. We'll go out there. We understand what the rules and parameters are, so we'll try to put together a good plan each week and try to take advantage of our opportunities.

Q. There's a lot of banter that went on about John Metchie and Xavier Hutchinson. A lot of it was social media, a lot of radio fluff. What did you see from those two in training camp?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, you could tell me what that says. I don't really pay attention to any of that. I think what you saw with both players was improvement. They were available. They were on the field, and they continued to get better, and they took advantage of their opportunities.

So I think Hutch was probably one of our most consistent, most dependable players from the beginning of training camp until the end. I would say Metchie took advantage of his opportunities there at different points.



I mean, that's all you're looking for. Training camp is about putting the foundation in place. Kind of the earlier question, what are we trying to accomplish? Put the foundation in place, look for individual improvement, look for a collective improvement. I would say those two players are good examples of that.

Now, the hard work starts. I mean, there's a lot that went into it to get to this point. Now the hard work starts, and we'll see what are our options game day, what's the role, how can we use them? It's not just about offense and defense. It's about the kicking game as well.

So that goes into a lot of discussions that we have not only daily and weekly, that DeMeco has with Frank and Bobby and Matt on the defensive side of the ball.

Those two players are great kids. They work really hard. They care a lot about football, and they've went out there and improved. We'll see where that goes from here.

Q. With a player like Noah Brown, did availability just finally catch up to him?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah. I mean, Noah is a good football player. Noah is going to be on a team. There's no question about it. He helped us win honestly probably two games last year by himself. I mean, good football player.

We understood going into this as we constructed the team that weren't going to be able to keep everybody, right? So got to make some hard decisions. I would say that was a difficult decision.

So we kept the players that we felt right now that could help us the most. I mean, I would say Noah, I mean, certainly part of that discussion. In the end we just made the decision to move on, but have a lot of respect for Noah. He is probably one of the toughest players that we had on this football team. He took advantage of the opportunities last year.

Again, he won us two football games literally by himself, the Cincinnati game and Tampa Bay game. He had 1,000 receiving in two games, whatever it was. Good football player. He's going to a team fairly soon and probably going to help a team win.

Those are the players that you wish them well. Can't keep everybody. But certainly wish him well. I have a lot of respect for Noah.

Q. As far as CJ Stroud, how has he handled the attention so far in the offseason?

NICK CASERIO: In the end you just have to keep the focus on football. I think he's been able to do that. Now the offseason is over basically. The regular season is here. Now it's what are you doing on a day-to-day basis to get ready for the next opponent, which in this case Indianapolis, which again, going back to our earlier discussion, this will be one of the best fronts we face all year.

Really good front. I mean, two of the best linebackers arguably in the league. I would say Speed is probably underrated. Nobody talks about Speed. Everybody talks about Zaire. Rightfully so because he had 150 tackles last year. So we have a big challenge in front of us with Indianapolis. I think the focus now is on football.

Whatever happened in the offseason, look, players deal with a lot of stuff during the offseason, and I would say CJ has handled himself very well. He's very mature. He's very professional, but in the end the focus is on football because in the end a lot of that stuff that comes along with being a good player, the opportunities that you get are a result of what you do on the football field.

So in the end the focus always goes back to football, and I think that's where his focus is and where the rest of our team's focus is.

Q. Dameon, (indiscernible) a ton of production in the preseason. What did you see from him, who played for the roster, and how much did special teams play a role?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, we'll look at everything. It's practice. It's games. Some guys get more opportunities in games than others. Some guys get opportunities in practice. I would say the joint practices, teams use that sometimes as almost another, I would say, scrimmage or game, if you will.

Dameon has been available. He's been out there. He's been productive with his opportunities in practice. I mean, limited opportunities in the game, but we're glad he's on the team, so we'll see what his role is moving forward.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter what I think or what DeMeco thinks. It's what the player does with the opportunities, and then the players are going to determine how big of a role they do or do not have on a week-to-week basis.

Q. You say before training camp starts that it was going to be hard to make this team. When you look at players like Kamari Lassiter and Calen Bullock, what did you see?

NICK CASERIO: Two young football players that we think can help us win. So I think they've been very consistent going back to the spring. I mean, I would say I know a lot of people might be surprised about Kamari Lassiter. The least surprised people are the people in our building, starting with myself and DeMeco.

This guy is a good football player. Go back and watch any film you want to watch at Georgia. He played against the best people, very consistent. Same things that we've seen. We're glad he's here.

I would say CB has done a good job. CB has got play-making ability. He can take the ball away. Even the play he made against, was it, Pittsburgh or whatever it was, middle of the field. It wasn't an interception, but not too many players can get to that ball.

There are two good young players. They're two really good kids that care a lot about football. So we'll see. Hopefully they can help us win some games. If they can't, then we'll find somebody else.

Q. When it comes to making cuts versus availability, you know they might have some guaranteed money or just they're not available. What's that balance looking at the roster and the contract construction versus production on the field?

NICK CASERIO: I would say the contract is probably the least of our concerns. The contract is the contract. We're not making a decision based on somebody's contract.

We're making the decision based on the information that we have, what we see on the field, what we think is best for the team. The contracts, I would say the amount of time we spend on that, that's more of a March discussion. What goes on in training camp I would say it's de minimis.

Q. With Cam Akers, remarkable comeback. He's torn his Achilles twice before. He comes in here, doesn't look like that's ever happened before. What did you see from him in terms of resiliency and how he plays the game?

NICK CASERIO: Yes, it says a lot about Cam. The player we brought in, I don't know if it was right before training camp or during training camp, and he went out there and took advantage of his opportunities.

So obviously it says that he's put in a lot of work to get to this point. I would say it gives you an appreciation for the level of athlete that you are dealing with. I mean, the normal human being, I mean, to come back from something like that, that list is pretty short.

I would say Cam has done a good job. He's been out there. He's been available. He has taken advantage of his opportunities. We'll see what that looks like here moving forward.

Q. Is there any difference between year one and year two of DeMeco going through the roster cuts?

NICK CASERIO: The great thing about him, he's the same guy every day. Pick a day of the week, pick a year. Again, I've said this multiple times. You can't say enough about him, our relationship, the ability to communicate with each other on a day-to-day basis.

I'm sure he gets sick of me because we communicate a lot, but it's all through the vein of we just want to make sure we're making the right decision for the Houston Texans. Not what's best for the player, what's best for me, what's best for DeMeco. In the end it's what's best for the collective whole. That's how we approach it.

We literally talk every day. We talked this morning. Hey, what are your thoughts? Anybody on the wire that piques your interest? Great. Well, here's this group of players that we're looking at. Hey, take a look at it. What do you think?

It's very communicative. It's very fluid. There's a lot of information that goes back and forth, and that's how it should be. My job is to support him as much as possible, and we're just trying to put the best team together for the entire group and for the whole.

But, I mean, I love the guy. I love working with him. Love everything he's about. Again, it's not like year one to year two this big change. Honestly, he's probably been the same guy since he was here when he was drafted by the Texans however many years ago.

That's what you love about him. I think that's what players appreciate about I would say specifically him or any coach. They're just looking for some level of consistency on a day-to-day basis, and he has that in spades.

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