

Houston Texans Media Conference

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GM Nick Caserio

Press Conference



NICK CASERIO: Afternoon. Appreciate everyone being here. Excited about the opportunity next week. Been a fun offseason. City of Houston, just congratulations to University of Houston and all their success. A lot of fun to follow them and best of luck to the rockets.

They've done a phenomenal job. It'll be fun to watch some playoff basketball here over the next few weeks hopefully into the summer potentially.

Overall, team is in a pretty good spot. Number of players here that have been in the offseason working. Offseason program doesn't start until Monday, but we have had great attendance, a lot of players in the building, some players at some different stages. Some of the new players we acquired have been around as well.

So certainly making progress in that area. Official kickoff will be Monday, so expect that to be very well attended. First couple weeks will be focused on weight room, and once we transition to phase two or three, whatever that entails, we'll see. The rules are always changing.

But, you know, great attitude, great spirit, a lot of energy in the building, so definitely good to see.

As far as next week is concerned, good opportunity for us here. We have four picks in the top 90 or whatever it is right now. Staff has done a phenomenal job like they do every year. Can't say enough about the work and the effort and attitude of that group.

You know, Lipp, Blanco, Zeke Curtis, John Richter, Brad Matthews, Bailey, DJ Debrick. There is a number of folks just that kind of manage a lot of different things. We rely on a lot of different people. Certainly not a one-man operation; not a one-man band.

They have done an incredible job. The big thing is just aggregating a lot of information and distilling it down to a clear picture of what we have with each player. It's very fluid. There is nothing set, no board that's set, no final list of players or like we're taking X number of players or these

are the three players we're focused on.

I would say just this time of year it's a bunch of noise out there that's a bunch of garbage. We're just going to go through our process and prepare and get ready to go for next week and take advantage of our opportunities to pick whenever those might be.

Right now we are scheduled to pick at 25. If we don't, we don't. However that goes, just try to be your judicious and make good decisions on behalf of the organization, which we feel we've done a decent job over the last few years.

DeMeco and I will continue to talk about different players, the team. We essentially meet every day, go through different groups of players, get his thoughts, thoughts of the coaching staff. It's a collective effort. In the end it's not one person making a decision. It's an organizational decision. Just trying to identify the right people with the right traits and characteristics that come into this building and make a commitment to our football team.

This program is about mental and physical toughness and competitiveness and about putting the team first. The rest of -- it's not about talent. Talent is a part of it, but it's really not about talent. The focus is on putting together the best team possible. Got a long way to go before we play our first game.

So just get the players in the building. Players that we acquire next week will be the furthest behind, so the only expectation is they just try to have a good day, work hard, just give themselves an opportunity to compete with the rest of the team. That's kind of how we approach it.

But definitely excited about the opportunity here next week. We'll be ready to go when we have the chance to pick.

Go ahead and take some questions and get it rolling.

Q. Nick, how comfortable are you guys right now at No. 25, and where do you see in this particular draft there is a dropoff in talent maybe per se?

NICK CASERIO: Just in terms of what do you mean by



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being comfortable at 25?

Q. Like do you feel like there is uncertainty given you're that far back, or do you feel like you have a big group of guys that you all are still good at No. 25?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, no, we're always prepared to pick. If we pick at 25 we're going to get a good football player. That's what we're focused on. Honestly, like we feel good about this draft. There is players littered throughout the draft, so we are pretty well positioned. Right now we don't have a fourth round pick. We got four in the top 40 -- excuse me, four in the top 89. Don't have a fourth, got a fifth, don't have a sixth, have two sevens.

We'll have an opportunity we think throughout the draft to add players that we think are going to create some competition on this football team. I would say whoever we bring in being it's going to be hard to make this football team. Just trying to get the right players. We feel good about the players.

Our board is probably smaller than some other boards and that's okay. There will be players to pick on Thursday and players to pick on Friday. Honestly, there will be players for us to pick on Saturday that we feel good about.

Yeah, going to get a good player if we pick at 25. If we don't pick at 25, then wherever we pick next, we think we're going to get a pretty good player.

Q. When you look at what you did in free agency, do you feel like it put you in a position where you don't have to (indiscernible) be flexible as far as positions?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, we've never drafted for need around here. Never going to. We're going to pick the best player we feel fits our program regardless of the position. I would say other than quarterback pretty much any position is on the table, like it always is.

Try to stay true to the board. That's the reason we created the players. We put the players on the board, we grade them accordingly to what we think the role is going to be, then we take them off the board as we see fit.

That's not going to change.

Q. You guys made a lot of (indiscernible) What do you think about some of the talent in the draft at the receiver position?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, look, we think we have a good football team right now. The goal is to try to continue to add good football players. There a number of players at

that position that look like they're going to have an opportunity to help their team, so there is always a lot of factors involved in that system.

What is their role, how are you going to use them, and it's so hard to tell when you haven't been on the field yet. You just try to evaluate the player, see some of things you like on tape, things you don't like. Can you improve those areas maybe they're deficient. How do they fit with the rest of the group, what are we going to ask them to do.

I think that's the one benefit of -- whether it's the visit here, interview at the combine, you get more of an intimate understanding of what they were asked to do from an assignment and technique standpoint.

You would hope they have an understanding of their assignment and system, and then we try to teach them some things relative to our system. How much they retain, they understand, where are they behind, where with is the gap we have to make up. I would say that position in particular in the draft, I mean, certainly looks like there are some players that are going to be able to help teams, whomever drafts them.

Q. Hey, Nick, I haven't talked to you since the offseason. The offensive line, what was the thought process with the changes you guys made? A lot of people in the building. If you could talk about the approach to the offensive line and is that someplace you guys may look for...

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I mean, honestly, yeah, it's the same every year. Every year is different. We understand there will be turnover on the team. There are certain players who's contracts will expire; some we'll keep; others are under contract and might be here and might not be here.

We didn't go into the offseason and say, okay, here are the things we're going to do. Some of this you have to be adaptable and flexible and take the information in and make the decisions you feel are best for the football team, which is what we did.

So there is never a, well, this is what we're going to do, what we think is going to happen. Some of that responded to the information around you and if we didn't make any changes, if we had to go into the season with the group that we had, then we would have done that.

But that wasn't the case. Each case I would say was a little bit different. Each situation was a little bit different. But, yeah, I wouldn't say there was anything specifically we said there is what we're going to do and need to do. And

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then even moving forward, we feel good about the players in the building. Are we going to add some players we think can potentially help our football team? That's always the goal.

Understanding the draft is one opportunity. It's probably the biggest volume opportunity, which is why there is a heightened awareness and emphasis on it. We don't put more emphasis on the draft than any other phase of the team building process. No different than free agency, than it is in training camp process, building the practice squad. We try to approach it the same way.

We lost some players; moved on from some players at a lot of different positions. We've added some players at other players, including the offensive line. Once the players are here, once we have an opportunity get on the field, we'll see how it all fits together.

Q. How much would you say ya'll's draft process has changed over the years based off the information you learned and also the turnovers in the building, and then how much does the offense change how you guys evaluate offensive players?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, two great questions. I would say the core of the process, and not just specific to the draft, but you try to put some things in place that you think are going to be consistent over time regardless of who is in the building, regardless of the system.

Then if you have to make some adjustments or tweaks on the margins or periphery to account for some of those changes. That's how we approach it.

I would say we've probably tweaked the in-house draft process a little bit, the approach to that. There are some things we've carried over from what we did in New England and some things that we have done a little bit differently.

Really the whole point of all of the exercises is to arrive at an end point to create as accurate a picture of the player so you can make the best decision on behalf of the organization at that time.

Everybody goes about it a little bit differently. How we do our visits on campus is different than other teams do it, but we feel like we get a lot of value out of that and we always, at the end if it, go back and say, hey, what are some things that everybody thought were productive and areas we feel we can improve. There is always going to be a little bit of give and take.

As far as systematically are doing things differently in the draft process because it has to fit whether it's offensively or

defensively. Probably have to be careful about that. So you have to start with a player, what they do well, what are their strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies, what can we improve, how does that player fit within our system, or what do we think that's going to look like.

Understanding this year offensively, all right, look, football is football, offense is offense. We're not all of a sudden going to put in an offense this wasn't around, that's brand new that nobody has ever seen before. Maybe there are certain positions, hey, you know what, a little bit less of this and a little bit more of that; who are the players that have some of those qualities.

That's where there is always constant flow of information, communication back and forth, which in the end is helpful for everybody involved. Whatever the offense is going to look like, it is the same thing on defense, what do the players do well. Then we're going to put them in positions, and you can talk to DeMeco about this, or he's probably talked about it, but we've changed over the last couple years some of the things we have done defensively, schematically.

Maybe some changes in the margins to accentuate what the players do well, and there will probably be some things that we do this year that are a little bit different that we haven't done previous years.

So three years same coach, same system; offense is going to be a little bit different, by and large, that's not like some wholesale evaluation change relative to how we evaluate players to fit what we think we're going to look like offensively.

Q. Going back to the offensive line and the process, you had the most invested or among the top in the league most invested in the offensive line. Really kind of hasn't translated on the field. Given that, outside of getting rid of players and coaches, does that process maybe require a little bit more tweaking than other processes given the results based on the investment?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, we always look at everything. You just try to, in the end, make the decisions that are in the best interest of the team. It's case by case. Each year will be a little bit different. Contracts are contracts. I mean, it's just part of the process.

So we look at everything. If there is something we feel we can improve we'll look at that. If not, we keep moving forward. I don't think there is anything wholesale we feel like we have to do that much differently.

Q. How much does the pro day change for you all than



it does from when you're at the combine evaluating these players? And how important was it to lock up players like Stingley and Pitre?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I would say the whole pro day/combine process, it's a little bit different. I would say the combine, big thing is 300 or so players there and the drills are the drills. Sometimes in a pro day they might be able to do something a little bit different from a drill or coach can maybe have a little bit more involvement.

You can ask them, hey, try this technique. If you have a group of players on the defensive line you might have ten defensive line coaches there. You're not going to do ten different drills, but maybe certainly things you're looking for to see how they respond.

Combine is bit more controlled and fixed.

But, look, the combine is the combine. The biggest thing is getting the datapoint. Okay, here is the information, weight, speed, jump, so you can put it into the system.

If they don't it at the combine, they got to do it at the pro day and you can see it, say, the pro day workout.

Everybody uses them a little bit differently. I would say from our perspective, it's more kind of -- some of it's geographic. We had an opportunity to get down to Austin. You can see groupings of players. You're not going just for one player. In Texas' case they got 500 kids that are going to get drafted. It's good to see them all in one spot.

I would say every situation will be a little bit different. At the pro day you might be able to focus on something a little bit more specific relative to a drill. Maybe, well, see what it looks like on tape. Then you see it live and, okay, maybe it pops one way or the other. You know what? Okay, that's the benefit.

It doesn't necessarily all of a sudden drastically change your evaluation. It's really another datapoint. When you think about how much touchpoints we have, you're talking about dozens from beginning to end with the pro day, combine, workout, being a part of that.

So second part of your question relative to the players we were able to extend, look, we didn't do anything. The players earned those opportunities with their play and performance. You know, these are players that we think can help our football team moving forward.

They certainly embody the quality we want the Houston Texans to look like. They are good football players, and our goal is to keep as many good football players around

here as for as long a period of time as we can.

It's a credit to the players and the coaches for putting themselves in that position. You know, I'll kind of handle the behind the scenes and the finances or the finance.

But those players, I mean, they've all been here. Pitre has been here, Stingley has been here. Talk about going back to last year with Nico. He's in here. I mean, so that says a lot about their commitment to winning and football, prioritizing their job and its importance.

I think I got asked about this on 610 about once you give a player a contract, how are they going to respond. Are you worried about that relative to their approach and attitude. I would say not necessarily. If you got the right people, then in the end it's about them taking care of their personal situation and putting them in a position where they can take care of themselves and maybe future generations.

That's the goal. We want to be put in a position to have an opportunity to potentially make an impact and help people. You know, it's kind of a different way, but this is a great way for them to be able to do that. In the end we want to go out there and play good football and that's what they're focused on.

Q. What's different in the evaluation process of a prospect that maybe hasn't played a position that you project him for, guys that maybe could change positions from what they did in college? How is that different?

NICK CASERIO: That's tricky, because when you see a player actually do something you have a barometer of understanding. If you're projecting it, there is a little bit of trial and error and you're not really sure how the player is going to respond, whether it's physically or mentally be able to handle this type of role.

There is a little bit of risk involved. There is risk in any player. I think when you see a player, whether it's play multiple positions, then it's a lot easier to say, you know what, we think he might be able to handle a multi-position role, whether it's offensively or defensively.

The offensive line, okay, they just play tackle; can they move inside. They just played guard; can they put their hand on the ball and play center. If they haven't done it you have to make an extrapolation based on the information you have.

Same thing on defense. Have a corner. Never played inside the formation; we do we think he can play inside the formation. Well, yeah. Here is the reason why.

One thing about college football, you've seen multi-position players. Safeties playing nickel, corners playing nickel. All right, that maybe can enhance a player's overall value and try to project that into your system.

What are you going to ask the player to do it ultimately it comes back to and can they handle it. If they can handle it, great. If they can't, all right, just put them in a position where they can handle one specific thing.

I would say going back to some of my experience in New England, Edelman never played receiver. You're taking an absolute flyer on a player's traits and characteristics. He has never caught a punt, never caught a pass.

Okay, well, we think the guy is good with the ball in his hands. We're going to take a flyer on him and see how it goes. For four years didn't go very well. It was a little bit up and down, he was injured.

But the one thing you saw, you saw in the first preseason game, we put him back there for punt return, 90 yards punt return. All right, guy's never returned a punt before, but guy gets a ball in his hands.

You don't really know until you actually see it. There are some risk involved and you're going to project it, but you don't want to put the player in a position where you're not really giving the best opportunity. We can say on paper this guy can play multiple positions. Can he? All right. We think he can. Here is the reason why.

We're going to focus on one position, and once he has an opportunity to play that position maybe we can give him some more. You're trying to build your overall depth and value of the team. Here internally, Titus is a real good example. I wasn't here when he got drafted, but he was a quarterback but he really wasn't; then he played tackle.

So he was a tackle and then nobody really knew if he could play inside until like he was actually put in inside, and he's gone in there and done a pretty good job when he's been asked to play.

Again, it's what's the position, what are you asking him to do. Okay, you want to be fair to the player, but it's always case by case. Not everybody can do everything. Sometimes they're better off focusing on one position and trying to get really good at that position, because that's their best opportunity to help the team.

Q. Nick, kind of staying on that, when it comes to scouting smaller school players, talent levels, is it more challenging to project their ceiling when you only

get a small sample size?

NICK CASERIO: I think the nature of the draft in the end, there is a projection element regardless of how much a player has or has not played. When you're playing at lower level, quote/unquote, there is going to be an adjustment period that takes place.

Is there an opportunity to evaluate that in the Senior Bowl or East West. I would say those two games did a pretty good job bringing in some lower level, smaller school players. It's a huge jump. No question about it. How are they going to handle it.

Going back to Dugger, another example in New England, small school kid, playing against the 20 of us in this room. Basically nobody. And then at the Senior Bowl, and I'm including myself in that equation, went to the Senior Bowl and did okay.

Is there some evidence along the way. Again, all right, here is the player; here is what we think he does well. You might have to not downgrade it based on level of competition, but there is a little bit of a difference what the guy does against LSU versus against Western Tennessee State or somebody like that if that's who they're playing every week.

You're not going to eliminate a player, but give him an opportunity, but not every player can make that jump. I mean, it's case by case like a lot of this is. There is a projection element involved, no question about it.

Q. As you normally do when you open up these press conferences, you mentioned some of the guys in your group. You guys have been together last couple years doing this. Last three drafts drafted six offensive lineman, three in the first two rounds. Do you think internally there needs to be a reevaluation of how you evaluate that specific position?

NICK CASERIO: I mean, we look at everything on a basis. Again, case by case. A lot of faith and confidence in I would say the entire building starting with DeMeco in the coaching staff. Have a lot of confidence in that group.

Again, we will look at everything and try to make decisions that we think make sense for the organization. It's not always going to work. I've said this before. I don't know how many times I've said it. The draft is 50/50. That's what it is.

Some will work and some won't. That's just the way it goes. We're no different than any other team. If there is something we can improve and tweak and adjust, we'll look

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at it.

It's never one particular thing and factor. We are always open minded and always trying to find ways to make things better.

Q. You spoke about how the offensive line, case by case basis. Given the fact you had so many changes, do you feel like you have to leave this draft by at least touching on the offensive line at all?

NICK CASERIO: We feel like we have to add good football players to our football team. That's what we're focused on. Whatever those positions entail, that's what you that's going to work. That's how we going to approach it and handle it. See how it goes next week.

Q. When it comes to this class (indiscernible) your assessment of the group, and is running back something that basically you look at and look at some player's contracts, always want to look ahead?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah. I mean, similar to the receiver question. There is a good group of backs, so it goes back to the same thing. We'll stack the board and look at our options and supply and demand. What are you passing up in lieu of something else.

That's a pretty good room. Feel like we got pretty good cohort of players in that group. Mixon, I think went to the Pro Bowl last year, so good football player. DP was one of the top kickoff returners, and when he's played offensively he's done a pretty good job with his opportunities.

Dare has -- his role is specific to the kicking game. So if there is an opportunity for us to add a player we think can help our team, we'll look at it. If we don't, we'll go with whatever group -- again, everybody is focused on the draft, but there are other opportunities to add players to your team, which we've done that. I would say let's go back to 2023. Four starters on the offensive line in the first four weeks weren't here until August. We were forced to do that because of injuries and some other things that took place.

Again, there is not one way to add players to the team. We're always going to look at multiple avenues and try to take advantage of the opportunities and make good decisions. We've hopefully shown the ability to do on a yearly basis.

Q. ... about different positions, you guys had really good success drafting middle rounds, getting receivers, some defensive skill players. Is there something about your group or the way you guys

approach the draft -- and I realize you said it's 50/50 -- that makes you keen or able to spot guys in those positions that will make it in the league or are you just lucky?

NICK CASERIO: There is no magic formula. I would say we just try to stay committed and disciplined to our approach and just continue to have fluid conversations and try to the players as intimately as possible top to bottom.

We spend as much time kind of on the middle to the bottom to even the free agent group as we do at the top of the draft.

So he have -- there is 250 whatever opportunities to add players to your team in a draft, however many slots. There will be players that come from all over the place. There is going to have guys in the first round that end up being really good players. There will be guys in the first round that end up not being good players. Gonna have guys in the fifth round being good players, seventh round -- look, some of this is circumstance. Some of it is the situation.

If you just try to know the player, understand their skillset, understand what motivates them, understand what makes them tick, understand what works in this building, and just put them in the right spot from a value standpoint and just stay true to your board, that's what we try to do.

Going back to an earlier question, I would say we have had a lot of continuity, which is definitely a strength. So there has been some things that I have been able to take off my plate because a lot of faith and confidence in other folks in that group.

So to be able to do that when you work with someone on a regular basis makes it, I would say, the process a lot smoother and easier, which goes back to trust and faith and confidence.

So, look, every decision we make is not going to be perfect. I've made more mistakes than anybody. I am the first to admit it. I try to make more good decisions than bad, and just try to do the best we can. In the end, try to make good decisions for the organization, which is the most important thing.

Q. I know you all have experience with guys with similar skillsets that play the same position having success at the same time. (Regarding Amendola and Edelman) You brought in Kirk. Is it safe to say that someone who primarily worked in the slot in college, you're not going to shy away from him because he did the majority of his work in the slot, like Christian?



NICK CASERIO: Yeah, good question. I would say honestly, when you look at kind of formation ing and some of the things you're able to do from an alignment standpoint, I mean, guys essentially lineup all over the place. If they're quote/unquote inside the formation players, I mean, everybody is an inside the formation player when you reduce the split, when you have tight receivers, tight formation.

All right, line up players outside the formation, I would say going back to Kirk at A&M, he played inside the formation, but when you look at his career, he's pretty much played all over the formation.

Go back to Arizona. This guy played all over the place. You need players that maybe have some degree of flexibility, so if a guy can play inside, outside the formation, all right, not everybody can do that; some can.

You can do some things formationally to help the players. There are some players better served on the perimeter. If he's an inside-only player, okay, well, then he's an inside-only player. Amendola I would say was an inside-only player. I would say Edelman wasn't. He was able to be a multiple-purpose player. Plenty of snaps on the perimeter.

Goes back to the same thing: What does the player do well, how do you deploy them, what can you do formationally to give them, what can you do to give them free access, help them against the matchup one on one, whatever it is.

We look at everything. Again, three, four receivers that are going to be able to do multiple things. Unless they do something really, really well you want to put them over there and say leave him on his own and we can handle the rest of the formation with these other guys over here.

I mean, Gronkowski was a quote/unquote tight end. I mean, there is plenty of times he was singled on the perimeter in formation. I mean, Rob is going into the Hall of Fame. One of the best tight ends ever.

So a lot of it is you can manipulate the defense however you need to based on the personnel that you have.

Q. Real quick one. Your philosophy on drafting a guy that maybe has a really high ceiling but a low floor or do you try to steer towards higher floors or just generally how do you...

NICK CASERIO: I mean, look, even if you think that -- you're not really sure. Like you might, oh, this guy has a high ceiling. What does that even mean. This guy has a

low -- all right, then it maybe goes the other way.

Look at the player, understand the player, understand his makeup, look at his skills. Where is the bogey that -- okay, they have some room in these areas. They all got to get stronger. It's not, well, this guy needs to put on strength. They all do. Get in the offseason program and that's how they get stronger.

You got to be careful. The best thing that you can do is play football, and the more we can evaluate that player playing football, I mean, we haven't talked about this, but it's like, well, you got a few more players a little bit older, 24, 25 years old. Honestly actually helps them because they have more experience, played more football.

Okay, they reached their quote/unquote ceiling, whatever that is. I don't know. They're is still room for improvement. I've seen plenty of examples of players in the league six, seven years who still improved seven eight years in.

There is always opportunities. I think you have to be careful just about, well, you know, that notion because it may not really come to fruition the way that you think it's going to.

Q. What kind of update can you give us on Tank?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I mean, making progress. Honestly those guys are day to day. Try not to put a timetable on it. None of us are doctors. I'm certainly not smart enough to be a doctor. So when they're ready, they're ready. You know, once they give us the information, then we'll adjust accordingly.

He's had a good attitude. He's been in here, seen him every day. He's in good spirits, working hard. Take it one day at time and when he's ready, he's ready.

Q. You talked about earlier the guys that are going to be coming in through the draft being the farthest behind. DeMeco talked a little bout about this offseason bringing guys in to be able to compete and make the team better through competition. How do you go about identifying guys in the draft that can catch up quickly and be able to compete?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, really, we'll be able to tell that once they're actually here. So whenever rookie mini camp is, that second week in May, all right, get some baseline measurements. All right, are they behind. It's more so from a training perspective. You have guys, six- to 8-week period have been traveling, been on planes. They haven't been able to establish their routines.



Once they get start the goal is to get them ready for training camp. So do the best they can, give them as many resources and opportunities so when they go out in training camp they have an opportunity to compete with the rest of the group.

That's the steps and stages we'll take. When they get here, all right, we have an idea. Be able to assess them, and then just get them in a position. Probably going to be some players, all right, maybe be limited in the spring. Not really ready to train with our group. No problem. Give them time.

We're never going to rush or force them. So get them ready for training camp and give everybody the best opportunity in training camp to go out there and put themselves in the position to earn their role on the team. They earn it with their performance, and so all we can do is put them in the best position to do that.

Q. Nick, you said you made some mistakes in the past. I'm not going to ask you about those mistakes. Just going to ask you about...

NICK CASERIO: You guys talk about them all the time, so...

Q. I'm going to ask what did you learn from those mistakes and how can you use that going into this draft?

NICK CASERIO: I think you just got to be open minded. There will be things that happen. Honestly, just try it take it one day at a time and just try to do constant dialog and communication with the people in the building.

I mean, I've talked about this publically. I've thoroughly enjoyed my time with DeMeco. I love working with him and having conversations. We're just trying to put the organization in the best spot and help each other. I would say I'm pretty curious and always trying to find ways to get better. I am not going to talk about them publically.

Honestly just try to do the best I can every day for this organization, try to put it in the best position possible. You know, hopefully we can just keep making progress. I think we feel like the program is in a really good spot. A lot of work and effort that's gone into this.

The goal is -- every year will be different. What's going to happen in 2025, none of us know. I don't have any answers. A lot of people probably think they do. None of us really know what's going to happen other than go out there and try to have a good day and stack days and establish some level of consistent performance, and then

in the end, it comes down to how well does the team execute on Sundays. We're either going to execute well enough or we're not.

I think they showed a stat at the league meetings. I mean, 70% of the games were one score in the fourth quarter in the league this year. What does that tell you. The margins are so small. So what can you do to give yourself an opportunity to put yourself in a position.

In the end, it's going to come down to probably a possession in the fourth quarter. Who is able to execute. The teams that execute are the ones that will win and advance, and the teams that don't are not.

So that's kind of how we're approaching it. But if there is something we can do with the process, something we can do with something in the program, something we can do in the department areas that helps the team, like ultimately that's my responsibility, and I have a fiduciary responsibility to do that for as many people in the building. That's what we're going to try to do.

Q. (Regarding draft a little bit higher.) Now you guys picking in the back of the first round. How do you go about figuring out how the board... gathering intel across the league?

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I mean, it's a little bit of a crapshoot. You look at, all right, certain cohort of players. More than likely these players are likely not the going to be able and they are probably going to be somewhere else.

No problem. All right, what's that next tier. I would just say you're still evaluating those players, even the ones at the top of the board. Again, I've watched as much film on Travis Hunter as some other players. Look, we're not drafting Travis Hunter. This isn't a news flash.

When you do Colorado it's not like, well, don't worry about Travis Hunter because he's going in the Top 5. You're still going to evaluate him because you never know when that player will become available.

I would say going back to my time in New England with Cooks, I know Cooks was here in Houston, but Brandon was a player I went out and worked out, him and I, in a bubble. He got drafted, wherever he got drafted, New Orleans, and then we trade for him in New England. So that information is valuable.

You try to -- understanding, all right, this group of players in the end probably not a nonfactor, but just not a factor for us. All right, who is the next group. Then there is 4,000 mock drafts out there. I don't know which one is right or



wrong. Somebody can analyze that.

All right. There is a million mock drafts. I would just say some are probably more relevant than others because some are getting the information from the teams. They're not making it up themselves. They're talking to teams saying, hey, so they're getting intel. I would say agents are involved. They're getting intel.

All right, so you try to I would say gather information, but you have to be careful about how much you actually put in the information. And then what can you trust. What can you rely on.

You're just trying to get yourself in the ballpark. Okay, looks like if we're around here, maybe these six or eight guys, we'll have an opportunity to pick. Okay, all right.

Who are we interested. Who do we like. This guy is not a factor. Hey, we can do this, move here. So it's a little bit of cat and mouse.

I would say some of it you're not going to know until Draft Day starts. I would say we talked about this before. Trades are player driven, so you don't know if you're going to trade up for a player until you get to Draft Day.

You have to be careful about too much information, but utilize it and then be able to trust I would say reliable information from the sources that you think are reputable.

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