

# Houston Texans Media Conference

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**Nick Caserio**

Draft Press Conference



NICK CASERIO: All right, how is everybody doing? Yeah, we're in a good spot. Feel really good about where we are.

We went into today I would say honestly we had three different scenarios: trade up, stay at 25 and pick, trade back. I mean, DeMeco and I have been talking about basically for two, three days about some different scenarios, possibilities.

I don't want to say we talked to the whole league, but probably talked to the whole league on every different level. There are some players we identified; some were out of reach. Some -- in the end trades a by-product of teams willing to make decision to move or not.

We felt at 25 that was the best thing for us. Puts us in a pretty good spot. Two twos, three threes, picked up another three next year.

We'll deal with tomorrow. We think we're going to get some pretty good football players tomorrow. We felt like the value to draft was basically in the middle, so try to take advantage of our opportunities here tomorrow.

Put ourselves in a pretty good position next year as well: One, two twos, two threes, two fours.

We've always talked about just creating as much flexibility and optionality as possible, and that's where we are.

Two more days of the draft left. See how the next few days go. Try to make good, smart decisions tomorrow. Trust our process, trust our evaluations, and then once we get through the draft flip the page and go to the next phase.

We are going to get good football players. DeMeco and I feel really good about tomorrow. Kind of see what happens.

**Q. When the offensive linemen started going off the board is that what you expected kind of with the way consensus on grades...**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I don't think there was really a consensus on a lot of grades. Honest to God, if you look at some of the mocks, where some of guys were mocked and where they went wasn't even close.

Again, players come off the board when they come off the board. That's all we can do is, go through our information, to figure out where we think the best spot for us to take that player.

So, again, we made multiple calls I would say picking a lot higher than where we are, so teams aren't interested they're not interested. Nothing we can do about it.

**Q. At what point did it become a reality that you would trade back?**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, probably like way before we probably were picking. So I mean, we were kind of looking, I would say, in the upper teens there a little bit. There were some opportunities. Okay, kind of move, what are the teams going to do? So we were talking about it. It wasn't like we waited until 25 and all of a sudden --like at one point we had I think three or four trades potentially on the board before we got to 25.

Then we got to 25 still had a couple scenarios. Teams were looking at a some situations. We took what we felt was the best offer and the best decision for us was at that time, so made the move.

**Q. Were you saying somewhere in the teens was like when you realized that trading back would be a...**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, not like -- I would say middle teens, middle to upper teens started to look a little bit. All right, what are we looking at? What are our options? All right, where are some of these teams, and try to get an idea. Again, not wait until 25.

I would say some teams had a pretty good idea in that 18, 19, 20. They were potentially looking to move out. So then it's, all right, who you moving out for, what are you doing, what do you have to give up?



Those are all the things. I know we didn't pick, but we probably were more active and had as many discussions as any draft I've been a part of. The thing about -- and we've talked about this -- everything is fluid. You've got to be flexible and adaptable and be ready to move and take the information.

You have a good pretty good sense or feel for what you think is going on in the rest of league. A lot of guys that were picked and where they were picked didn't surprise us. May have surprised other people because they weren't thought of to go that high.

But I mean, DeMeco and I talked before the draft. We said, we talked to even some agents. This guy is going to go way higher than people think he's going to go and they agreed and we were right.

Doesn't mean we are right on everything. Means we had a sense and feel for maybe how we thought this was going to go.

**Q. Nick, looking at the evaluation, having seen it, do you consider the net present value enhanced now going into tomorrow?**

NICK CASERIO: What do you mean by that?

**Q. Means that you probably can pick whatever you value on your board now that you got more dollars to deal with now.**

NICK CASERIO: I would say more flexibility tomorrow than we did today, going into day two. So, you know, we have some optionality. We have the ability to move up or down a little bit.

Still a number of good players that we really like up there. Not going to get everybody, but probably going to be some players that we come out with that we feel good about that we feel are going to be an asset to our program.

**Q. You've had a lot of success since you've been here in finding starters outside of the first round. Is that something that's in your head when you're thinking of getting out of the first round to go not that much lower really?**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, we don't view it that way. It's more look at the players, where do you have the player graded? All right, where do we have to position ourselves? It's a collaborative effort. Coaches have input, scouts have input.

This is why we put the work in. They put the work in

starting in August to get tot his point, so we value all the information and try to process and aggregate it and try to create as best a profile we can on the player.

We were not, well, we're drafting a starter, we're drafting a backup. Here is what we think it is. We put a grade on the player. Our values are relative to what we think the role is going to be.

We're not a round-based team. We haven't drafted that way. That's not how we evaluate and grade the players. So we our assign the grade relative to what we think the role is going to be, and there is a numerical value associated with that. Based off that, we try to put them in a spot and pick the players where we feel is appropriate relative to their value.

In the end, when we pick them it's just about getting them in the building. Once they're here doesn't really matter where they were picked. It's about what they do with their opportunity. Henry got picked in the third round and led our team in tackles last year. I'm not sure anybody had that on their bingo card when we drafted Henry. We thought Henry was going to be a good, solid player. How big of a role he had for himself, it's going to ultimately be how good the player is with what he's asked to do.

**Q. Was not agreeing to a trade up more so about not agreeing to the value that you saw with other teams, or was it more so your players coming off the board earlier?**

NICK CASERIO: Trades are just two parties have to agree on what they think the value is. I say for the most part you're in the ballpark. Now, if something is egregious you have to make the determination, okay, is it worth essentially forfeiting three for one, for who for what.

You have to weigh that calculus.

Most teams kind of view the trade value similarly. Some teams, they view it a little bit differently. So like we can't control that, but here is the terms. Here is what we think that position is worth. Here is what we think that spot is worth. If you agree, great. If you don't, no problem. Keep moving.

**Q. You said that you and DeMeco have said that you all don't draft by need; draft best player available. When you started getting close to time to pick, did you not feel there was any best players available that would've fit this team and would've been day one starters?**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, we don't like going to the draft and



saying this guy is going to be a day one starter. What's the role? How do we value it? What's the opportunity cost? Pick the player. Or if we don't pick the player, here is what we get in return.

So we could have very easily picked. When we looked at the time we just felt like that value for the trade made a lot of sense from a big picture, organizational planning, and so that's why we made the decision we did.

**Q. With the offensive lineman going right before you, had you guys already at that point thought, hey, we're going to trade, that you're going to move back?**

NICK CASERIO: I think we were prepared for either way. So, look, we were always prepared to pick at 25. We had some parameters in place already before we got to our pick, like I said a little bit earlier.

So I would say that pick isn't really have any bearing or relevance necessarily. When the pick goes in, the pick goes in, and then you adjust and react accordingly.

**Q. With what you all did today as far as with the trade before the draft, trading back during the draft, is that that big picture and future that a lot of fans or media members don't see that you see from behind the scenes knowing you're building a foundation for the future for this team?**

NICK CASERIO: Yeah, I think it's two separate entities. The trade earlier today was really more about positioning. We were at 166. We don't have a six. We had the two sevens. It was really about positioning. So the player you potentially draft at 166, how different is it going to be at 179?

So we were able to recoup some sixes and sevens; maybe that gives us some flexibility either tomorrow or on Saturday. If we get to Saturday, maybe there is an opportunity for us to identify a player that we feel potentially could have an opportunity in our program.

Xavier Hutchinson was a sixth round pick, JP was a sixth round pick. You never really know. It just gives you more bites at the apple. That one was more about positioning. I would say the trades we did today were more about like creating a little bit more flexibility and optionality and giving us just an opportunity potentially to kind of move around a little bit more.

Like going in, I think we had a two, we had 58, then two thirds; we didn't have a fourth; moved the fifth out. We were able to recoup a couple extra picks.

So you don't really go into the draft and say, this is what is going to happen. You have to take the information as it comes and just be able to adjust and adapt. I think that's one of the things that we've always -- I mean, I've probably said this a thousand times -- just the flexibility, be adaptable, be ready to adjust, take the information in, and then just make the decision you think is best for the organization.

**Q. Nick, you said you all were ready to pick at No. 25. Was the pick you all might have picked still on the board?**

NICK CASERIO: Good question. Actually, one of the players that we were talking about is actually still on the board, yeah. So good question. Whether or not we actually pick the player, we'll see if that actually happens.

**Q. Some of those assets that you built up as far as with the trades and the assets that you got from the trades, could that also be used later on to trade with a team for another player?**

NICK CASERIO: Look, I've said this, you guys have heard me say this. The draft is the draft. It's not the only team building opportunity. We get through the draft, there is a heightened sense of awareness and a lot of hype and everybody loves the draft. I love the draft. I'm not trying to minimize the draft.

Okay, it's just one fixed point. Once you get through the draft it's April. May, June, July, August, September through the season there is opportunities, and part of it is understanding the league, understanding as many players as possible, and if there is an opportunity for us where you can use a third round pick next year or use a two to acquire a player that I feel makes sense -- now, there is a financial component as well.

The contract has to fit and all these things. We look at everything. Like we're never going to eliminate one thing or never going to be so fixated like a lot of people are on one particular aspect of team building.

That's just not how you build a team. Other sports approach it the same way. Like how many first rounds picks has Oklahoma City Thunder have? Like 400? And they got a pretty good team. Nobody thought probably when Sam was moving all those picks.

Look around, there is no one size fits all model. We just try to use our information, make good decision. DeMeco and I talk continuously, regularly. He's sick of probably seeing my face. That's okay. That's why he wants me to put this hat on.



We're both excited about where we are, even though we didn't pick tonight. He and I have as much energy tonight as we did going into the draft, and excited for the opportunity tomorrow.

Get some rest, recalibrate, see what our options are, and be ready to go tomorrow afternoon.

**Q. Are these few days your favorites of your year?**

NICK CASERIO: Favorite? There are a lot of favorite days. I enjoy it. It's just keep moving on to the next thing, whatever it is. So I enjoy every aspect of my job. You know, so that's why hopefully I'll be in this position for a little bit. Unless someone want to get rid of me.

It's out of my hands. So I just try to do the best I can with the opportunities I have each day, make the most of it, and just try to make good decisions on behalf of everybody in the organizations.

**Q. And you even enjoy talking to the media.**

NICK CASERIO: Who said that? (Smiling.)

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