

Tennessee Titans Media Conference

Saturday, April 30, 2022
Nashville, Tennessee, USA

General Manager Jon Robinson

Postgame Press Conference

JON ROBINSON: Good day for us today. Excited about the guys that we were able to add. Haskins there in the fourth quarter, good size, good run style, downhill. Had a lot of good visits with him leading up to this process. Plays in the kicking game, and just a great, great dude.

Chig, spent some time with him at the East-West, extremely fast, athletic. Phillips, the receiver, another guy that I spent quite a bit time with at the East-West Shrine Game. Tough cover. Plays mostly inside receiver and punt returns. Jackson, the DB, local guy. Overton. He was at our local day. Got to visit with him. Outstanding guy. The coaches at Tennessee, you know, when you are asking about their prospects, just continue to rave about Theo and what he meant to their football team. He plays safety. He played some Nickel. Can play some outside corner. Kind of a versatile piece there in the secondary.

Then, lastly, there Campbell out of Ole Miss, transferred from Maryland. A tough, physical inside linebacker. Runs pretty good. Should factor well on special teams. Excited about all these guys and what they can add to the team.

Q. The sheer volume among all these guys, why are these particular players Titans players fitting kind of your identity and what you guys topped establish?

JON ROBINSON: I like the way that they play. They all play with a tough, physical style of play. Chig, he can kind of get type-cast as this pass catching, speed tight end, which I would say that's a strength of his, but there are plenty of games where you can see him kind of put his face into a block and be competitive.

They all work hard. They're all tough. They're tough. Phillips is tough. Campbell is tough. Jackson is tough. All of them play with a tough play style, and they were all good -- really good in the interviews. They came across as team-first guys, guys willing to buy into their role and compete to help the football team.



Q. Offensively it's not like play strength is something new for you guys, but that certainly seems to be a trend with this class as well.

JON ROBINSON: Yeah. I think that as the game wears on, if you can play a tough, physical, downhill style offensively, I think that tends to wear on opponents some, and hopefully you can find enough points there late in the game when we continue to play with the effort and finish that we preach extensively here and hopefully kind of wear some teams down.

Q. In comparison between a guy like Haskins and Foreman in terms of style and maybe a role --

JON ROBINSON: They play running back. Stylistically, Haskins is more of -- he is a downhill, between the tackle, stretch and cut runner. His long speed is good. I don't think he is going to be a 4.2 guy in the open field, but it's usually the first guy doesn't bring him down very easily.

I like stylistically the way he carries a football.

Q. You added a handful of skill guys in the draft, added two in free agency. You also lost your top two receivers from last season. Do you think that right now you're at a better point surrounding Tannehill with weapons than you were at the start of the season?

JON ROBINSON: We'll see how it goes. That's what you set out in the offseason, is you try to bolster the roster in free agency to what degree you can do that with the monetary resources that you have. Then you go into the draft and try to attack that.

We feel really good about where we're at with the football team. We'll continue to try to look and add. We don't play until September. I've said that several times. If there's a player out there that can help us and it makes sense for us financially and fit-wise, then we'll certainly look at it and entertain it.

Q. With three new receivers coming in and Robert and the two that you drafted this weekend, you have got guys that Ryan has got to get used to and guys that have to get used to Ryan, especially with two of those being rookies.



JON ROBINSON: Yeah, I think timing and confidence, just working with guys, knowing where this guy is going to be and how he runs the route. They all may run it a little differently. Some faster players might get to a certain spot a little more quickly, so you have to let the ball go a little more quickly. All of that takes timing and working with the guy and being on the same page.

Q. Six of nine, is that what you wanted do coming in? Is that the way the board fell? Is it a combination of those two?

JON ROBINSON: Probably a little combination of both, Jim. Again, we tried to take the best player that fit our football team when we were on the clock, and there's some guys that get drafted. When you've got gaps in between picks, there are certainly players that we like sometimes that get picked, and conversely, I'm sure there were guys that we picked that other teams liked as well, and they missed out on.

Q. Talent is obviously the most important thing, but you turned seven picks into nine the last couple of days. Were numbers important to you in this draft?

JON ROBINSON: I don't know that we set out that way to take, hey, we were going to take -- we needed X amount of picks, so we needed take this pick and turn it into that. It kind of just manifested itself organically. I thought that to trade out of where we were in the first round, that certainly gave us some picks to move around.

It's always good when you can have extra guys. Especially on a day like today when with the guys that we took, we felt good about coming in and competing and carving out a role on the team.

Q. You look at a Theo Jackson, it looked like his numbers took a big leap last year, and they maybe did some different things with him. What were some of the reasons that he had such a bump, do you think, and --

JON ROBINSON: They played him -- he played in the deep part of the field, and he also played kind of in at nickel kind of closer to the core of the formation. He was certainly assertive on a lot of those run plays. When you are closer to the core, you tend to get a little bit more action if the line can hold up and the ball can bounce out there to you. He wasn't afraid to throw it in there.

The same thing at safety, but a lot of times when you are back in your middle field safety or your half field safety, you may kind of be the last line of defense. Hence, the word safety.

I think maybe closer to the core may have affected that a little bit.

Q. Austin and now Chig, how much do you feel like you kind of revamped, updated, upgraded tight end?

JON ROBINSON: Yeah, I think that I'm excited about looking at watching that position group come together. I think they all kind of have a little different skill set, and they hopefully will play off each other. Skills to give us a couple of different looks that teams will have to try to defend.

Q. Do you have a bullet point kind of on each, how they differentiate?

JON ROBINSON: On Hooper, he is competitive at the point of attack. He is a smart route runner. He is crafty. He has good catch skills. He has good size.

Chig is speed. Stretched the seam vertical, get the ball in his hands. He is competitive at the point. I think he may have been the fastest tight end at the combine or something.

Who is the other one you asked?

Q. Swaim.

JON ROBINSON: Swaim was here last year. Can move him around a little bit. He played at the point of attack, was competitive as a blocker, played some fullback, was productive in the passing game for us. I think that all of them have value on all three downs, and they're all kind of different.

Q. What was Chig as a blocker on the film that you watched on him? Because it seems like the receiving part of his game may be the more polished part.

JON ROBINSON: Yeah, I think that's the one thing, Terry, that -- and as I was watching back through him this past week, there were some games against really good competition where you would expect him to lose some of those one-on-ones. I'm not saying that he drove his guy 15 or 20 yards, but he occupied his guy long enough so that he didn't impact the play, and there were good players that he was kind of fit up on, and he was able to stay engaged with those guys, keep their feet moving, keep his feet moving so that the defender really didn't factor in the play, and I think if you can -- as a tight end, if you can kind of do that, then that's usually a win for the offense.

Q. How much more comfortable did you feel with the process in your final board with the more traditional

scouting process this year?

JON ROBINSON: Much. Yeah, much. When you have done it is a certain way for 18 or so years whether as a scout or when I transitioned into this role and then you go to try to settings up some mock thing in your house and you're lysing everything down when someone plugs in a wire, and then last year it wasn't -- everybody wasn't in the draft room. So I couldn't look around and, hey, is everybody good here? Any opinions on this? There was only so many people in there. It was different the last few years.

So the full process that we were able to go through this year with being at the All-Star games, having the combine, being at the pro days, being able to bring guys in for 30 visits and then having a full draft room to kind of work the board on draft days was much more kind of what certainly I was used to.

Q. You're drafting in a position where you already have someone you know is capable of being a good starter, like Hooper at tight end, Tannehill at quarterback. Does it give you more license to take an upside type of guy, a plus athlete that maybe isn't quite so refined knowing, you'll have a chance to groom them?

JON ROBINSON: Yeah, I think you're always looking -- again, I talked about it last night and Thursday as well. There's competition at the position, but certainly when you have some players because it's a big transition to go from a college game to the pro game. Some guys do it quickly. Some guys it takes a little bit more time. Certainly when you have veterans, and you have a culture and a chemistry from a team standpoint that are going to work with those guys. You know, they know. They can see the -- the veterans can see when these rookies come in here and they start working with them. Like, oh, this guy can do this or that. We tell them all the time, show up on time, earn the respect of your teammates, and that's the one thing that we told all these guys and a lot of these guys told us when we were on the phone with them on the call was, like, I want to come in there and earn the respect of my new teammates.

When you have that mindset, you can kind of build and groom and improve.

Q. What's the number of undrafted guys you'll be able to sign?

JON ROBINSON: 7,000. I don't know, Jim. We'll see how it goes.

Q. Is it a range or room that you have to add guys?

JON ROBINSON: You don't have to get to -- you don't have to get to 90 tonight by midnight. You're constantly looking. We have found guys that were -- I mean, I got an email on a Sunday, and it was like, all right, watch the guy and the guy looks pretty good. He comes in. He is a rookie try-out. He ends up making the team or making the practice -- something. There's always those guys. They don't necessarily have to have a home right now. We'll keep kind of combing through all of that. The guys that they're on our board, but maybe we've got guys ranked higher, and if for some whatever reason they don't have a spot after the draft, take another look at them and see what happens.

Q. How about Phillips as a returner?

JON ROBINSON: Confident. Fields it well. Gets one cut. Gets upfield. He is not trying to circle up on the return game and bounce it outside. He is tough. He is gritty, which is the mindset you kind of have to have at that position to be able to look at a ball coming down, knowing that guys are barreling down on you. Make sure you field it cleanly, quickly transition your eyes down and find the coverage, make one guy miss and then get vertical.

Q. These videos started coming on Twitter of him just knocking guys over on special teams. What do you think of his ability in that department?

JON ROBINSON: We like that. Guys when they run down and knock guys over on special teams, that's a check plus.

Q. What's the biggest difference between college and pro special teams?

JON ROBINSON: That's a good question. I think there's -- I mean, I think the players are probably overall are faster, and you've got guys who have played those positions professionally and really gotten good at their craft, and they know the savviness that it takes to play special teams.

You don't have to always be the fastest guy. It's about instincts. It's about speed, but it's about anticipation. It's about, hey, I see the return is going this way. They're studying tape. They're studying the return game, much like an offense or defense is studying plays. This is this type of return or this is this type of block, and here's how I'm going to attack that. They can recognize that running as fast as they can down the field and still having the mindset that, you know, they're throwing their body into another 220-plus pound guy and trying to impact that play.

Q. Five offensive line starters on the roster right now.



Do you feel confident about that, or is there still a chance, as you say, in the months ahead that there may be another person or two added?

JON ROBINSON: Yeah, we're excited about that group. We're able to add some pieces. Looking forward to the competition level.

We'll certainly take stock of the players that are out there in the post-draft, the players that are out there in the veteran world who kind of -- those guys are kind of waiting until after the draft to see how the draft falls. Then they kind of settle into homes potentially.

We'll look at all that and see if there are guys that could improve and help us. As I said earlier, what are the financial implications of maybe adding one of those guys?

Q. One of the areas where Campbell maybe needs to grow is comfort in space, better in space?

JON ROBINSON: I think he's a cerebral player in space. I think that he's traditionally been more of a downhill between the tackles type of linebacker, which certainly lends itself well to special teams, but I think that his intelligence and his savviness is there as an overall football player. It's just the transition ability and, hey, maybe I don't have to go to this spot athletically. I can kind of be here because I know the route concepts or where around I might fit in the coverage.

Q. Not quite the same build, but does Theo Jackson have a chance maybe to fill some of that role that Dane Cruikshank had the last couple of years in slip packages?

JON ROBINSON: We'll see. The thing we liked about Theo is we do think he has a home in the kicking game, and I like his versatility on defense. I think that he can play a couple of different positions. He was an intelligent guy when we spent time with him. Can play safety. Can play down around the line of scrimmage. You make him play in a bigger nickel package on some match-up things. He ran well. I was excited when he was there. Saves us a plane ticket. He can drive over and get rolling.

Q. How much does that mean, Jon -- not that you sought out to do it, but to be able to get a kid from Nashville and all the emotion that --

JON ROBINSON: I think we started a trend because it seemed like when we took Theo, there was a bunch of local products that went off the board back-to-back-to-back-to-back. I think Atlanta took a tight end that's from Atlanta. A kid from Georgia. I don't know.

Maybe we started a trend there.

Yeah, it's cool when there's a guy that's grown up here, and he has probably been to several of our games as a kid growing up. And to now play for us, I can imagine -- I know what it felt like for me to come here in the role. I wasn't athletic enough to play professionally. I was barely athletic enough to play collegiately, but to be at the hometown team, I think that's pretty cool.

Q. Phillip said he was maybe probably faster than the time he ran. Does he play fast, and what made him so successful scoring touchdowns?

JON ROBINSON: I think it's his determination and his toughness and his grit. You see that with players. I mean, there's some players that run 4.3 or whatever, but when they put the pads on, they slow down for whatever reason or they don't play to maybe that speed. I think he plays to his speed because he is so tough, and he is so gritty and competitive.

Q. How much education on offense did he get with three years of a Chip Kelly system, do you think?

JON ROBINSON: That would be a question for him and maybe Chip. I'm not well-versed in Chip's offense, but I know that he knows how to get open and catch.

He was impressive at the -- certainly impressive on the UCLA tape when you watch him, but when I was at the East-west and I got to sit down with him for 20 minutes and visit with him and talk to him and get to know him as a guy and then watching him at practice, it just looked like he understood leverage of DBs, and I can set this guy up this way, and he is going to take it, and I'm going to go that way to give myself some space.

Q. Jon, with taking Theo Jackson today, Roger McCreary yesterday do you feel that maybe you have more flexibility, more maybe opportunities to move guys around in the secondary both at corner and safety just because of what you have done?

JON ROBINSON: Yeah, I certainly hope so. I hope that those guys will give us some flexibility and some opportunities to use their versatility and put them in positions to maybe give some match-up type coverages for us. That's for the coaches to determine that, but I think from a skill set standpoint, we certainly like Roger and we like Theo, and we think they're going to be good football players and come in here and help us.

Q. How do you feel about edge depth right now?

JON ROBINSON: I think we were able to get Ola back, and we have some guys coming back. Getting Harold back. We'll continue to look at that position, but I think that we certainly -- that position group paid dividends for us kind of towards the end of the season. We were able to kind of get those games going and get pressure on the quarterback, but we like it.

Q. (Indiscernible) a bonus rookie because of how much time he missed last year?

JON ROBINSON: Been working really hard. He has been in here constantly, and he is doing better and excited. I know he is chomping at the bit to get back out there.

Q. What's next couple of weeks like when these guys get here before the mini-camp?

JON ROBINSON: Better be working, Jim.

Q. Communication with them and get them things to help them?

JON ROBINSON: We'll get them things and have conversation with them, but, yeah, it's about -- we tell all of them, after the call and certainly the pro days that I went to or guys that I worked out, it's the most important time.

When you think you're done just because you're done with your pro day, you don't just sit back, relax, and hang out. You've got to start to prepare to go practice. These guys have been training for vertical jumps and short shuttles and three cones for, what, two, three months now. They haven't been doing a ton of, 'hey, let's go play a football game' activities. They've been trying to get their 40 time down. That's a different type of training than it is to go out and play football.

Once the pro day is over and the workout is over, it's time to transition and get ready to play football. They certainly have been playing it a long time. They know what it takes, and that's the thing we stress to them is get ready for football shape.

Q. Any reaction to drafting a Michigan running back that had a lot of success against Ohio State last season?

JON ROBINSON: He did not, John. That didn't -- he did not bristle at it. He did not say, O-H-I-O, and just excited to add him to the team.

Thank you, guys.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

