

Tennessee Titans Media Conference

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Ran Carthon Mike Vrabel

Postgame Press Conference



RAN CARTHON: All right, I guess I'll start it off. We all know why we are here. We just selected Peter Skoronski with the 11th overall pick. Peter checks all the boxes for us and what we're looking for in our offensive line and what we're looking for to bring into our program.

He was a guy that, truth be told, we targeted from the very beginning. Didn't know that if he was going to be there or not so we had other contingency plans, just in case and we got lucky and he was there. So it made the pick really easy for us to pull off at 11. So, Mike? Nothing?

MIKE VRABEL: Well, I would just say I want to thank Ran, his staff, our coaches for putting a lot of work in not, only on Peter but this entire draft. So far an amazing process. Exactly, you know, where we were yesterday in some of the scenarios, our communication. Have absolutely enjoyed it thus far. We're getting a fantastic player, a physical player, a violent player, he's got versatility. And those are things that we covet. And with the durability. I know when he grabs people most of the time they stop moving. So that's really a good thing for an offensive lineman.

Q. That's the thing, it may not be a sexy pick going for offensive linemen. But 49 sacks allowed last year, how important is it to protect the quarterback?

MIKE VRABEL: We've said since the end of the season, during the season, multiple times, numerous times, we have to do a better job protecting our quarterback. We have set out to do that, not only by improvement, but in the off-season and some of the free agent acquisitions, but also tonight. And you have to be able to do that. And this isn't just a pass protector. This is an all-around very, very good football player, very good offensive lineman.

Q. Did you guys talk to Arizona, anybody else, about moving up? Was a quarterback in play?

RAN CARTHON: If you guys remember, when we spoke, I guess it was Monday, and I told you guys about everybody being nosy. That included me. So you have to know all the scenarios above you, below you. So we called everybody. Whether it was teams above us, teams below us, just exploring to see where we were going to be.

It's funny, Mike and I were, we were just talking about it downstairs, how they came off is about how we predicted and where we thought was going to be there for us at 11 to choose from. We did think Peter was going to go a little higher than expected, but we would have loved for him to fall for us and he did.

Q. Do you envision him as a tackle or inside?

MIKE VRABEL: Really just going to play him at offensive line to start and see where we go and see where he feel like he can best help the football team and where he can best help himself. We haven't targeted him anywhere. Really when we set off to talk about this off-season we wanted to identify speed, violence and versatility and he checks those boxes and we'll kind of let that materialize as we work through the off-season, into training camp. That's when the offensive line is going to come together, we talked about that, is in training camp.

Q. Do you think in the end, between Dillon and Skoronski, one's at left tackle, one is at left guard?

MIKE VRABEL: Well we hope that they both are going to be able to contribute. Obviously that's why we made the acquisition we did in the off-season and that's why we made the pick that we made tonight. We have played against teams that have really good lines of scrimmage. I'm glad that Ran feels the same way that we do, is that that line of scrimmage is critical in this league. And you see what some of those guys have to block across from 'em. And Peter and hopefully the rest of these guys as they come in here and develop and gel are going to be able to do that for us.

Q. You mentioned value at different positions. How, like later you could get guys who have similar value. You taking Skoronski at 11, what is it that you feel separates him from the other tackles or guards in the draft?



RAN CARTHON: Well I think the thing about Peter who Mike was saying is his versatility. When he grabs people for the most part they stop, you know, when he gets his hands on guys. So whatever his length is is his length, but he played at a high productive level using that same length to stop people. And again it's another way for us to add not only a good football player but a good person.

He's a consummate pro, even in college, the way he carried himself. That was just -- he just made it a comfortable and easy pick for us to pull off the board.

Q. You mentioned the length. Are you referring to the arm length?

RAN CARTHON: Yeah, because that was the pre-draft motion from everybody, can he play tackle. And it wasn't because he wasn't successful playing tackle in college, it was because of the quote, unquote desired arm length. So we know at the end of the day we got a good football player that is going to be productive wherever he plays.

Q. This was a first for you as a general manager of a team. What was it like when 11 came on the clock and you had to make your pick? What was going through your mind?

RAN CARTHON: Nothing. Communicating with my partner. We talked throughout. We were doing a countdown, hey, we're three out, we're two out, we're one out. Here is this scenario, here's that scenario. It helped having his leadership and his veteran knowledge of how to do it. It made it easy. Like we talked about the other day, us being locked in that room together, going through that board, working through discrepancies that he we may have. Whether it was our scouts, whether it was our coaches or whether it was ourselves, put everything into vision for us. So when that pick came we knew immediately. We didn't have to have much conversation. Just a quick, hey, we're good and we were good and so it made it easy.

Everybody's been asking me how I feel, am I excited and all those things. I've been telling everybody the same thing. I think about, you know, you score your first touchdown and you dance and you celebrate and most coaches will pull you to the side and act and say, Act like you been there before. So I approached today as if I've been there before.

MIKE VRABEL: I told Ran you never forget your first though. So we laughed about that.

And just to echo that, it was easy. There was a comfort to it. Having worked through those scenarios up and down.

And so like he said, it was, it kind of happened. And there we were and I was hoping -- it just, it kind of came to us and it was easy. So that was probably the best part of this entire process is having spent those last couple hours yesterday, just him and I, putting everybody's thoughts together and everybody's vision together for these players.

Q. How has Peter worked through the short arms and overcome that? What's a guy with shorter arms do?

MIKE VRABEL: Great foot work. He's square. He plays square. He's got, he's strong. He's got -- you can watch some of these clips and these are 280-pound guys, 270-pound guys rushing on the edge or blocking down on a three technique. And he gets his hands on you, they, for the most part, they don't go very far.

I think he uses his mind. I mean, he's intelligent. There's a lot of things you can do to make up for not having 35-inch arms, which very few tackles have. So it's angles, it's strength, it's body control, it's playing square and being able to move his feet.

Q. You talked the other day about the value of getting face-to-face time with these prospects. What did you learn about Peter when you got with him in pre-draft and how did that inform the pick?

RAN CARTHON: So we met with Peter at the combine, felt really good about him. Then our O-line coach, Coach Hoss went to the pro day and spent time with him.

Again, the player and the person checked all the boxes for us. So we felt like who he was and what he brings here was easy.

Q. If he ends up playing inside at guard, how good is he at getting to the second level of run blocking like your guards do?

MIKE VRABEL: Good. When any offensive lineman for us is uncovered there's times where they're going to have to play in space. Whether that's at the second level or that's pulling and those what we would call movement blocks. He's very, very proficient. It's not like he hangs his hat on one thing. This isn't just a player that's just a one-trick player. He's a complete offensive lineman coming out of college. There will be a lot of things that he's going to have to learn and that we're going to have to help him learn and continue to develop him and maybe some of the tricks of the trade. But I don't think that there's any concern with Peter's ability to move and block in space or on the edge.

Q. Does he check your box about being a glue player that he can play right away?

RAN CARTHON: Yes, he is that. And hence why he goes at 11.

Q. You mentioned being nosy and checking things out and so forth. With the proximity you guys had to the top of the draft this year and the quarterbacks that were up there, was there much of a temptation in your mind to kind of take --

RAN CARTHON: I mean, again, it goes to what we were talking about earlier this week, trusting the board, and that's exactly what we did. He was a player that, like I said, we covered it and we didn't think would be there. So when he was there and where we had him slotted it was an easy pull, because we trusted not only our communication but we trusted our board.

Q. When you look at the division and particularly two young quarterbacks, are you thinking defensively about stopping those guys? Are you thinking offensively about matching what those guys might be?

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah, I don't think we thought that way. I think we obviously want to improve our football team. We're not setting out to -- obviously we have a goal every year, we want to win the division and host home playoff games and win championships. But I don't think that ever crossed our mind is that, hey, we have to go get somebody to stop whatever rookie quarterback.

We're trying to build a team, a complete team. We have lot of work to do. We're just getting started, but I think it's a great start.

Q. Is there a quarterback that you especially like that went off the board?

MIKE VRABEL: There's a lot of players in this draft I like and there's a lot of players that Ran likes and that we both like. I think we're going to continue to try to find players at all levels, quarterbacks, running backs, receivers, defensive linemen.

So we ended up where we were, we stuck and we knew this was a player that when we said, if we're going to stay there and pick Peter Skoronski is going to be one of those players.

Q. You guys both talked about speed, offensive line speed probably not the first play you think of, does that remain obviously a big deal going into tomorrow now?

MIKE VRABEL: Yeah, but we talked to our players

already, the ones that we have on the roster, about the ability to play fast and the ability to be and get timed fast. So we're going to find a way to get 'em to play faster. And then we're going to target some players that have speed. But at his position, this is a fast player, plays fast, isn't unsure of what he's supposed to do. He goes and hits somebody and blocks the guy and keeps 'em away from the quarterback.

Q. (No microphone.)

MIKE VRABEL: Well, I think Ran caught him at the pizzeria, they probably had some pitchers (laughing.) He congratulated him, obviously. I thanked him for the way that he played. I told him that the reason that he was in this position was for those people around him and that he should be gracious and he should always remember to put the team first and come in here and be ready to get to work.

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