

Tennessee Titans Media Conference

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JC Latham

GM Ran Carthon

Coach Bill Callahan

NFL Draft



RAN CARTHON: We'll make it quick, just welcome everybody. Obviously we're here to celebrate us drafting JC with the seventh overall pick last night. We have his family here in town with us.

It's been great having him around the building, getting him around and having people here to meet him in the lobby, all the different staff members. He's met some of his teammates so far, main one being Will. I think you guys saw the picture circulating last night them FaceTiming. And Will was in here getting some early work, and JC was here, so it was good to have those guys connecting. We're glad to have him.

BRIAN CALLAHAN: Really excited to add JC to our team, to the offensive line. You'll see the type of person he is as you get to speak to him. I spoke to him a little bit.

Fantastic person -- big man on top of it. And really someone we're excited to add to the group to the team. It's the most important part. They're all considered good players when you draft them in these spots. And to add someone of his character and quality of a person is just as important to us as his quality of play.

And you see his energy in the building as we walk around. And it's been really exciting to have him, and I'm really excited to see what's to come.

RAN CARTHON: We are excited to introduce JC Latham.

Q. What have the last 24 hours been like for you?

JC LATHAM: It's been amazing. I got to celebrate and enjoy it with my family. I was born in Mississippi, moved to Milwaukee with my pops, my brother and my step mom. Then I went to IMG.

Everywhere I've been my whole family hasn't been a part of it just because of different dynamics of our life. But being able to celebrate the biggest moment with everybody in my life was really special to me.

Q. You look like you carry 342 pretty easily. But is that a situation where when you get in the league you know that number might have to go up or down some?

JC LATHAM: Yeah, I want to play around like the 345 range. So it won't be nothing too hard to maintain. I got a little bit of extra money now so I can have a better nutrition and diet.

Q. You spent so much time with this organization leading up to the draft. What were some of the highlights for, like, the chemistry you guys seemed to develop right away?

JC LATHAM: Just starting at the combine, a lot of my teammates and agents were saying the teams that were really tense in the interview process are the teams that are serious about you.

I had an interview with this team, I think it was my fourth one. I had 25 in one night when I went to the combine. These guys were the fourth one, and the coach was telling me just be prepared for intense environment. They've got the seventh pick and they're really considering taking an offensive lineman.

And when I got my (indiscernible) visit Coach Callahan was one of the guys I spoke to before lunch. It was supposed to be a 30-minute conversation. Ended up being a two-hour conversation, just picking each other's brain, figuring out the background of where we both came from, watching film, going over techniques, just talking about a whole bunch of things.

So the chemistry was definitely there. Really enjoyed it. It was a really special day for me also, the day of the eclipse. So there was just a lot of things that were aligning that day when I came here.

Q. Is there anybody, a player or two, that you patterned your game after? Any tackles that you look up to that had success in the league?



JC LATHAM: Trent Williams, obviously, he's a standard at offensive line. Every lineman dreams to play up to his caliber of play. He wins in an unorthodox manner. He does it in his way and gets the job done.

I play right tackle. Lane Johnson is a hall of famer at that position. And that's what I want to model my game after, just the level of consistency that he has on the play-in and play-out basis. So those two guys are guys that I try to emulate.

Q. JC, before that long conversation with Bill Callahan, how much about him did you know? And I guess just for you knowing his pedigree, you referred to him last night as a legendary coach, just how excited are you knowing kind of your aspirations to get to work with a guy who has molded some of the better offensive linemen in the history of the league?

JC LATHAM: I'm extremely excited. I knew he was the coach with the Cowboys back with Tyron Smith and he coached the Bills with (indiscernible). And those two guys are great players as well.

Just looking at the tape and seeing, going over all the different techniques he instills just on one single play. His attention to detail is next to none.

And knowing that that's going to be my positional coach. I had Saban coming out of high school. He's a great coach, but he wasn't my positional coach. So I was really just learning the discipline aspects of everything, how to go about being a pro and being great. But to have somebody in my corner in a day in, day out basis, that's any player's dream.

Q. You had to make a switch from D line to left tackle at IMG. You're making that switch back again. How much does being through that process already help you in this process having to do it again?

JC LATHAM: Making that switch from D line to left tackle, left to right, playing guard as well and then back to left, it's hard for sure. But just consistency and discipline on every single day to just be the best version of yourself. And I did IMG and Alabama when, at the time, were the pinnacles of high school and college football.

So it wasn't like I was just doing it at a regular school. I was doing this at the top schools in their realm of what they play in. So I was going against the best competition in an uncomfortable situation. So now that versatility status is with me. I'm comfortable doing whatever I need to do for the success of the team.

Q. Why did you stay in that position after (indiscernible) left. Why did you stay at right section?

JC LATHAM: Saban felt like that was what was best for the team.

Q. What led you to IMG?

JC LATHAM: Saban had a quote that he said, when the student is ready to learn, the teacher will appear. My whole life I've been moving around from different leagues, looking for the hardest league that can challenge me.

I thought I found that at Oak Creek. Ended up wanting to go to Catholic Memorial. I feel like it was better for me. I think they won state the year before I got there. And I think they had, like, 14 total state titles.

The coach became the most winningest coach in all of high school football in the state of Wisconsin. They went on a three-year back-to-back-to-back state run after I left. I knew that was the school I wanted to go to and better myself at.

Coach Bill Young taught me to be where your feet are. He was a great coach. By my sophomore year I was top 10 in the country, No. 3 in my position as defensive end. And that's when IMG came. And eventually IMG led to Alabama. I lived by Saban's motto unknowingly -- when the student is ready to learn, the teacher will appear.

Q. Obviously we saw the pictures down there, what was the combo like? Probably a quick one how unique is it to have two young guys in just such critical positions knowing you're kind of protecting this guy?

JC LATHAM: He was a rookie last year. So he knows everything I'm going to go through. He can kind of guide me through the adversities of being an offensive player what to expect in a new team. So there's that portion of it.

But also just we're kind of both in this together. He only has a year above me. It's not like he's a 10-year, 15-year guy in the league. We're kind of going through all the same things, trying to build the team up and live by the motto of being resilient and relentless. That's what the team goes by.

Q. You've talked about it's not going to be easy. You'll have to deal with adversity. What are some things you've gone through maybe as a player that you learn from, made you work harder to get to where you are now?

JC LATHAM: I mean, honestly, just I didn't really have a

player that I kind of learned adversity from. But I really picked it up a lot just understanding just to never give up from Jalen Milroe, that was a guy who taught me a lot and instilled a lot unknowingly. The adversity that he faced last year, I've never seen a player face that personally in my life.

After the Texas A&M game two years ago he was receiving death threats and a whole bunch of negativity coming his way. And he's the first one in and always showing up with a smile on his face. And being the quarterback of the team that's extremely important. But I know it's extremely hard to try to balance, even your own fans not really liking you.

And he to win them over. But he was benched after week two against Texas when we lost. And I know you've seen the video on him on the sideline celebrating with the second- and third-string quarterbacks and just cheering everybody on.

So the amount of adversity that he faced and he acknowledged it after the Georgia win, when we played them in the SEC Championship game, saying that the world gave up on him but he didn't give up on himself.

That's something that I feel like everybody can take from. It doesn't really matter who believed in you or who doesn't, as long as you never give up on yourself and always believe in yourself.

Q. You talked about where you want to play weight wise. What's the heaviest you played at, heaviest you've been?

JC LATHAM: I was 360 last year. Played great at it. It wasn't a big deal. I was in shape. I was 290, lean muscle mass. It wasn't like I was like a crazy, crazy thing. Just gained 20 pounds of muscle the last offseason.

Q. Brian said you view yourself as a left tackle. How excited are you for that challenge to make that switch back, prove yourself as an NFL left tackle and do that right away?

JC LATHAM: I'm extremely excited. It's a challenge. I love facing challenges. I love a good challenge. And to get back to left tackle, the pinnacle of the O line, and just to be able to compete at the highest level. If you're a true competitor, you love that situation.

Q. (Indiscernible) get Josh Young twice a year. You're going to get Will Anderson twice a year. There's no weeks off in this. How daunting does that look to you?

JC LATHAM: I don't ever want to say you look ahead. But

being at Alabama the one thing our coaches said all the time, when you play teams like Georgia, LSU, Texas, they say you came to Alabama for this purpose.

And that's right, you want to play in those big games. Every game is a big game now. For me to come to Alabama to play in big games, now I'm playing in all big games, that gives me goosebumps.

Q. What were your battles against Will like in practice?

JC LATHAM: That was insane. I loved going against him. I remember we had a night practice and he's great at bull rush, but he did want to expand his pass rush moves.

And I remember we had numerous different periods, 5-on-4, 9-on-9 where it's one O linemen going with one D linemen or two O linemen and two D linemen, one-on-one pass rush, team pass, fast ball, all that stuff. And we had all the periods live.

And the first play he did a bull rush. And, you know, when Will bull rushes he keeps his hands extremely tight to the chest. You can't see his numbers. Head down, he's dang near spearing you when he bull rush.

I remember it caught me off guard because, OK, he's bringing the juice. All right, let me match up, it's Will Anderson. And we had to go three plays in a row. That's how it was set up right there.

The second play, bull rush. The third play, bull rush. And I'm, like, dog, there's no way he's going to bull rush the whole practice. It's just insane.

When I say three hours later all he did the whole day was bull rush. That's Will Anderson. So I just love going against him.

A play that stood out, our coach called him the Terminator. We had a play-action play and Coach told me, you know, if there's somebody in the B gap, help. If there's nobody in the B gap, help the two tight ends backside. And we had a guy, Robbie Ouzts, and I think Cameron Latu at the time. They had to block Will.

And I'm looking and I'm thinking there's no way Will gets through both of them. It's a play-action play. He might get through one but he's not getting through Robbie. Robbie is a big guy, a big tight end. He's not getting through them.

He grabbed Latu and shrugged him, and I'm like, okay, that was pretty quick, maybe he might cause Ouzts a little bit of a problem, so let me just be ready to help out if he needs to.

And the way he just threw Ouzts out of the way, there was no hesitation. He just ran threw two guys like that and he comes to me and just bull rushes me, tries to put me in the quarterback's lap. I'm like, yeah, this guy's crazy. But I loved going against him. I can't wait to go against him again.

Q. You were talking about some offseason work you've been doing, obviously working back on the left side. What's some of the things you've been doing? I know you worked with Pooty (phonetic) too.

JC LATHAM: I worked with Pooty last summer. That was more hand/eye coordination, things like that to get your hand usage up. His drills were really intense. He was telling guys to punch you in the face if your hands weren't ready.

So he would have a guy throw a punch, you had to kind of deflect it rather than kind of avoid it. That's something he was big on. And it helped for sure. But my mentor and coach specifically was George Hegamin, that was one of the guys that I worked on intricately. He played with the Cowboys with Larry Allen and Deion when they were winning Super Bowls over there. Played with the Eagles with Jeremiah Trotter. Played with the Buccaneers as well.

Just taking his knowledge of the game and going over there. We were really just fine tuning little things within my technique. Keeping square. Staying low, not exposing your chest, hand placement, not rising up late within the rep and just being able to, every step, whether it's run game or pass game, being intent with it.

Q. Why did you choose not to do any testing at the combine when you --

JC LATHAM: I had a high ankle sprain I didn't know about it. I thought it was a regular ankle sprain. I'm not one -- I pride myself on being available and availability. And I just remember that last play of the game, even one of my friends -- he's right back there -- he was asking me how I didn't tear my ACL on that last play.

The quarterback just ran directly into my knee. He was trying to make a play, make something out of nothing and he obviously didn't see it. But you see his knee drives right in the back of my knee. My knee was perfectly fine. But my ankle kind of got rolled up on. I'm thinking it's a regular ankle sprain.

We just lost the game. We left to go to Alabama, and I ended up going to Florida to go train three days later, and I remember it was hurting, but I just thought I'll get to work

and let it heal for an extra day. Throughout that whole process, it just never healed.

Whenever I tried to cut, whatever the case may be. So we decided to call it off, just focus on positional stuff because there wasn't a lot of cutting within pass sets. We get to the combine. We do the doctors, and he feels the swelling still there and a little bit tender. He tells me it was a high ankle sprain. I just didn't know about it.

Q. You wear gloves sometimes when you play. You haven't worn them at other times. Is there a rhyme or reason behind when you do, when you don't?

JC LATHAM: The only times I wear gloves was when I was bleeding. They told me, you get caught with blood on your hands, you have to come out. They made me wear gloves whenever my hands got blood on them or scratched up really bad.

I just remember -- I'm really amazed by the human body. One of the things about the human body, when you go swimming, happens to everybody, you get the wrinkles in your hand, it's like when your skin adapts to water. So it allows you to grip wet surfaces when you get those wrinkles.

Being at Alabama, practicing through rain or whatever the case may be, whole bunch of sweat, whatever it is, your hand can kind of grip wet objects. When you wear gloves, it gets pretty slippery. I took the whole equation out, just started playing without gloves.

Q. What about the time at IMG -- you were involved in an interesting game against (indiscernible). What do you remember of the game?

JC LATHAM: I remember one of the guys, he was big. He had a full-grown beard, like even fuller than mine right now. And like I never talked to the other players. I really don't care to talk to them. But I had to ask, how old are you? And he told me he was, like, 20. I was just amazed by it.

I'm, like, there's no way he's 20. I'm 17, you know what I mean? Then the next year, I remember because one of the guys on the team, Tyler Booker, he was still there, he's a year younger than me. I'm a freshman in college. He's a senior at IMG. He's telling me all these guys are, like, it's a whole crazy program, like XYZ. We saw guys swapping helmets back and forth. Ended up being a documentary literally the next week. It was crazy. I didn't know about it. But I played him the year before that situation happened.

Q. (Inaudible) and Peter Skoronski, a rookie here last year, first-round pick, playing alongside him, rebuild

this line?

JC LATHAM: I'm extremely excited and stoked to do it. Just even not even with him, but the whole line, the offense as a whole. Playing O line, that's the most vital position to every single team. Games are won and lost in the trenches.

I'm not trying to say nothing wrong with the D line, but if two guys get pancaked or whatever the case may be on the D line, but one guy gets a sack, it all works out.

O line, if a guy gets beat out of one of the five, the whole play's dead. You need all five to work as one, and so I'm extremely excited to play with him and to play with everybody else on that O line.

Q. You're all smiles in this press conference and others. On the field, it's a lot different; you play with a nasty streak. What is it that makes you convert to that?

JC LATHAM: It's just the flip of the switch mindset. One thing I picked up from Kobe and like Jordan, all those greats, they find something that really triggers them, puts them in that mindset to really run through a guy's face and do it continuously, like Marshawn Lynch said, over and over and over and over and over and over again.

So that's that kind of mindset you gotta have. It's cool to be nice and cordial outside of the field. When you're on the field, it's a whole different mindset. Success of the team first. But when you break it down, you've got to dominate your box, and that's the mindset that I take.

Q. What triggers you?

JC LATHAM: I mean, anything. Things as little as why I'm not playing left when I was at Alabama. Other things that, you know, just match-ups, guys thinking they can match up with me, whatever the case may be.

I got a grill in. I don't play with a grill in. I remember it pissed me off first time I saw a guy play with a grill in against me I thought he's caring more about how he looks than me. I take that with a lot of disrespect, the guy doesn't think I'm an issue to worry about, like I can dress up how I want to dress up because JC's not a problem. Things like that triggers me.

Q. Back to the gloves and blood, how often do you feel like you played literally with blood on your hands?

JC LATHAM: During like training camp. It's a lot of reps. Probably maybe like, when it happens, it happens a lot. So

if I end up cutting myself or whatever the case may be with the helmet or shoulder pads, it will probably happen probably for like the next three days until I let the scar heal. But I'll play with it all the way up until I need to.

Q. Who is your biggest inspiration for playing football to reaching this level and why?

JC LATHAM: One of my brothers over there in the back over there, that's my biggest inspiration, also on top of my two younger sisters and youngest brother. I want to be able to provide a lifestyle for them that they didn't have growing up. I don't want to say it was cliché, but we just weren't having the best financial situation as a lot of families have.

I mean, being blessed with the talent that I have that was God-given and the hard work that I put in, I have a chance to change that, and I want to better their futures and their paths, and that's my main reason on why.

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