

Tennessee Titans Media Conference

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Ran Carthon

Anthony Robinson

NFL Draft Press Conference



RAN CARTHON: I feel really good about the draft class and what these guys are going to be able to come in and do. I think we have some guys that will come in and compete to start, and I think we have some guys that will come in and compete for spots and make us a team with some depth. And know there's still some holes to fill, and we're going to get to it. Left some open roster spots instead of filling it up with just all college free agents. We want to be able to have some flexibility to sign some vets and not have to just cut people. But looking forward to it.

Anthony is up here with me. Been a huge part and huge asset for our personnel department and the structuring and running of the personnel department, so I'm glad he's up here to field all of your questions.

Q. Cedric said he didn't think he'd talked to you guys throughout. Was that the case, and how unusual is it that you'd draft a guy without having much or any conversation with him?

RAN CARTHON: No, part of the process of doing that, when you bring guys in, sometimes you have questions about guys and you want to dig a little bit deeper, and Cedric was about as clean as they come, so we felt comfortable with what we knew about him and our contacts and the people that we knew that had spent time with him, so there really wasn't a need to use that. We'd rather use that visit on someone else that we had more questions about.

Q. Do you see Brownlee as more of a slot guy, or do you see him with the capability to play on the outside?

ANTHONY ROBINSON: Yeah, we see him as a guy that's got versatility to play inside and outside. He's a passionate guy. He's tough. He plays bigger than he measures. He's played inside. He's played outside. We feel like he can do both, brings that versatility.

RAN CARTHON: And he's a dog on teams.

Q. You were down in Mobile for the Senior Bowl. Six of the seven guys were Senior Bowl participants. Is that a coincidence?

ANTHONY ROBINSON: No, I think when you go down to Mobile, that's when you're showcasing what you can do. You take these guys who have been at their university for the last four or five years and now you put them in the environment of the Senior Bowl and you get them new coaches, around different players, different schemes, that's what you want to see. A lot of these guys rise to the occasion. They show that they compete.

To your question on Cedric Gray, he was a guy that we interviewed down at the Senior Bowl, so we were able to get in front of him, and we felt really good about what we got from that interview.

But yeah, it's a good opportunity for them to showcase what they have and for us to go down there and see him.

Q. With James Williams, he said that you guys had spoke to him about linebacker. That was really the first time he got to showcase what he could do there. What did you see from him in Mobile?

ANTHONY ROBINSON: Just a kid that's big. Big kid. He's 6'3". He's 230 pounds. He's got long arms. He's played in the middle of the field. He's played down in the box. Being able to see that on tape and see it live really helps our evaluation.

Frank Bush did a good job of watching him and projecting what he could be for us and also help us on special teams.

Q. Five of seven on defense. Is that just how the board fell? Did you think we need to be heavy on defense or just best players?

RAN CARTHON: That was how the board fell. Last year we went all offense, so let the board dictate what happens and what's available to us. But we kind of figured the front end of the draft would probably be heavy offense and then the back half would be heavy defense, and that's kind of how it went for us.

We were joking before we came up here, there's a lot of things, TD made the correlation to all the guys that were at the Senior Bowl, and looking at the list, what is it, five out of the seven guys we drafted all names start with J, so maybe we have a thing with J names, too. We've got Jerome, Jarvis, Jha'Quan James and Jaylen, so good luck to you all remembering all those J's.

Q. Players all at different positions. Are there characteristics from each guy that are similar do you think of what you're looking for in players that you would say stand out?

RAN CARTHON: Football character. All these guys love football. All these guys are passionate about football. All these guys fit what we want this program to be and what we want this organization to be about.

You can hear the passion in all the guys when you hear these phone calls when we made them, how this moment was big for them, whether their name was called at 7 or at 252. You feel the passion in all of them.

That's one thing that stands out about all these young men.

Q. Ran, are your ears okay from the Jha'Quan Jackson call?

RAN CARTHON: Man, was so much to that call. It was a cool moment. Especially with his relationship with Tyjae, and talking to Tyjae literally right after, got a FaceTime from him, he probably FaceTimed me two more times after that, then sent a text. Then Jha'Quan called Colt and Levine and asking when can he come, how soon can he get here. Him and Tyjae might be driving here now for all I know, but he's excited to be here.

Q. What's it mean to you to have a guy, really both of them, that wanted to be here that bad?

ANTHONY ROBINSON: I think that means a lot because he's got kind of familiarity with the team, with having Tyjae on the team, so he kind of knows what to expect because Tyjae has been in the building, new staff, kind of laid out the parameters of what is expected, so he'll know that coming in.

RAN CARTHON: I think a lot of kids that we visited with, that we met with, if they had their choice would want to be here, just for the environment, and like I said, what this city provides, what this state provides. I think that shows, and I think that's big for all of us here.

Q. What did you guys see in Jha'Quan that really set him apart from some of the guys taken around him and

how much is his ability in punt return potentially going to play a factor this fall?

RAN CARTHON: I think he's a guy that he's a dual returner. I think he can kick return, I think he can punt return, and he has an element that he can bring to the offense, so he was a complete guy for us, and it just made sense, especially with this new kickoff rule that we're all trying to figure out. It's essentially the first play of offense the way it's going to be run, so you need a guy that has run-the-daylights skill set that can make something out of nothing in short space.

Q. How does he do with physicality against the press?

RAN CARTHON: Most of these young guys still have a ways to go because they don't press much in college, especially when you're fast, people play off you because they're scared of the speed. That's a part of his game that he'll continue to work on, and with Coach Tyke Tolbert who specializes in developing these young receivers, I have no doubt in my mind that he'll learn how to do that.

Q. Is there one spot you view Harrell at, or will you try him at a bunch of spots to see where he fits?

RAN CARTHON: I think with our offense, versatility is key, so all these guys will be cross-trained at multiple positions. Whether it's Calvin, D-Hop, everybody will know X, Z and F, so I think wherever we see the best fit, probably start him off at C or X and see how he does on the inside at F. Eventually he'll know all three.

Q. With Jaylen Harrell I meant.

RAN CARTHON: Sorry, my bad. No, Jaylen will be outside backer. Probably maybe start him off at Sam. He's an outside guy with some athleticism and some twitch and some speed, and obviously rushing will be a part of his game, so we'll find the best home for him.

Q. Anthony, do you see him more as a guy that can both set the edge and rush, or do you see him as a situational rusher?

RAN CARTHON: No, he can play all three. He's a guy that plays extremely hard, plays extremely physical. We'll continue to develop his hand use and proper technique and what we're going to do here and what we're going to use, but I see him as a three-down player.

Q. Latham and Sweat, what are some of the immediate characteristics that stand out about both those guys on each side of the ball?

ANTHONY ROBINSON: Big. Big guys, physical guys. JC did a lot of work on him. We did a lot of work on both of those guys, but the first thing that comes to mind for both of those guys is size. You win the game in the trenches, and both of those guys bring that element.

Q. You were on that trip to go see them. Trying to project how a guy like that could fit into this city, how did that process work for you?

ANTHONY ROBINSON: I think the trip was good. We got a chance to meet him, meet some of his family members, mom, really get him in his environment where he was comfortable, and we did a good job, and he presented himself well. Just a good dude. Good dude, good family, good mom.

Q. Was there any point where you were close to moving up, moving back throughout the seven rounds?

RAN CARTHON: Yeah, we were trying to get active there in the fourth round pretty early had some guys up there just trying to figure out whether Cedric or some other guys would be there when we got ready to pick. You start seeing -- it's one of those things where you call around, you try to see if there's going to be some interest, see if people are trying to move back, and there were some situations where people wanted to move back, and we were looking to move forward.

But it was one of those where we started getting antsy because you get a feeling of what's going on around you and you don't want to lose your guy, and thank God A-Rob and Chad and Cally and everybody else in the room was like, hey, we can sit tight, and we were able to do that, and Cedric was still there.

Q. How transformed do you feel like the corner group is through both the draft and free agency, and how much is physicality and aggression a part of the idea there?

RAN CARTHON: Yeah, I feel good with where we are, obviously starting with free agency, getting Chido, and then being able to swing the trade to get L.J. and having Roger already here and then drafting Jarvis today and having other guys here. Tre Avery has played a ton of ball for us and some other guys. It makes the group competitive.

Then when you have a defensive coordinator in Dennard and you have Chris Harris as your corners coach, physicality is going to be a part of what we do, and so I think the way Dennard has already addressed the group and how his daily meetings are with the group, I think they

know what the expectation is, and I think all those guys are ready to meet it.

Q. Is Cedric somebody you guys think has the requisite traits to wear the green dot?

RAN CARTHON: I was waiting on the green dot question. I knew it.

No, we do. We do think he has those traits. He's an extremely smart guy. He's a three-year starter, two-time captain. He has the ability -- didn't have to do it at North Carolina because of the guys he had around him, but he is very capable, as is Jack Gibbons, as is other guys on our team. We'll let those guys figure that part out with Dennard and Coach Bush, but we feel like we've got more than enough guys capable of wearing the green dot.

Q. In the first part of free agency and now through the draft, what are you most excited about with the team that you have now versus the end of the season?

RAN CARTHON: I'm just most excited about this coaching staff and the way they've come in and kind of transformed the energy of the place and how the guys have taken to them. I'm just ready to get these guys out on the grass. I was joking with Cally earlier, I was like, once we get past this last pick, homey, it's all yours, and it's time for the ball to take place.

We're really excited about that part, ready to get these rookies in here in a little while, get them acclimated with the vets. Like I had mentioned earlier, I thought the vet mini camp went really well. Participation this whole off-season has been great, and now we've got several rookies that are champing at the bit to be here, so now they get to have their mini camp and then roll right in with the vets, so it'll be good to get everybody here.

Q. Having three tight ends on the roster, still three tight ends on the roster, is that an area you think you'll go back out in free agency and add a veteran?

RAN CARTHON: We don't have three anymore. There's more announcements to come.

Q. You're through your second draft here; how was this year compared to last? Did you feel more comfortable? Was there something first draft that you were able to take away?

RAN CARTHON: You know, from first year was -- I was a rookie. You didn't know what to expect. It was different. When you spent 16 years executing someone else's vision and then you get into that first year and it's yours, now you



realize everything falls on you, no matter what people are saying, you have to make that decision and pull those cards off.

This year I was more comfortable in that, and especially being able to anticipate runs on positions and using all the different tools we have available. I thought Sarah Bailey did a hell of a job being able to talk to us and show us the numbers, and when these positional runs were going to happen, so we could anticipate those things and understand and know who could be there for us.

It was more of a comfort thing this year. I don't know why this year felt so much longer than last year. But I know we looked at it, it was like one point when the fourth round ended, felt like we had already been through the sixth round, and we just knew we had a long day ahead of us. It was just more of a comfort thing.

Q. Is it likely you'll need to return to the veteran market at safety?

RAN CARTHON: Yeah, we're going to continue to look at the safety spot. That's one that we're going to address. Like we talked about before, it's a lot of good veteran safeties that are out there on the street, and we knew that there would be, so you didn't have to overreach for a guy, if you will, in the draft knowing what was available on the street.

Q. I think you're at 72 with the draft class. You said you may not sign all free agents to get to the 90. You talking about maybe 12, 13? What's your number there for your UDFAs?

RAN CARTHON: Roughly. The hard part about the UDFA process is nobody has signed. You've had the conversations. You feel good with where they are. It's like college recruiting because that's really what it is; it's college recruiting. You may have commitments but they're not yours until they sign, so things could still happen overnight. You potentially could lose some, you could potentially gain some.

To your -- what number did you throw out?

Q. 12 or 13.

RAN CARTHON: Roughly.

Q. In wanting to add some veterans, maybe safety or another spot or two, do you want to get through the off-season program, do it right before camp and see what you've got in hand first before you add a couple more pieces?

RAN CARTHON: No, because I think for us, we'll figure out what the right time is, but also when you're a new regime, you want to get everybody in, everybody on the same footing. Especially because a lot of these guys that are available, they haven't done anything since last season, so we need to see them move around as opposed to just hoping that they're in shape. They're vets, and they will be, but there's a difference when you get them in your program, get them acclimated to how you're going to do things and how you want things done, so it's probably better to get them in sooner than later.

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