

New England Patriots Media Conference

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Eliot Wolf

Jerod Mayo

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ELIOT WOLF: He's strong, he's young, and we feel like there's a lot of upside to his game.

Q. At what point do you guys feel you reached a consensus on Drake?

ELIOT WOLF: Throughout the process. We had a good process with all these quarterbacks and all these players in the draft, and we really started to feel comfortable with Drake. Most of the game film was really good, but we started to feel comfortable with him as we spent more time with him and visited with him at North Carolina.

Q. What did you learn about him from the pro day and combine?

ELIOT WOLF: Really just getting a chance to know him, see what he's about, see what his family is about and getting him on the board and seeing his high football intellect.

Q. What, if anything (indiscernible)?

ELIOT WOLF: We had some conversations with other teams, but ultimately we felt like Drake was the player that we wanted and we had the opportunity to get him.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

ELIOT WOLF: A really long time ago. It's two separate -- the trade offers, I don't say they were constant, but there were different points throughout the process where there were trades, but all along we knew we were in a unique opportunity here to get a quarterback that we liked, and we were obviously able to do that.

Q. You said you had to be convinced not to take Drake. You still had time on the clock; you didn't let it go all the way down when you picked.

JEROD MAYO: We had time to think through the process.

We went through various scenarios with the coaches and scouts, even going back to the collaborative approach that we did this time, and I would say the organization was happy with Drake at 3.

Q. Eliot mentioned the trip to North Carolina for his pro day. You sent a big staff out there. What did you learn and what were your takeaways from that trip?

JEROD MAYO: First and foremost, I would say just getting a chance to spend time with Mack Brown and asking him questions about Drake really helped me get the full picture. Look, this guy is very competitive. He would literally miss one question and he'll be on himself about it, but we like that competitive nature, that striving for perfection, and he showed us that.

Q. Jerod and Eliot, is Drake maybe a quarterback that can start right away or someone that you think needs some time to develop?

JEROD MAYO: I think to go back to Bill, I don't think many rookies are ready to just jump in and play. At the end of the day, our philosophy is the best players will play. Coming in as a rookie, hopefully he's a sponge. A lot of good players in that locker room.

Look, Jacoby understands, he's a mentor. He's very smart, has great leadership skills, and hopefully Drake can learn something from him, as well. I would say we're going to compete all spring, we're going to compete during training camp, and the best player will start.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

JEROD MAYO: Darker blue will look better for sure. The light blue only on Jordan Smith.

Q. You said Drake can elevate his teammates. How did that stand out in times of adversity?

ELIOT WOLF: Yeah, not to take anything away from anyone else in the program, but the game was on his shoulders for them. They have some talented players, talented running backs and receivers, but he really was able to elevate them and make them into what they could be.



Q. Eliot, how did you work through some of the bad tape this year?

ELIOT WOLF: Yeah, that's a good question. Meeting with Coach Van Pelt, Coach McAdoo, Coach McCartney and talking through some of the development that he needed, some of the things they thought they could tighten up or fix in some cases, and at the end of the day, we felt comfortable with those things and really betting on the talent and the kid. Drake is a relentless worker from all the indications that we have, and he's going to be able to overcome some of the things in the areas that he needs to improve.

Q. What do you guys think you need to do to support him, do what's best for him?

ELIOT WOLF: I just think we need to support him in any way we can, on the field, off the field. We need to add some weapons to the offense. We need to shore up the offensive line. We have good players already at those positions but really just increasing the depth and the competition. Like Jerod mentioned, that competition is going to be at every position.

Q. Eliot, how would you characterize the past (indiscernible)?

ELIOT WOLF: They've been very supportive throughout. It helps that Jerod and I have been on the same page for almost everything so far, which I know won't continue, but hopefully continues until we have some adversity here and then through that. But they've been very supportive.

Q. Eliot, when did you guys know Drake was your guy outside of the trade? In what part of the process?

ELIOT WOLF: I don't know if there was one moment. Do you have a --

JEROD MAYO: No, honestly, the more exposures we had with Drake, the more comfortable we felt. Honestly, not to talk about other players, but those top three guys, we were comfortable with all three of those guys, and it just happened to be Drake, and he's definitely -- he has a lot of potential. We have a lot of coaches, and we have to develop him.

Q. (Indiscernible) high caliber of football for a long time. What gave you the sense that he's (indiscernible)?

ELIOT WOLF: Yeah, he was one of the only quarterbacks in this draft that went up there after every loss and handled the media. Not that the Chapel Hill media is as tough as

you guys are, but he handled it with grace, with class. Watching those press conferences, there were a lot of times where the reporters were trying to get him to throw somebody under the bus, and he wouldn't do it. He's a 21-year-old kid, but he's very mature and understands what it means to be a leader.

Q. What was the biggest surprise for both of you guys from the last couple weeks?

ELIOT WOLF: Really just all the scrutiny. I think with so many quarterbacks being so high in the draft, there was a lot of, for lack of a better word, BS out there about this guy or that guy and a lot of rumors and innuendos and things that just didn't end up being true.

We stayed the course. We were on the same page. It was really a really good process for us.

Q. Jerod, you talked to Drake having an extremely high ceiling. If he hits that ceiling, what does it mean for the future of the franchise?

JEROD MAYO: It means a lot. Look, let me go back a couple of questions ago. We're not sitting here saying that Drake is our starting quarterback. I think he understands that. He understands the things that he has to get better at. With coaching and once again the hard work and the coaches that we have, the support system from ownership, I think he has a chance to go out there and really -- to really play at a high level.

You can talk about potential all you want to. Until you reach it, it really doesn't matter. We did know the man; we know the man is a hard worker, and he's going to do everything he can to be successful.

Q. Jerod, you said last month that Drake really impressed you during the combine. What was it that impressed you about him at that time?

JEROD MAYO: Just his composure, and I would also say a lot of teams, they put up all the good plays of players. Eliot and his group, they put a tape together that had a lot of bad plays, and honestly he took a lot of that blame on himself even when sometimes it wasn't his fault. A very accountable man, and can't wait to get to work with him.

Q. Did you guys have any hesitations in selecting him?

JEROD MAYO: No.

Q. You talked about his floor. How much did his floor scare you?

JEROD MAYO: I wouldn't say it scared us. Everyone was focusing on the ceiling, and obviously Drake has a high ceiling. But the floor is -- if everything goes wrong, which we don't anticipate to happen, what does that look like. We were very comfortable as we continued to go through the process. We watched years of this guy playing football and feel good about the pick.

Q. Had Washington taken Drake at No. 2, would you have been comfortable taking Jayden Daniels with the third pick?

ELIOT WOLF: That wasn't really something that came up. We knew a long time ago that Washington was going with Daniels so we were able to make our pick, and we're really happy about that.

Q. How long ago?

ELIOT WOLF: Weeks.

Q. Eliot, can you talk about if you guys don't trade up and we don't see you again tonight, can you talk about just having one piece now out of this draft because obviously you talked about weaponizing the offense. You guys know you need a lot, right?

ELIOT WOLF: Yeah, we have seven more picks, and we'll probably move around a little bit. Hopefully acquire some more picks.

But we feel strongly about the board and we'll kind of see how it goes here. There's a lot of other players that are -- a lot of good players that are going to come off the board before our next one. So we'll kind of see how it goes here.

Q. Looking at the TV here --

ELIOT WOLF: Trying to see who's going where.

Q. Obviously with your experience in previous organizations and taking time developing the quarterback, I know this question was asked earlier, but is there -- not so much a timetable, but when do you have a sense you guys will have a better idea of when he might be ready to play?

JEROD MAYO: Yeah, I think you just answered the question. They try to put time tables on it, but you just never know when that time is going to be. If you look over the history of the league, sometimes guys, they can go in there and start game 1 and have a Pro Bowl season. Then other guys they sit for two or three years and they have a great season or great career, but it can also go the other

way. You sit for two years and have a terrible career.

I think it's hard to really put a timeline on when he will be ready. Once again, look, I don't want you guys to forget about the quarterbacks that we have on our roster, and it's about competing and it's about going out there every day striving to get better.

Q. This is a different feel, obviously, to the draft from this year, so to be able to make the call and make the pick and turn it in, what was the feeling like?

ELIOT WOLF: For me it was a lot of excitement. I've been waiting a long time for the moment to be able to sit here with someone like Jerod and kind of collaborate and try to do what's right for the organization, but there's a lot of excitement in the draft room from the scouts and the coaches and just kind of the new direction that we're taking the team.

Q. Jerod, there are a lot of fans upstairs that you addressed a little bit earlier. Now that you've made this pick, what's your message to Patriots Nation right now?

JEROD MAYO: We still have holes that we need to fill. We still have a lot of draft capital. What I will say is the most important thing is the guys coming out here working each and every day. I know a lot of people are writing us off, but we'll see when it comes to the fall.

Q. Eliot, before you made that pick, did your father give you any words or advice?

ELIOT WOLF: Not before the pick. I talked to him a couple times today, and it was really just trust your instinct and try to do what's right for the Patriots.

Q. You said you knew Washington was going to pick Jayden? (Indiscernible.)

ELIOT WOLF: It was pretty obvious at that point, yeah.

Q. What was (indiscernible) reaction? When was he let in on all the -- knowing that Drake was going to come in? What was his reaction?

ELIOT WOLF: I would say this morning. We've talked a bunch of times about the different things that could happen and this morning, and he's excited. He got the opportunity to talk to Drake on the phone. We picked him and they had a nice conversation, and yeah, I think he's excited, as well.

Q. What areas of Drake's game do you hope to see



him attack early?

JEROD MAYO: A guy like Drake has all the natural ability that you want. He can make all the threes. Really it's about getting to the playbook. It's going to be a different scheme. One thing about our playbook offensively, we're going to be a game plan offense and we're going to tailor our offensive game plan to whoever the quarterback is. We'll see how that pans out.

But excited to get him out there with the guys and the coaches.

Q. Was there one thing on tape that allowed you to go with Drake?

JEROD MAYO: One thing about Drake, and we kind of talked about it this past year, they also had some holes on offense, and the thing that most impressed me about him, he would get smashed and just get right back up. That's the same trait -- you had a guy like Tom Brady -- not saying that he's Tom, but just that mentality. Same thing with Joe Burrow. Those guys just keep getting back up and continuing to play at a high level, and that was like the aha moment for me.

Q. Are you preparing the defense to chirp at him all training camp?

JEROD MAYO: We chirp all the time. We chirp all the time. It does get competitive, and right now we have the spring to get some things done. We'll have a couple extra weeks with the rookies. We'll see how the rest of the draft class plays out, but this is a big one for us, and I'm very happy. I'm very excited to be in this position.

Q. Eliot, you talked a little bit about (indiscernible)?

ELIOT WOLF: As far as?

Q. As far as (indiscernible).

ELIOT WOLF: Yeah, we're all working together. It's not just Jerod and I. Obviously Matt Groh, Alonso Highsmith in my department and a bunch of other people that are working their tails off, Richard Miller, Brian Smith, Steve Cargile. We're all working together and we're all excited about the opportunity that's been presented to us.

Q. Do you anticipate sleeping tonight?

ELIOT WOLF: Absolutely.

Q. Did you sleep last night?

ELIOT WOLF: Yes. Pretty well, actually.

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