

New England Patriots Media Conference

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Jerod Mayo

Draft Media Conference

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JEROD MAYO: I would be remiss not to offer my condolences to Korey Cunningham who was part of the Patriot family and also AJ Simon who came here on a 30 visit. We lost both of those young men. It's a reminder of the fragility of life, and we as an organization want to offer our condolences to the families.

Q. I'll start with Milton, the quarterback. What can you tell us about the pick and how you sort of envision him fitting in here?

JEROD MAYO: Yeah, you know, we're in the business of trying to get good football players through the door, and Milton happens to be one of them. Obviously he understands we took a quarterback at 3 in Drake. One thing that we preach is competition. Everything is about competition, and nothing is given. All of it's earned. That's how we thought about the process.

Q. On the quarterback position, you guys have five players on the roster right now. Do you envision keeping five players on the roster throughout this off-season, or is this a scenario where you could move someone?

JEROD MAYO: Well, that's yet to be seen. At this current time, we're still on the phone right now with potential free agents coming up here soon. We'll see how all the dominos kind of play out, but at the same time, you want to have a strong group. You want to have a strong room. I would say the way it looks now, we have a very strong room.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the left tackle position because when we talked to Eliot last week, he said that Chuks would probably be the left tackle if the season started today, and then obviously with the pick you guys made yesterday, that's two guys who will be moving from right tackle potentially over to left tackle. In your research or anything that you guys have done, have you seen good examples of players being able to make that transition from right tackle to left tackle, or is it just still plenty of guys on the roster who could

potentially play that position?

JEROD MAYO: Yeah, I think that's a great question. We feel pretty good about the decision on the outside. Obviously a lot of people -- there will still be movement as we continue to go through the process. What I will say is all of those guys, they do offer some flexibility to move from right to left.

But at the same time, we've got to see when we put the pads on.

Q. I'm curious about the receivers that you took over the course of the last couple days. What do those guys bring to your room? Obviously they're different players, but what made you want to bring those guys in and how do they change the group?

JEROD MAYO: I'll start with Polk. He's one of those guys that before we even get to the main responsibility of a receiver as far as get open, catch the ball and run with it, he's one of those guys that isn't afraid to do the dirty work. When we talk about the dirty work, obviously we have a good set of backs. But sometimes you need those receivers to come in there and kind of dig out support, and he does that at a very high level.

Now, let's get to the meat and potatoes of Polk. He's one of those guys, smooth route runner, has good hands, can do a lot of different things and he's smart. That's one thing that we covered around here. He's flexible, can play in different spots, and I'm excited to really see him out there.

Then really, when you talk about Javon, look, you talk about run after catch, the run after catch, this guy is aggressive, and I would say Bake is all about -- he's all ball. He's all ball, which I can appreciate. You can see the passion come through when you watch them on film. Two guys that obviously have different skill sets but at the same time will help our team going forward.

Q. With Milton, he's obviously a big really athletic guy. Do you see him strictly as a quarterback or could you be using him in some other places, too?

JEROD MAYO: Yeah, we'll have to see how that plays out once we put the pads on, but we drafted him as a quarterback.



Q. Only one defensive player out of eight picks. Didn't you have a say?

JEROD MAYO: You know, I had to take off my defensive hat and put on my head coaching hat. We had more holes on the offensive side of the ball. You guys knew that. Defensively we feel pretty good about the players that we have, and we feel good about some of those players taking a leap here in their second and third year. We're pretty comfortable with that. At the same time we'll continue to add pieces as we go.

Q. Would you please tell us how the collaborative process worked this time out from start to finish?

JEROD MAYO: I thought it was great. I thought it was great. At the very beginning, we gave the coaches an opportunity to look at a group of guys and to grade them. The coaches, they actually wrote reports, so it was a good professional development thing for those guys.

Honestly, I would say overall, the draft room was very cohesive. Everyone was on the same page. There were tough discussions that had to be made, but at the same time we all felt pretty good or feel pretty good about the haul that we just brought in.

Q. You answered a lot of questions night one about Drake Maye. I want to follow up on one thing. It felt like when you guys went down there for his pro day, I know you mentioned a series of meetings. It seemed like that one was fairly significant in terms of the volume of people you had down there and the way you met with him. Any color you can fill in on that?

JEROD MAYO: Yeah, I would say before we even meet with those guys at their pro days, there's been years of exposure to these guys from our scouting department. So once you start to consolidate all of that information, for me and for Eliot, we're kind of seeing them on the back end of the evaluation process, but we had people in the room that have been working on these guys for a long time and really understand the character and the development that they had at the college level, hoping that we can talk about the ceiling, look, this guy is just getting started, and his ceiling is relatively high.

I hate to keep saying the collaborative approach, but that's exactly what it is where you have an area scout who identifies a talented player, brings them to the table, and then you track that guy until you get to the third pick.

Q. Who was that with Drake if you're willing to share that area scout if you know?

JEROD MAYO: That's an Eliot question.

Q. I just wanted to ask you, Layden Robinson, the pick you guys made there, do you see him with position flexibility? The reason I ask that question is I know it's a new regime, but last couple years a lot invested in interior offensive line from Cole Strange, Atonio Mafi, Jake Andrews can play in there, Sidy Sow can play in there, as well. Do you envision him being a guy that can play multiple positions, or is there something about maybe some of the existing guy you have in the interior offensive line that maybe aren't quite what Alex Van Pelt and the offensive coaching staff are looking for?

JEROD MAYO: I'll kind of answer that question in the same way I answered the Milton question where we're in the business of bringing in good players and breeding competition. Some of those guys you spoke about that you guys see as true guards currently on our roster, those guys have flexibility, as well. So when it's all said and done, we want to put the best five guys out there and see what happens.

Q. The one defensive player you did get, Marcel Dial, I was wondering if you have a role in mind for him. I know he spent some time at cornerback but also at safety. Do you know what he's going to do or do you see him as a versatile player like a Myles Bryant type?

JEROD MAYO: We see him as a versatile player, a guy that can do it all. Honestly we were so excited to get him. We were kind of nervous that he was going to come off the board. His versatility as you guys know, we cover that, and can't wait to see him on the field.

Q. With all these offensive selections, the Packers, the way the Packers do things is they draft young guys and they put them in the hands of the coaching staff. This is a lot of offensive players with a lot of guys that you have never worked with. Can you talk about what you've seen out of those guys, your confidence level, and the role that they're going to play in developing these players?

JEROD MAYO: Yeah, I think that's a great question. First and foremost, I would say as we -- we brought in 17 new coaches this year. One of the things, one of the criteria that we always make sure that these guys will check the box with is just able to relate to the players. I think that's a huge thing, especially with the generation of players we have right now.

To your point, look, a lot of offensive players, a lot of

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

quarterbacks in the room right now at this current time, but at the same time I would say we have coaches where you can still get that one-to-one type of coaching. We're trying to coach together, but at the same time, Alex Van Pelt is going to run that offense. I have nothing but faith in him and McAdoo and the rest of the guys over there to get it done on the offensive side of the ball.

Q. How was it with your first -- obviously this being your first draft in this role, how was that transition from you going from being a position coach to a head coach? Obviously it's been a process for you throughout this off-season, but how was it at this point during the draft having a much more involved role in the decision making in terms of players?

JEROD MAYO: You know, I thought it was great. Honestly even earlier in my coaching career, Bill used to let the coaches evaluate the players, as well, and we would practice writing reports. I felt some type of way being stuck with the linebackers so I would try to look at all the defensive positions, and as soon as I put the head coaching hat on, now you're looking at all the spots, including kickers and punters.

It's been nothing but a learning experience for me. We'll see how this crop kind of turns out. But I'm excited about the players that we have, the players that we chose, and we'll see how we can develop those guys.

Q. How was your first draft experience?

JEROD MAYO: It was great. It was great. A lot of people in the room, a lot of good conversation, and hopefully a lot of good players. Right now everyone feels pretty good, and we'll see as we continue to go down this journey what it looks like.

Q. You talked about Javon Baker as a very aggressive kind of -- he goes all ball for that. Considering what kind of happened on the offensive last year and how maybe that was kind of missing, was that a part of his game that you really wanted to look for in a receiver during this draft?

JEROD MAYO: Yeah, you know, honestly, we have leaders on the offensive side of the ball, and I would also say some of the additions, K.J. even Kendrick Bourne, those guys provide some leadership in that room. At the same time, we wanted to draft good players, and you can't help but turn on a UCF game and see that this guy really loves ball, the way he runs, the way he's able to run routes. He's just a good player.

Q. You talked about this was your first draft.

Obviously you don't know with the players where they're going to be and all that. Do you feel as an assessment looking back on all seven rounds and the players you were able to get, are you happy with how this went, and were you able to get the players that were at the top of the board throughout this whole process?

JEROD MAYO: Absolutely. I'm very excited about the players that we selected. Look, once again, we had our holes. We tried to fill those with good players, and then it got to a point where it's like, let's take the best available player. It was kind of a mix of philosophy. Let's make sure we get the best player at this spot and then let's just take the best player off the board. I thought it was a great process. Once again, you guys will judge us on this one in a couple years. Probably a couple months, honestly.

Q. You mentioned a minute ago you had a lot of people in the room. I'm curious what the benefit of having all those people in there. I think we saw a picture after the Drake Maye pick, it looked like there were a couple dozen people in there.

JEROD MAYO: Yeah, the benefit is we've all had different exposures to that individual. So even when we bring people in on their 30 visits, they meet with everyone, not just coaches, not just scouts. They meet with Nancy Meier, they meet with the people in the lunchroom, they meet with the strength and conditioning coach, and then you try to consolidate all those opinions and really try to figure out who this guy really is.

I thought it was great, and obviously picking at 3, hopefully we never have to pick at 3 again. People were excited to be in the room and see it come to fruition.

Q. For that pick or another one, are that many people chiming in leading up to that moment?

JEROD MAYO: Not at all. You bring in the scout that's watched him over the course of his career, his college career. You want the coordinators in there. They were in there for every single pick. Then sometimes you bring in position coaches who also have a different opinion.

But the rest of those guys, they type up their reports, boom, that's what it is, and we go. Once you get to the conversation piece to it or you're five picks away, now it's like, all right, let's shrink this down and let's select who we all see as a good player.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Caedan Wallace. We talked to Eliot yesterday, and he cited his athleticism for believing that he could flip over as a college right

tackle to left tackle. What gives you the belief that this guy could make that transition from your time with him?

JEROD MAYO: Yeah, honestly, how I got comfortable with him, look, I love the way that he plays, but after having conversations with Van Pelt and Scotty Peters and that group and Kugler, they were very confident that this guy could play on both sides. I have to have confidence that I picked the right people to evaluate or project what this guy can do going forward.

I'm not into micromanaging or anything like that. If the offensive coordinator and the offensive line coach say, hey, this guy can do X, Y and Z, all right, I'll take it in, but at the end of the day someone has to make that decision, which is me, but I also already made the decision that we picked some good coaches.

Q. Just so we understand, did they cite any other factors that you could see aside from the raw testing numbers from Caedan to say, yeah, this could work on the other side?

JEROD MAYO: Yeah, it's just the overall athleticism when you watch the game film. It's one thing to run around in your shorts and show your athleticism. It's another thing when you watch the game film that this guy loves ball and that he can do a multitude of things.

Q. To go back to Drake, to spin it back to Drake on day one, you have Bob Bicknell on your staff as a tight ends coach. His brother, Jack Bicknell, Jr., was the offensive line coach at North Carolina in 2022. Did you tap into that relationship or how much did you tap into that relationship because that's a guy that has firsthand knowledge of Drake when he was really at his best in college?

JEROD MAYO: You know, I personally did not have those conversations and I can't speak for Eliot and Groh and their staff. I spoke to Mack Brown and it was a glowing recommendation. We're very excited, very happy to get him in the building.

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