

New York Giants Media Conference

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Joe Judge

Draft Press Conference



Q. Can you speak about the importance of getting some edge pass rushing in there? The Giants defense for years, it used to be an automatic with pass rushers and it's been an issue for you particularly on the outside?

JOE JUDGE: First off I was pleased with the progress we made on defense last year with the guys on our roster. We had injuries that affected guys like Zo and X-man, and we had some rookies. And obviously we had some rookies had to come in and step up and got good contribution from guys like Jabaal Sheard when they were on the team.

So we didn't look at this in the nature of, you know, that we had to absolutely go out there and address something, you know, or else it was going to be dire. We have confidence in the guys we have on our roster. We like Azeez as a player. We have a lot of experience with him throughout this organization. Cooper one of our scouts has great relationships with these guys. We put a lot of trust in his evaluations because he gets it know these guys on a deep basis and coincidentally actually three picks came from Coop's area and he has a lot of inside info on these guys.

On top of that, you talk about Azeez, the coach he's going to play for, Kevin Sherrer, recruited and signed him at the University of Georgia before he was a freshman. You talk about the other coaches that we have on staff that had to play against him in the SEC, he's always a guy that stood out to them on the field as someone they had to account for.

I have a lot of respect for the way Kirby runs his program. I love those guys down there. I think they play tough and they are well-coached. To be able to add a guy to our team to compete with our current roster, he was a good fit for us. We are excited to have him here but like all other rookies, he's got to come in and compete when he gets here.

Q. With Azeez, it's out there that there was a knee problem and some teams actually flagged him. Where

did you guys stand on that?

JOE JUDGE: Yeah, listen, I don't think there's a player in this Draft or any Draft for that matter that doesn't have something that shows up on a board. I trust our medical team, Ronnie and his guys do a great job. We have some of the best doctors in the world who look in these guys and constantly update us on what they think the current risk is.

All I can go back to is this guy came back, he played, this guy doesn't miss practices at Georgia. He played with very high effort, high intensity. I'm very pleased with what you saw on tape in terms of the medical expertise. I leave that on Ronnie Barnes and his staff and I let them go ahead and give us the information, and with that information make the decisions.

Q. What did you like about Robinson?

JOE JUDGE: A-Rob is a good player. Again we are excited to add him to the program. Going to come and compete. There's going to be a lot of competition with defensive backs, corners and safeties.

Look, this is a guy that jumped out to us on tape and as well as when we were down at the Senior Bowl got to see him in person, sit down, meet with him; I had multiple meetings that week. Got the Zoom throughout this process. So O had a lot of exposure with this guy as a person, and this guy really does, he's got a good personality, he really lights up. This is a guy, he plays on the field and you see when he makes a play, his teammates immediately sprint to him. There's a lot of excitement. You can tell he's got a bond with his teammates, and that stands out with the energy his teammates play with as well.

In terms of him as a player, he's a physical player with good traits and gives us versatility to play inside, outside. This guy has some value to play in the kicking game as well. Just the demeanor he plays with, the physicality and his ability to play in both press and off, he'll give us some options how we can use him.

Q. We know about your connection with Kirby and



talking about that Georgia program, how much does that help with transition, and is what they do similar to what you do schematically?

JOE JUDGE: I would say the answer in terms of the terminology or maybe some of the concepts of the defense, there are similarities to that. It's all basically off the same branch of the defensive tree and philosophy from different coaches in the past.

However, it doesn't matter where you come from. None of these rookies have a leg up on anyone. They come on in. They come in and have to learn our league and system and compete with our vets from on the roster. Just being from a certain school doesn't give anyone a leg up on anything. You have to come in -- the National Football League is completely different from college. You have to learn a lot of things about it: The speed of the game, the tempo of the game.

So it's nice that he's from a familiar system, but past, you know, day one install meetings and basic terminology, that's the only jump he'll have on anybody else.

Q. This is obviously not a new world for the Giants, but the way the Draft was manipulated the last two days, moving down, you had a fifth round pick you gained and you just traded away, was with the Giants for about 12 hours or something like that. Do you like this a little bit more rock and roll and keeping everybody on their toes?

JOE JUDGE: It's making the best decision for the team at the time. We had an opportunity to move down and gain more value because there are a number of players we feel in that range are going to be available, we'll go ahead and look at that option.

As you saw with A-Rob we didn't want to give somebody else a chance to take him at that point; he was a priority for us to get, so we used the pick to trade on up. As I said yesterday, these picks are people and make calculated risks whether you acquire them or give them up. I feel good about what we did today in the Draft. I'm sure Dave has got a concussion or something, so make sure we check on him overnight and we'll get back to work tomorrow.

Q. With all the uncertainty, how important were those Senior Bowl meetings?

JOE JUDGE: Yeah, I thought they were critical. I really thought Senior Bowl this year did a great job of making sure that everyone got to meet with every player and the set up down there was really phenomenal and not having

the Combine, Senior Bowl really replaced the personal interactions with those guys. I don't think you can ever replace getting to see a guy play or work out or compete in person, and be able to sit down and look a guy eye-to-eye and really get a feel for them. Zoom is nice. Personal interaction is critical.

Q. What do you remember particularly about the one with Robinson?

JOE JUDGE: I just remember he had a very direct personality. You talk to him, he lit up when you start talking football. That's important, again, the passion for the game. I just like direct, honest people and he's got that to him.

Q. What is your relationship like with Kirby Smart and is there a quality in the players that he coaches that stands out? Because you have drafted three guys from there in the last year, whether that's a coincidence or not.

JOE JUDGE: Well, I think the coincidence would be that he just coaches really good players. They do a great job of recruiting top talent and develop them over the course of time they are there. Those players work hard and player hard and understand the value of playing old school, fundamental, physical football. That's really what draws to us. Me and Kirby we worked three years at Alabama. I have a lot of respect for him as a person and I have a lot of respect for him as a coach.

When you know where someone is coming from, you have a little bit of insight in how you can coach them, okay, what really makes them tick and how they respond in adverse situations.

Q. How critical was weekends like this in determining when you're building your coaching staff, because you have so many assistants that were former college coaches with ties to these major programs. How much did that factor into the hiring process for you?

JOE JUDGE: Actually none of it. We have a great scouting staff here, so we didn't anybody in to supersede what anybody is doing. Really, this is a bonus. I hired the best coaches I can find, and it starts with being good people and good teachers.

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