

New York Giants Media Conference

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Patrick Graham

Press Conference

Q. Logan said yesterday that -- I don't know if he was joking, half-joking, but he's a big proponent of having an 11 DB package on the field. I don't know where you are with that, but the depth that you guys have on the back end this year coming in, what does that allow a coordinator to do in this league with the way things have changed offensively and continue to evolve, what you have on the back end as far as options go?

PATRICK GRAHAM: Well, to combat with what Logan said, I'm an old D-line coach, I wouldn't mind having 11 D-tackles out there as long as I knew they were going to run the ball.

Having depth is a good thing. Again, we don't know yet. We've got such a long way to go before we know who these players are completely. We know what's on tape and we are working with them now to go through the process but as we work through now mini-camp and the rest of the off-season and going into the summer with training camp, we'll find out more.

But I like having a lot of good players. I know Joe likes having a lot of good players and hopefully we play to that. But you know, we place a value on guys being multiple. So if you can cover, you can tackle, you can defend the run, that's always a about thing and we'll do our best to put them in the right spots and make it confusing for the offense.

Q. Coach Joe from Cosby wishes you well and he's expecting his training camp invite.

PATRICK GRAHAM: He can come any time.

Q. Adoree' Jackson, what did you see from him from his Tennessee days, and putting him opposite of James, how has that changed scheme-wise going into this season?

PATRICK GRAHAM: Well, for Adoree', he's fast, he's athletic, he can tackle and he could get his hands on the



ball. So like for me, again, you can't have enough good DBs because as you could see throughout the league, just take a look at the team that would be the Super Bowl, Tampa Bay, they were five or six deep at wide receiver plus they had tight ends and they are going to have another tight end coming back. So you have to be able to cover these guys, first game of the year against Denver, not that we are focused on that but they have a bunch of guys injured coming back there to add to that list.

So you can't go wrong with having a bunch of DBs but we are happy to have Adoree', his skill set, you could watch the tape and figure that out but there's other guys, too, that we are excited about, Darnay Holmes, Aaron Robinson, these guys, they are all in the mix. I'm excited about our group.

Q. Speaking of Aaron Robinson, do you see him as a tight man coverage guy?

PATRICK GRAHAM: I think in our system, we want to be able to play man, when it comes to third down, red area, two-minute; in this league, you're going to have to play some version of man at some point. I think can he play man? He definitely did that at Central Florida, and is that the only thing he's going to do? Absolutely not. I see him being multiple just like the rest of the guys, but we're going to try to make sure that what he does best is what we're going to try to make sure that he's doing most of the time.

Q. Bringing Williams back obviously was a big off-season move for you guys and he's coming off a career year for him. What did you see that makes you believe that that's not an outlier; that that's -- it finally clicked in and that's his new level of production.

PATRICK GRAHAM: I don't know if you've ever met him before or spoke to him, I'm sure you have, but he is one of the most humble people I've been around to be that big of a, whatever you want to say, star or just a good player. He's been successful at every level, whether it's high school, college and now the pros.

So to me him being humble and understand he has a ways to go, I'm hoping that wasn't his best year and I hope next



year is his best year and I hope the year after that is his best year. He definitely understands he has stuff to work on and he's eager to work on it. I couldn't be more excited to see how he performs.

Again, the focus is on today and he's strung together some good days so far. But you know, I can't predict the future or anything but with his attitude, he has the right attitude to be successful for the long haul.

Q. We haven't talked to you in quite a while. What went into turning down the interview request with the Jets? I would think it's a big honor to get a head coach interview. What went into turning it down, staying with the Giants and just what was your reaction to being included in that group of candidates?

PATRICK GRAHAM: You know, any time opportunities present themselves, you're excited. Again, has a lot less to do with me and more the guys, the players here, we played decent defense as the year went on, a lot of room to grow.

To me, the Giants, this is my dream job to be here at the defensive coordinator for the New York Giants. So I'm just happy to be here. I don't know, it's nothing against hem or anything. It's just I'm just happy to be a New York Giants.

Goes back to my days at Notre Dame with Tim McDonald when I knew him, a lot of my mentors, the people that I learned football from had connection with the New York Giants. That's important to me. I happen to be here working with one of my friends, Joe Judge and I've got a great group of guys to work with and a great group of coaches and players. I mean, these guys, our coaches on defense, these guys are top-notch. Who wouldn't want to have that work environment. That's why I like it.

Q. Did you go on a health kick or something? You look a few pounds lighter.

PATRICK GRAHAM: A health kick? That was my heaviest at the end of year in my whole life, so I had to look in the mirror and get that thing fixed. Thankfully Fitz, our strength coach, is helping me out in the mornings. Some days I skip; he's on me. The dietician here, Steve, he's doing a good job helping me out. I don't want to give an advertisement but I'm going the stationary bike thing, so that's working out at home. Just trying to show some discipline for a change outside of the office. Show some discipline sitting at a table a little bit. Be a good example for the players.

Q. Following up on Ryan, do you still have a desire to be a head coach?

PATRICK GRAHAM: Do I have a desire? Again, I told y'all a long time, I think about today. I have a desire to do well today. We have third down going in today so I'm excited about that. But in terms of desire to be head coach, I love coaching football. I love being a teacher that happens to teach football. You know, everybody in their profession likes a natural progression. If it comes up one day, it comes up one day. But is it the focus of my life, absolutely not.

To be honest with you, it's not the focus. The focus is to coach ballplayers, teach, be around these guys, do a good job for my boss, my head coach and whatever I'm doing, I'm making sure I'm making my parents proud and my family proud.

Q. Wanted to ask you about another one of the new guys, Ifeadi Odenigbo. What do you like about him as a player and what role do you see him playing? With the Vikings he primarily was a defensive lineman.

PATRICK GRAHAM: Outside of football he's a very knowledgeable guy. We were doing Zooms and I saw his artwork in the background, he helped me out, I thought that was a good -- he provided the connection there for the artwork. Smart guy. I like the way he plays football. He has versatility inside and outside on the line. Natural pass rush ability. Plays strong with his hands. Physical edge setter and a great attitude.

You know, he's always soaking it up. He's very serious but he could play around a little bit. He was joking with me yesterday. I was like, I don't feel your energy out here. He's like, Coach, I'm focused and he gave me a little shove. I definitely felt it. Being down to this weight, I definitely felt it. I like him. He's a good football player for the reasons why we like those guys, plays with his hands, plays with his base, plays good with -- good discipline and all that stuff right there.

Q. Did you cross paths with Kyle Rudolph at Notre Dame? Were you there at the same time?

PATRICK GRAHAM: Oh, yeah, back in the day when they called him -- I don't call him Rudy anymore. I'm sure people still -- because he's a grown man now. I was there when he was like a freshman. He looked like a grown man when he was a freshman there at Notre Dame but yeah, so when we played Minnesota throughout the years, I was always surprised he remembered me because, you know, I was a young buck back then but definitely ran across him.

Q. The edge rushing group looks different, you have to draft picks and you have to sign a few guys and guys coming back from injury. How do you view that

position right now and what do you expect out of that group?

PATRICK GRAHAM: Right now, a big part of their evaluation happens in training camp. Because like when you say edge rush, this guy has to set the edge in the run game and have to play blocks and we give that evaluation part come training camp. I'm pleased now with how they are grasping the system and understanding the different ways we'll use them, whether it's rushing, covering, playing the run, whatever it may be, stunting them, playing technique.

But I'm happy with the progress they are making, but their true evaluation comes in training camp, just like everybody else but even more so for the guys in the front. We talk about the run. We walk through drills for the run. But the running game comes up and the toughness in the running game comes up in trying when they are allowed to hit each other.

Q. So you mentioned this a little bit already, but how important is it, and might sound obvious, that you now have personnel that allows you to play man-to-man on any down, and how helpful is it maybe that you had to get so creative last year that that maybe expands what your playbook looks like for this season when you have more options?

PATRICK GRAHAM: I know we didn't play a ton of man last year but we picked spots to play the man. Again, like those guys last year, they did a good job what we asked them to do. Like we mixed up more zone and then we had man in the pass.

But again, I don't know what the recipe is going to be for this year yet. But I don't want to be -- I'm not saying you were, but I don't want to be disrespectful of the guys that were here last year that aren't here. I mean, Adoree' brings another element to, Aaron Robinson, Darnay, they bring another element to it. Will we probably be in more man? Possibly.

But it's always good to have that problem, so we are going to try to do what's best for that game, that game plan. But you need to play man-to-man coverage in this league, period, point-blank and obviously six wins last year, we didn't do enough on defense, so the hell with that; we are looking at all options, whether it's the blitz more, blitz less, play less zone, play more man, we need a whole lot of options. Six wins is not going to cut it.

Q. I was wondering, what was your thought process during the Draft when you traded down to 50, and Azeez is sitting there and you have to wait seven or

eight picks to see him there, and your anxiety may be about getting them and what do you like about him and what have you seen so far in the field with him?

PATRICK GRAHAM: I was excited to see him there to be honest with you and I'm glad we have him. What I've seen is here he's a rookie, all right, he's trying to learn the system and he has some familiarity with it because some of the verbiage is similar to Georgia and the system they have been in. Luckily we have coaches that have coached him before, so a little familiarity with that.

But the thing I've seen from him -- all I've talked to him about is our pad level. Let's work on our pad level today. Playing with more knee bent, playing a little bit lower and that's the case for most young players, especially in the front. Here is our thing, a lot of those young defensive linemen, defensive front player, because they were so good, they were able to just look for the ball, hold off the blocker and make a play. They all have to have the transition of learning, that man across from you is a professional football player, you've got to play with good technique, work to the lockout, pop your eyes to find the ball and you've got to do it at low pad level.

So it's always stressing that with the young guys, whether it's him, Raymond Johnson, Elerson, those guys right there, it's all the same for them. They have to learn how to play a little bit lower.

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