

New York Giants Media Conference

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Joe Schoen

Press Conference

JOE SCHOEN: (Interview audio started in progress) need to thank the trainers. Throughout this draft process, whether it was the combine medical, the film evaluations by the coaches, traveling to pro days, these 30 visits we've had, it's been all hands on deck for the entire organization. The meal room, the cafeteria, you name it, everybody throughout the organization has done a phenomenal job throughout this process.

My first exposure to a lot of the people on the team. It's been nothing but great so far. Looking forward to getting in the draft a week from tomorrow. I think a lot of the hard work will pay off.

With that being said, open it up for questions.

Q. With the philosophy best player available, then there's filling a need, how do you approach this whole thing?

JOE SCHOEN: I think where we are in our roster, there's several needs. To put a finger on what exactly the biggest need is would be difficult. If you can find two really good football players at five and seven, that's how we stacked the board. Let's just throw need, whatever perceived need is out. Who are the best football players in this draft?

We've set a vertical board and we have a horizontal board as well. It's not completely set. There's still some conversations to be had. I don't think you can go wrong with drafting good football players.

Q. You said you had wanted to identify seven players for seven spots. How close to doing that are you?

JOE SCHOEN: We're close. We're close. We're going to get with the coaches. I know Dabs mentioned that earlier. The scouts just left on Tuesday. We had some meetings with them. We kind of set the board how we saw things. We met with the coaches, got their rankings, how they see things.



There's a few players where we're going to shut the door, lock it, have knock-out, drag-outs. When we come out, we're going to make the best decision for the Giants.

There's not a lot of players where there's a big separation in terms of how we see them.

Do I have seven right now? Yeah, as a personnel staff we actually did like a 1 through 100 vertically as an exercise. We're going to get with the coaches to make sure we're onboard, not just seven, if there's a move-back scenario, whatever that is, do we have 10, 15, 20 players we like, make sure we get them the right order as football players.

Q. How much of this process are you trying to figure out what Carolina might do? Does that factor in how you might order your picks?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, I've thought about that several times. What are they doing, trying to figure out what position they might go. That will make a difference in what you do.

If you're sitting there at five, there's somebody you really like, there's two other players that may be at the same position you like as well, or just two players in general that you're happy with regardless of position, that can also factor in to who you take at number five.

If you have a crystal ball, I'd love to see it. We're going through several of those scenarios, if they're there, how we're going to go through, make the pick.

Q. You mentioned in an interview with the team website that you would like to get as many at-bats as possible. Roster building is never a one-year thing. Are you approaching it that way this year or looking to get some at-bats for down the line?

JOE SCHOEN: Both. I'd be open to both. I said it in my introductory press conference, we still want to compete today and build for tomorrow. Playing both sides of that, if it's picks this year or picks into the future, getting those are cost-controlled assets, young players, that could really help us set the foundation there. I'd be open to either/or.



Q. The offensive tackle group coming out, everyone talks about Neal and Ekwonu. How about Charles Closs, Mississippi State, should he be in the conversation with those two? Do you project him as a top 10 pick in this draft?

JOE SCHOEN: Want to give you our board (laughter)?

I'm not going to talk about any specifics. Charles is a really good player, really good feet. We like him. Whether he should be up in that group or not, that's for everybody to decide. We'll see how it falls on draft night. Over time we'll see how it plays out.

All three of those players that you mentioned are talented and good players, great kids. I think they all have bright futures.

Q. I'm sure you know the offensive line here has been an unsolvable Rubik's cube for years now. How committed are you and your staff to leaving the draft believing you can put a capable, dominant offensive line on the field starting in September?

JOE SCHOEN: Dabs said it earlier, too, the offensive line is important. There's several other positions that are important for us to go compete. I understand, again, I wasn't here in the past. I'm not sure exactly everything that went on. I'm privy to recently where the offensive line was. We tried through free agency with the resources we have to upgrade the offensive line the best we can. That will continue through the draft.

Again, if you want to build it up both sides of the ball, build it up front, offensive line, that's very important.

To get our best version of Saquon, Daniel, the entire offense, to your point, that's going to be very important to get that right, whether it's running the ball or pass protection. That will definitely be a priority.

It's just the need, the value, where that is. You just got to make sure it mirrors up or you're going to be in the same boat. If you try to force it, it's not the right value, we're sitting up here next year saying the same thing. We needed a guard, so we reached for him, but the value wasn't right.

You have to make sure when those two meet, they mirror each other, that's when you're going to make the best decisions.

Q. How do you balance if there's a guy on the board that you really like versus you (loss of audio)?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, I've been there before. You get greedy, let's move back. That guy is gone. Are you going to sleep better at night knowing you got an extra sixth round pick, you move back four spots, but you lose the guy you want, or let's just take the guy and not be greedy. You play through all those situations.

Again, that's why sometimes I'll do a vertical board, how many players are available, if we move back X amount of spots, are we going to get one of these five guys? It makes sense, yes, plus you get an extra pick.

It's not something I have to do. We'll take phone calls, analyze it, call the team back if they're calling and let them know if we'll do it or not.

Q. If you get the number one cornerback in this draft, I would think your approach is different whether James Bradberry is on the depth chart or not? Do you think he can be here? If not, how much does that affect how you go into the draft?

JOE SCHOEN: So your question is more about James?

Q. Both. If you think James...

JOE SCHOEN: There's going to be a number one corner at five?

Q. Yes.

JOE SCHOEN: Okay. You got the crystal ball (smiling).

We'll see. We'll figure that out. I've had great conversations with James Bradberry's representatives. I've talked to James. He can still play in this league. He's a starting corner. We talked. He wasn't here today. There are contingency plans as I mentioned in the combines and owners meeting where he could still be a New York Giant.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOE SCHOEN: We've gotten calls on James Bradberry, yes.

Q. When you approach this draft, it's kind of been said that you don't have a lot of salary cap space, you need about \$12 million or so. How does that influence what you may or may not do as far as trading, moving around, how you approach everything? Do you not let that affect you?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, not in this draft. Again, contingency plan. If we stay at every pick, this is what it's going to cost

us. If we do move back, there is a cost savings of doing that. That is not going to drive our decision. We are not going to pass up on a good player, especially in the draft, for a cost savings. That's not going to be the genesis of that decision.

Q. You said restructuring, this year the timing, why do it when you do it?

JOE SCHOEN: The public websites that they have out there said there's some things when you're dealing with the salary cap that they don't necessarily bake in when they're doing that stuff. There were some things that occurred, we had to convert at that time.

Q. In your contingency plans, this is your first year, based on your experience at Buffalo, how soon before the draft do you start talking about trade value and potential trade up and trade down scenarios with other teams?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, again, head down in meetings with coaches, scouts and everything. Haven't really come up for air to start thinking about that. Hey, does it make sense for us to move back, move up?

Right now we're planning that we have five and seven, the rest of our picks, et cetera. We have received calls on both picks. Again, it's too early. We're still working through our process. It's more, hey, let's stay in contact as the draft gets closer. We'll go through those scenarios. It's too early right now to make any type of decision like that.

Q. Is there any advantage to being and unknown quantity? You don't have a track record, a history. Nobody probably knows what you're thinking. Any advantage to that?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, there could be. But I think where the picks are, I'm not sure that's going to play in as much. It's the fifth and seventh pick. Again, I just know we're going to get two good players. There's enough needs that we have that whether I had a track record or not, I think where we're going to go, I don't think anybody really will have a good sense of that.

Q. You said you have a pretty good idea of the first four rounds. Has that changed a lot since you've been here?

JOE SCHOEN: Oh, yeah. Myself and probably four or five others have seen the entire board. Between myself, Brandon Brown, Tim McDonnell, Chris Pettit, we've seen the entire board. A couple national scouts that have seen quite a bit of the board, too.

If you're talking about a receiver at USC and a receiver at Tennessee, you have multiple looks on those guys that could have that conversations. If it's an area scout that has seen somebody at USC, and an area scout at Tennessee, they can't really can't enter into that conversation because they haven't seen them both. Multiple looks along with the coaches on the entire draft board. Again, that's part of our process that we believe in, that will help us lead to the best decisions.

Q. You said you received a call about the picks. Have you received any offers for the five and seven?

JOE SCHOEN: Not a hard offer, no. We haven't got into negotiations. Just some teams called and said, Would you be willing to move? That's kind of where it is right now.

My comment was as the draft gets closer, we can talk more if there's any specifics, if you're serious about doing it.

I think some teams are just fishing around.

Q. When you table those discussions, possibly if they reach back out to you, do the parameters around that change or do they come back with a new price, what is the philosophy there?

JOE SCHOEN: It's a situation where I'm perfectly fine at five and seven. If it makes sense, something that blows your doors off, then you think about it if somebody offers something. Nobody's offered anything, hard offer, right now.

To me it really wouldn't make sense right now to do anything, again, unless it blew the doors off, something you can't turn down.

I think a lot of it right now, same as me, people are starting to come out of meetings, stepping back, meeting with their coaches. Now you kind of get into the planning part of it. If it's a team behind us, they want to move up, how can we get there, who can we call. Some exploratory calls typically will happen now. By Monday you'll find out who is serious, who is Jacksonville going to take, Detroit, all those rumors.

It will pick up steam next week, there will be more serious conversations if there are teams that are legit, serious, thinking about coming up.

Q. From an evaluation standpoint, for you personally, you have a scouting background, what is the biggest lesson that you take into this process of scouting guys

that maybe you may have made a mistake, wrong on a guy? Is there something philosophically you look at and say this is why I believe what I believe?

JOE SCHOEN: Absolutely. Autopsy report. After you make a decision, you look back, why did it work, why didn't it work. Over 21 years of doing this, you got a Rolodex of players and situations that have occurred that you can reflect on and learn from.

To me the biggest thing is the collaboration between the coaching staff and the personnel staff. It doesn't make sense to draft a guy if the coaches want no part of him. They're dead on arrival. As soon as that guy -- if they're worried about his hands, they drop a ball, they're up in my office, Told you he couldn't catch (smiling).

Again, there's a little bit of - how should I say it - trying to get the coaches on the same page, whatever it is. We joke around about being lawyers. We are presenting our case to the coaches, we have to figure out how to get them to where we want them. If there's somebody we really like, there's a roundabout way to get them to see it how we see it.

To me the collaboration, it has been outstanding between Dabs and his staff. We had pro days. 30 visits. Six guys in the building today that they're meeting with. They've been phenomenal.

The collaboration, I think when the coaching staff and the personnel staff are on the same page on a player, I typically think those are the best decisions.

Q. You mentioned earlier there were contingency plans where James could still be with the Giants. How difficult are those plans to enact to keep someone with his cap number here? Why don't you need to know that before the draft? If you do have to make a move with him, a big hole to fill once the draft is complete.

JOE SCHOEN: That's the tough part about this job. You know what, James Bradberry is a great person, good player. He is. I know the two people very well that were in Carolina that drafted him. Brandon Bean and Sean McDermott. He's a player we talked about.

I like the kid. I like the skill set. It's just the situation we're in from a financial standpoint. It is what it is. But there are ways that we can still make it work and James can be here. People say why don't you cut or trade him. Then there's a huge void.

We're going to play it out, see how the draft goes, see what the roster looks like. There's still contingency plans where

we can keep James on the roster.

Q. Do you have to take into account how the locker room might perceive it if you keep him longer, then cut him, puts him in a tougher spot? Does that weigh into your decision?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, you're always taking that into the decision. That's part of process, too. You think about all those things.

At the end of the day you have to do what's best for the New York Giants. He's still a player that can play at a high level and is a starting corner in the league.

Q. You'd be open to reworking the contract?

JOE SCHOEN: I'm not going to get into details. But we have contingency plans.

Q. What is your sense or intuition, nobody likes him, then everybody likes him, but do you get a sense that at five and seven there will be teams interested in quarterbacks that makes this whole thing go, do you get a sense of how strong the market is, what teams are thinking about these guys?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, not yet. I'm guessing that will pick up steam. Right now, I mean, you call around and you ask. Nobody has showed their hands on the quarterbacks. They really haven't.

We know what teams have been where. We know, again, where these kids have went on visits, private workouts. We track a lot of that stuff. Really haven't heard a lot on what teams are high on which quarterbacks. Hasn't been a lot of that.

Q. You said you still want to compete today and build for tomorrow. How important are these two first round picks for today and tomorrow?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, very important. Integral. For Brian and I, it's our first two picks as New York Giant head coach and general manager. In terms of foundational pieces, in terms of being good players, the type of people we want, it's very important.

Q. Generally speaking, how do you view a third round pick? Should you get a multi-year starter?

JOE SCHOEN: I don't want to put any pressure on the guy. Then, the hit rate at third round, there's some margin for error, there's a margin for error across the draft.

I've had guys that come in and play and have good careers. Some guys are backups, contributors, special teams. Yeah, ideally they all turn into starters. I don't want to put a play time percentage or anything like that.

Q. I ask because it's been a spot where the Giants have not gotten much out of the third round since 2005. Having been a scout, what do you value the third round as?

JOE SCHOEN: Again, ideally they all turn into starters. You prefer that. Just looking over the past couple years, we had some guys where I've been in the past, it's taken them some time to develop, but they've turned into good players. Some guys, took a couple running backs in Buffalo, they split time.

Again, sometimes it's based on the situation, injury, what the success they've had. I don't want to say, yeah, this guy is going to be a starter, then you guys crush me two years from now (laughter).

Q. As the man with final say, do you feel the weight of responsibility?

JOE SCHOEN: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

Q. Your first time in this position obviously.

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, absolutely. I want to get it right.

Q. Last time we spoke to you, you said you were still feeling out what Don Martindale wanted from a player standpoint. What traits are you looking for, what have you learned about the types of players?

JOE SCHOEN: I'll give Wink a lot of credit. He's very open-minded. He likes players with versatility. He doesn't necessarily have size, length parameters. When we watched some Baltimore film, you could just see how much he values versatility, where he can play players, how he can put them in their best position to succeed.

He's been really good, really clear, really defined in terms of what he's looking for.

The first piece is one of the things I really appreciate from watching the Baltimore stuff with him, some of the stuff we're looking for.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOE SCHOEN: Absolutely. It's part of it. We're in meetings, just going through players, whether it's reading reports, how we do interviews at the Senior Bowl, how we

into interviews at the combine, the information we're getting back from pro days to having a couple weeks of meetings. You're always evaluating everybody.

Some of it's just maybe we're going to do things a little bit different in terms of our process, who is going to buy in, who is going to excel, who is all hands on deck, who has adapted.

The staff has done a great job with that. There's a lot of good people in this building that have done a lot of good work over the three months I've been here.

Q. What is it like watching Brandon go through this process?

JOE SCHOEN: Oh, Brandon through this process. That's a good question.

To me it's a little bit of what I was talking about earlier, the coaches, maybe you don't see eye-to-eye, how to navigate that, consensus build, get people on the same page if there was a discrepancy between personnel and the coaching.

I was fortunate, I was in a lot of meetings dealing with ownership. It's not something you do when you're an area scout or national scout or whatever. My interactions, being in those meetings with Brandon, the Pegulas, that's something I would have never learned along the road if I wasn't with Brandon. That was very valuable.

Q. How much do you factor character? Is there some stuff that's non-negotiable?

JOE SCHOEN: It weighs heavy. It weighs heavy. If it's a guy that we don't think fits from a character standpoint, we'll just take him off the board. He goes on and has a really good career somewhere else, that's fine. We just got to get it right for what we want in our building.

Q. How about durability, guys that have injuries?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, we just had our medical meeting Monday night with the medical staff. They've done a great job at the combine working through all these guys. Some of the players that weren't at Indianapolis, they weren't combine guys, getting that information, too. We take that all into account.

They're the doctors and the medical folks. We lean on them on what the recommendations are in terms of taking or not taking a player.

Q. Did you have a draft day routine?

JOE SCHOEN: I used to golf, there was less pressure (laughter).

Q. What do you think it's going to be like next Thursday?

JOE SCHOEN: Oh, probably a long day. I'll probably get up, just come in here. In a temporary apartment right now. Probably not going to sit there. Probably too anxious to golf. Probably come in, get a workout in, make some phone calls, call around the league, call our general managers, see if you can get any information on what's going on in front of you. Again, probably take some calls if people are calling or looking to move up.

Yeah, it will be exciting. Something you dream about. For that day to finally be here, it will be really cool.

Q. Do you think there will be a lot of outgoing calls?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, I'll be calling to try to get some information (smiling).

Q. When you look at this draft, do you say if I take five and seven, I know in my mind I'm going to get two sure-fire starters?

JOE SCHOEN: You would like to think that. I'm not going to label these guys are going to be sure-fire starters. There's so much that goes into it. Again, I'm not perfect. You're evaluating an imperfect human being. I don't want to put anybody under that type of pressure.

We're going to get two guys that we think from a character standpoint, as an athletic standpoint, as a football player, and it's going to mirror up to what we're looking for. I'm confident we'll find somebody that checks all those boxes.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, I mean, I really can't answer that. It's a good draft. There's depth in the draft. Again, there is depth throughout the draft, late into the first, second, third. I do think it's a good draft. That's my job and our staff's job, to identify those players. Fourth, fifth as well, and on.

Q. You mentioned there's a reason why these jobs are open. You get the roster you get. Is one of the things that really was good about this job is what you have as far as capital in this draft?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. Having two top 10 picks, it's definitely a good way to set the foundation, get two really good players early on. Again, you're not sitting at 15 or 20, trying to figure out who

is going to be there. The fact that we can list seven players, know that we're going to get two of them, makes it a little bit easier.

Yeah, that was definitely an attractive part of the job.

Q. Do you look at 36 as that as well?

JOE SCHOEN: The good thing about 36, you get all day Friday, we're the fourth pick in the second round. We know we're going to get one of these four. If there's 10 you like, somebody calls, you can move back, get one of those guys. All that stuff will go into play.

Q. Is it concerning to you that Kadarius is not here, hasn't reported yet, doesn't know the playbook?

JOE SCHOEN: It's voluntary. Nobody asked about the other guys that aren't here. It's life. Life happens. I've had good conversations with Kadarius. We've been in contact. At the end of the day it's voluntary. That's what it is.

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