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Xavier McKinney

Press Conference



Q. So what's it like with the new guy?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Who?

Q. Wink?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Oh, Wink, it's really fun. Edge we all enjoying it. You know, just so much aggression. It's just giving us energy. We're able to go out there and play without worrying about making mistakes, so it's just giving us a lot of freedom to just go play, go attack and be the play-makers that we have on our defense. It's been fun and we've loved every bit of it.

Q. Is that the focal point of Wink's defense is attack, attack -- not the offense?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Yeah, like I said, we love it because ultimately as a defense, that's what we want to do. We want to make the offense make mistakes, not them wait, not us wait for them to make mistakes, so we want them to make a mistake off of what we do and how we bring that aggression towards them.

Q. How different is it without Logan and James Bradberry? Seemed likelier, secondary was like the strength of the unit and now all of a sudden, it's like you're the old guy?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Yeah, we definitely missed those guy, man, and you know, they made decisions for them that were good for their situation, and I was just talking to lo yesterday, I just called him just to check up on him. We all keep in contact and we all brothers at the end of the day. But the guys that we have now, in our DB room are great and we're just all finding that chemistry with each other and finding that bond within ourselves and within our group. Like I said, we're having fun.

Q. Seemed likelier was kinds of a breakout year for you. What do you consider your next step?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Take it ten times forwards. That's what I'm trying to do. Trying to make sure whatever it is I need to do to help this team win games and help us play great defense, that's what I'm willing to do and that's what I'm going to do. For me, that's what I'm focused on.

Q. Wink called Jerome Henderson the best secondary coach in the NFL. Obviously he's the only one you've ever known, but what makes him a good coach and how important is it for the young guys in the room to have the consistency, I think he's the only assistant that stayed?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: For us, we feel great, Ro and Mike actually stayed. We're happy about that. They difficult give us the confidence to go out there and just play. They help us a lot on the field of just seeing different things. Obviously when I came in, Rome is who I had. That's great, being able to stay with him obviously in this game.

Always been a lot of coaches get switched around but keeping our same coach and keeping the coach that I have my rookie year is great because we already had that chemistry with each other, and a lot of us had that bond with him already. It's a lot easier to be able to just listen to him and be able to soak in the information that he gives us.

Q. With pressure comes, you know, sometimes a DB gets stuck on an island. Do you mind that?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: No, I don't. I don't. Especially in this defense. Because it's so much aggression. Like I say, it gives you the freedom to go out and play. I don't mind that at all because at the end of the day it's me versus you, anyway, so trying to win one-man battle every time and I'm confident that I'm going to win that battle every time. That's how I see it and that's how I go about it.

Q. Obviously you had the turnover on the coaching staff but you individually, how did you attack the off-season and will continue to attack in terms of here is my game and here is where I want to take my game?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: I just wanted to take it to the next level. I think my biggest thing this off-season has been a



lot of film study. I've just been diving in on film and just seeing different things that the off-season does, whether that splits how they run things, when they are going to run things, situational stuff. That's really my biggest thing. Every day I train but I want to make sure that I over emphasize studying the playbook, staying, watching game film, watching practice film, watching myself, seeing what I can improve on. I think that was the biggest thing for me as far as really taking us into the next level. A lot of times, that's what separates great guys from good guys is study -- that's what I've seen, so just been focusing on that.

Q. Does it change the way you watch film or the amount of film you watched?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Kind of both. I watched it more at like a slower pace just so I can be locked in on certain things. If I saw a play once, I would try to make sure that I could see that play again. For me it was just watching it at a slower pace and not just going through it. At some times, I would also just sit there and watch the whole game and I wouldn't rewind. I would just let the game play through and if something came and I saw something, I write it down or you know, I call it out before it happens. So that was kind of both for me.

Q. You missed a good chunk of your rookie year because of injury, came back and were able to play last year. A-Rob is sort of in the same situation, a year removed from that. What advice do you have for him and what can he expect in his second year that's a restart, a do over for him?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Just to go out there and be himself. That's what we ask amongst ourselves. We all hold each other to a high standard in our room and we all know that we all hold each other accountable. So you know, for him, it's really, follow us, go out there and play and be yourself and go make a play. We don't -- if you mess up, we won't worry too much about that because everybody going to have their mental errors. I have mine. I had some today. But everybody is going to make their mistakes. Just go out there and play and we'll correct it later.

Q. What did you think when the team drafted Evan Neal and what was his rep at Alabama?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: I was happy about that one. I've been getting on his case a little bit. I was glad that we picked him up, man. He's been great so far from what I've seen and when we go out there and compete against them. We family, so you know, obviously we played at 'Bama together and it was fun there and I'm just glad that he's my teammate again and glad that we can have him as part of the team.