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Xavier McKinney

Press Conference



Q. I'm sure you saw the Jalen Hurts contract already. Just what you thought of that for your former teammate and how much do you look at the Eagles as the team to beat? They are the NFC champions and win the division. How much do you measure yourself against them as to where you want to go?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: First of all, congrats to J-Hurts. Obviously he's my former teammate, so I know how he works. I know he's a really good guy, so he deserved every dollar that he got, so I'm happy for him.

As far as the Eagles, I think that everybody is a team to beat in our division. Obviously we didn't do that well in division play last year, so I think that's something for us that's going to be heavily emphasized. So I don't really see it as just one team that we need to be worried about. I think it's all of the teams in our division, so that's just how I see it and I think that's how a lot of us see it on the team, so yeah.

Q. How much did that stick with you guys that you only won one division game last year?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: I mean, it's tough. Obviously that's not something that we were looking to be that way but it is what it is. You know, we still went through the year and had a pretty successful year from where we came from, so you know, that's how we look at it and now it's just time to improve and get better from there.

Q. At the end of last season, I think you said that you were going to stick around and continue rehabbing on your hand. Can you give any update as to where your hand is and how you're feeling?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Yeah, hand is good to go. After tremendous amount of work and rehab that I've been doing, you know, with the staff and with the training staff, doing outside things to be able to rehab it, is good. So I'm just really looking forward and ready to go to the start of this year.

Q. So you don't think you'll be needing any kind of splint or protective covering on the hand this year?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: I don't think so. I don't think I should but we'll see how it goes.

Q. You're getting back Wink Martindale who drew some head coaching consideration. How important was it for the defense to have that continuity?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: To have Wink back? Oh, yeah, it was great to have him back. Me personally, it's hard being able to change DC, so I'm glad that we got him back. I think we built a lot of him, with just everybody, the whole group as a defense, built a lot of good relationships. You know, we understood how one another worked and we were able to build something special. I'm glad he stayed. I really didn't have any doubt that he would leave, honestly.

So like I said, just happy that he's here and happy that he stayed and we can continue to build off of what we had last year.

Q. What was your reaction to Julian leaving, and how confident are you in any of the guys who will have to step up whether that's a new comer like Bobby or the new guys, who has impressed you there that you think could fill those shoes and what was your reaction with Julian?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: I was in contact with J-Love, so kind of was, you know, knowing what was going on a little bit. Obviously it sucked to see him go. We have a really good relationship together, not just on the field but off the field as well. Not only I lost a teammate but I lost a brother -- I didn't really lose him but just the fact of being on the team-wise. I'm glad to see he got paid and I was happy for him.

But we still talk and we still have communication, so kind of know what it is, and you know, our message to each other was just keep on, like keep playing and keep going and getting paid.



But for the guys that we have here, the guys have already shown that we can step up. We've got guys in the room who have been in that situation last year and were in situations where they had to come in and step up and they did that very well. They did that at a high level.

So I have a lot of confidence in who we have in our room now and the guys that we'll have bringing in, so I'm not too stressed about that and I'm really confident in who we got.

Q. Obviously Dexter is not there and he has a year left on his deal and you have a year left on your deal, and I think Joe Schoen told us you changed agents recently. Clearly your contract is on your mind. Did you think about skipping any of this off-season program yourself?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: No, I didn't. No.

Q. Have you guys had any -- what can you tell us? Have you had any contract negotiations or how do you feel about your future here with the Giants?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Well, for me, I'm focused on what I'm doing right now. That's my biggest thing. I'm a pretty present guy. I just like to stay in the present with things and where my feet are at, so that's kind of my mindset right now. It's just to get better, you know, personally but also help my team, whichever way I can. So that's pretty much how I've always been and that's how I continue to be regardless of anything else that's happened on the outside but not too -- too focused on that right now.

Q. To follow up on that a little bit, you did change agents. Was the contract, your future contract part of why you changed?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: You said -- say that one more time?

Q. You changed agents. What was the motivation behind changing agents?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Just you know, I had some other things that I feel like I need to get done but I think those are all personal things. I don't think that's still the things that I'm going to discuss with you guys, but you know, that was really the sole reason of it. It didn't really have much to do with what was going on right now. Obviously didn't having in to do with OTAs.

Like I said, I'm going to be here and I'm going to help my team out however I can, whenever I can, so you know that's like -- my focus is just what I'm doing right now, so yeah.

Q. How much of a hindrance was your hand last year, and just to clarify, you said you didn't think you needed a splint but you feel like you're a hundred percent in that regard right now?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Yeah, no, I'm a hundred percent for sure. That wasn't a kind of thing -- kind of thing I'm not a hundred percent.

As far as being a hindrance, it wasn't really hindering at all to me. Obviously I mean, you guys saw the games that I played with the cast. I was still able to make a huge impact on the games, and I think if you turn on that film, that you see that. So I didn't see any hindrance. I don't know if y'all did but I definitely didn't. I still played at a high level.

Q. The one last question, I want to ask, the Draft coming and Brian Branch, a 'Bama guy who is projected right around where you guys are picking. Is that something you'd like to see to have on the other side of you is a guy from 'Bama?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Yeah, it's always good to see the guys that -- I didn't get to play with BB but I know him pretty well. But it's always good when you see the 'Bama guys up there and you know when it's their time to finally get drafted and things of that nature.

If we can add 'Bama guys, obviously I'm always going to be for it. But whoever we get, I'll be happy with it. But if we can have some 'Bama guys, I'll be cool with that for sure.

Q. I wanted to ask you about two of your new teammates. Did you cross paths yet with Nacho?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Yes, I did. I actually reached out to them once they got the deals and stuff like that. I was able to -- I actually talked to Bobby. I was able to get in touch with him and talk with him but I reached out to Nacho, and I didn't get -- we didn't get to speak much. So we actually just were able to meet each other today.

But you know, obviously two great dudes from what I can tell, and I know they are going to be -- know they are ready to go and add to what we have here defensively.

Q. Nacho, his first Zoom with us was lots of personality.

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Yeah, yeah.

Q. That D-Line and that defensive room?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: He's definitely going to be a great

guy to be around. We got some guys that are pretty funny and their motor is high. I saw that a good bit in him, too. Like I said, it's going to be good just be able to add those guys on to what we already had and make it a lot better than what we have. So you know, it will be fun.

Q. And one more, if I may. Darren Waller, you're a student of the game, and you see tight ends on Sundays. What can he bring when you look at a guy like that with his stature and his resumé already?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Yeah, I was able to reach out to him, too. So we talked a little bit before we came in today. But obviously just knowing and seeing the way he plays, his style of play, the threat that he is to defenses, I know for me personally, it's going to be some fun practices because I know I'm a real competitive guy. I know he is, too. So it's going to be fun and I look forward to it. He's going to make me better. I'll make him better. So it's going to be some good matchups and you know, I know he's going to hurt some people on the other side of the ball, too, just being a threat that he is. So it's exciting to see and I'm glad that he's part of our squad.

Q. As a team leader, do you think it's a big issue that Saquon and Dex are both not there due to their contracts, and also, how you feel Brian Daboll your coach has handled it thus far?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: No, I don't think it's an issue. They are dealing with their own things. That's for them to work out.

But we know what type of guys that they are and what type of players that they are and we all love them. We all kind of know what it is. But we don't really -- you know, the guys aren't really looking into it like that. But I think they just handled it great. It's kind of pretty much the same. But I think we all -- we all know what type -- like I said we all know what type of guys they are and what they bring to the table, so that's how we see it.

Q. Quick follow-up on your hand. You sounded optimistic you won't need to wear anything in the season but you're not certain yet. Is that an accurate representation of what you said? Or where exactly is it right now? Is it a conversation with the training staff about whether to wear something protective?

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Either way I'm going to play at a high level, and I'll leave it at that, but yeah.

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