

New York Giants Media Conference

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Eric Gray

Press Conference

Q. Can you talk about having DeMarco Murray as a coach, what he taught you that can be an advantage at this point?

ERIC GRAY: DeMarco was a big important piece for me and kind of the reason I went to Oklahoma. I feel like him playing the game at a high level, he could teach me a lot about being a pro in this league, like what it takes to be a pro, what I need to do to get better to get to this level.

Q. Was there one thing in particular that really stood out to you?

ERIC GRAY: The most important thing I took from him is just being a pro every single day, no matter what's going on. Everybody has something going on, and you have to be on your P's and Q's every single day.

Q. You got a rep today and then you talked to Brian for a little bit. What did he talk to you about?

ERIC GRAY: He was just talking to me more so about defining my routes, making sure I'm doing everything correctly, just getting used to his style of coaching.

Q. I thought you probably could have come out of Tennessee. What went into your decision to go to Oklahoma to work on X, Y, Z, get a little bit more college football?

ERIC GRAY: Actually when I left Tennessee I was a sophomore, so I couldn't go yet, so I went to Oklahoma, just looking for a new home. I felt like I could be explosive in the offense as well as with DeMarco Murray, but DeMarco was the key to teaching me a lot about being successful in this league.

Q. What was that first year like? Just reading about it, it didn't seem like you got as many reps as you wanted that first year. What was that like to have that deal with that and how did you get through that?



ERIC GRAY: Yeah, that year was definitely adversity for me, but I learned a lot in that time. I grew mentally, I grew spiritually in that time, learning that you've just got to keep going and it's going to pay off one day for you. My dad had a saying during that time that was like, you can't keep a good man down. I knew if I kept working and kept going hard that I would ultimately be where I am.

Q. What are a couple specific things that DeMarco taught you that you're like, wow, I never thought of that, that's really interesting expertise that maybe you wouldn't have gotten from someone who's not like a massive expert?

ERIC GRAY: Well, him playing the game, it's different from when you're actually out there. He knows about playing in the flow, playing in the heat of the battle, being out there and knowing fronts, knowing coverages. He taught me a lot about reading the defense before the play happens, reading it pre-snap to give you a feel on where the ball is going to hit or even protection maybe.

Q. Everybody talks about the position. I want you to rank this DB skill set that you need to play running back at a high level: Vision, footwork, balance, speed. Which one is the first one for you?

ERIC GRAY: It's vision first -- vision, footwork, speed, balance.

Q. In your mind what came together last year to make you have a successful year?

ERIC GRAY: I would think my mindset going into that year saying I wanted this to be my last year, I wanted to go out there and give my all and put it all together and have that season that I wanted to have. The previous year, like I talk about the adversity year, I learned a lot in that time, and I knew coming to the next year that if I just stick to my Q's, stick to my coaching, stay close to my teammates that it would happen for me.

Q. You didn't play in the bowl game. How hard is it to make that decision?



ERIC GRAY: You know, it's a hard decision because you think about it, you go out there with a team from January all the way to December, so you gel with your teammates, you're there for a long time, working together. You're in Smitty's workouts for a long time, so just to -- at that time it was a hard decision for me, but my coaches ultimately said it was the best decision for me.

Q. When you think about the position you play, it's a valuable position, but in the league some of the guys don't get drafted as high, sometimes they don't get paid as much. What is the value of a running back, and do you like the position?

ERIC GRAY: I think it's a very valuable position. You look at today's game, you look at just the different running backs in the league and you think about how important they are to the offense. They've got to learn protections, they've got to learn the passing game. They have to know what everyone is doing, so in my opinion it's a very valuable position.

Q. Do you think you're a third-day pick? There are third-day pick running backs that do well. Do you think of yourself as a third-day pick that wants to do well, or do you look at yourself as, no, that's not (indiscernible)?

ERIC GRAY: No, I don't look at it that way. I'm just looking at my opportunity here. My opportunity, I'm here now. First day, second day, third day, that's all out of the window. I'm here now. Got a chance to be in a special place like this, so I'm happy about it.

Q. What do you make of at some point being a teammate of Saquon?

ERIC GRAY: You know, he's a great player, had a lot of success in this league, so I plan on learning a lot from him in the room.

Q. Have you had a chance to speak to him yet?

ERIC GRAY: No, I haven't.

Q. It's obviously a whirlwind, you're here right after you get drafted. What kind of impression has it made? What has stood out to you about being on a professional field in a professional environment?

ERIC GRAY: It's been a lot of emotions, like yesterday being on an NFL field, and I was walking, like wow, the Giants, like I'm really in the NFL now. It's been unbelievable. You think about coming all the way for me, coming all the way from little league to now, it's flown by,

and it's a blessing to be here.

Q. You got to play with Jalin at Tennessee, right?

ERIC GRAY: I did.

Q. What stuck out about him? We all talk about the speed.

ERIC GRAY: 100 percent. When he came in as a freshman that's what you knew -- as soon as first workout, his speed. His speed is what he's good at; that's his strength. His speed, so definitely noticed that from the first day.

Q. I'm sure you probably keep an eye on Tennessee. Did you watch that Alabama game, and what did you think --

ERIC GRAY: I think actually -- I don't remember who we played, but we played an early game that day, and me and my whole family watched that entire game, and I was rooting for him. I was rooting for him the whole way. I had a lot of teammates that I played with that were still on that team, so I was happy for him.

Q. What did you think about what he did in that game? That was a big-time performance.

ERIC GRAY: Unbelievable. I was watching it live, so I was like, Jalin is doing his thing tonight.

Q. Did you field any punts today?

ERIC GRAY: Yes, I did.

Q. When you look at the way you stack up, you can't tell yet, but do you have any doubt that your physical abilities will translate to the NFL?

ERIC GRAY: I think football is football in my opinion. I think you go out there, you work hard, you do what it takes on and off the field, and you let your body take over when you get out there.

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