

# New York Giants Media Conference

Thursday, May 18, 2023

New York, New York, USA

**Bob Papa**

**Shaun O'Hara**

**John Mara**

**Joe Schoen**

**Coach Brian Daboll**

**Deonte Banks**

**John Michael Schmitz**

**Daniel Jones**

**Darren Waller**

**Kayvon Thibodeaux**

**Andrew Thomas**

**Xavier McKinney**

**Bobby Okereke**

Press Conference

(Applause.)

BOB PAPA: Oh, yeah. Welcome everybody. The Giants town hall presented by Verizon. I got my Super Bowl champion, Shaun O'Hara, by my side. Shaun, how awesome is this? Because of COVID, for the first time since 2019, we get the flavor of the Giants' season ticket holders right here at the Beacon Theatre.

SHAUN O'HARA: Yeah, Bob, this is awesome. I can feel the energy, the electricity right now. Kind of brings me back to last home game for the Giants at Met-Life Stadium where we beat the Colts 38 to 10. Place was rocking!

(Applause.)

Yeah. Yeah, it's great to be back here in person with you guys and great to see all the Giants fans out here. Word



on the street is there is a 60 jersey out here, so I must have a family member here. That's great. There we go! Representing.

BOB PAPA: Look at that.

SHAUN O'HARA: All right, a little O-line love. I love it.

BOB PAPA: Collector's item. Collector's item.

You know, it's really cool because things haven't gone well the last several years, but what you Giants fans did this season to make Met-Life Stadium basically Giants Stadium all over again was awesome, because you guys provided truly a home field advantage.

SHAUN O'HARA: Yeah, no doubt about it. You could feel it. You could feel the energy, the excitement. I can't wait, as I'm sure you guys can't either, for this season. Can't get here soon enough. You're going to get what hear from some of the big players and the coaches that are going to lead the way.

But Giants, we're back, baby. We're smart, we're tough, and we're dependable. (Applause.)

BOB PAPA: Now, listen, this night is for you, so we'll ask some questions, but it's your opportunity to ask questions of John Mara, Joe Schoen, Brian Daboll. They're going to be up here on the stage.

We're going to have some of the rookie class here tonight and then have a handful of veteran players that helped the Giants make it to the post-season last year right here up on the stage.

So you get an opportunity to line up and ask your questions this everything, but to get things started -- and you've got to be 13 or older, by the way, to line up and ask the questions. Should have read the fine print on the invite.

But to get things started, for those of you that follow the Giants on the Giants social media platforms, Giants.com and GiantsTV, there is a really cool show called Giants Life

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
sports

where you get to see exclusive footage and behind-the-scenes connections with the New York Giants that nobody else has access to because it's an in-house production.

So episode three of Giants Life, which will drop tomorrow morning on all your favorite Giants' social media platforms, takes you behind the scenes and inside the draft room and through draft weekend. It's an awesome episode.

But because you're season ticket holders and you're here tonight, what we're going to do is give you a sneak peek of episode three of Giants Life. Full episode drops tomorrow morning.

Giants Life, episode three. (Applause.) You're going to love it. The full episode drops tomorrow morning on all the Giants' social media platforms.

It's time to bring up here on stage -- remember, line up if you want to ask questions. The first group that we're going to bring up is the man that brought you that unbelievable draft room. He is the president and CEO of your New York Football Giants, please welcome Mr. John Mara, the general manager of the New York Giants.

(Applause.)

Please welcome Joe Schoen.

(Applause.)

And I know, you wanted to stay sort of in character based on that video you saw, please welcome the head coach of your New York Football Giants, Brian Daboll.

(Applause.)

JOHN MARA: Can you believe he called me and asked me if it was okay if he wore his coaching stuff today. I said, I don't give a shit what you wear. Just keep winning, baby. Just keep winning.

Oh, it's great. Straight from the office.

BOB PAPA: John, I'll start with you. Obviously the Giants will embark upon their 99th season in the National Football League this year.

Such an awesome experience last year, and the life line of this franchise sits right here, the fans. Just talk about the positivity that you feel from these fans and the franchise's direction.

JOHN MARA: No, we've been around a long time now and

we have so many fans, and I know a lot of you are out there that are third-generation season ticket holders. That's an unbelievable feeling, when you get letters from people saying, I started going to the game with my grandfather back in Yankee Stadium and had tickets ever since.

I don't know that any other franchise has that kind of history to be honest with you. That's something we take very seriously here. That's why I try to respond to all your letters. Even the ones over the last five or six years that weren't always so positive.

But, yeah, because it means a lot to us, the loyalty that they've shown to us, you want to give it back to them.

BOB PAPA: Yeah, you guys certainly did that, and you guys are building something great. I think everybody in this room feels it. Joe, I want to start with you. We just watched a little sneak peek of inside that new draft room that you've got.

I'll tell you, it looks like there is a lot going on. Things happen really fast. Take us through that moment as it's a frenzy as, hey, are we going to pick a player, are we going to trade. What's that like as a GM to have all that responsibility?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, Dabs and I were just talking about that scenario that they showed up there in the first round. We had been through all the scenarios so many times. If this, then we'll do this. If it gets close, we'll do this.

So, again, you're trying to predict what 31 other teams are doing and it's very hard to do because you're obviously not in their draft rooms.

But you take all the information you have. A lot of our scouts have done a great job throughout the fall with the work they put in, and then try to do what's best for the Giants in the different scenarios, and think it worked out great for us this year. We were able to get Te Banks at 24.

Because of all the preparation that not only the coaching staff, did but the personnel staff did, it's really not that hectic on day one because you have gone through all these scenarios and you're actually pretty calm.

JOHN MARA: About that million dollar draft room. So when Joe came to me months ago saying, we got to redo our draft room; I want to make it as modern as possible. I asked him the same question that I asked every general manager in my time at the team. That is: Is it going to help us win?



It'll shock you to know that not once anybody ever said, no, not really. He said, yes, it's going to help us win, so we went and did it. I'm happy we did it. I thought it worked out great.

**Q. Coach, had you ever made a trade before?**

BRIAN DABOLL: No, I haven't. It was good to be part of. These guys work incredibly hard, Joe and the staff, of putting together the draft board, of being out on the road away from their families. So when we jump into it as a coaching staff we're a little bit behind. We got a lot of catchup to do.

I would say that coaches did a great job, along with the scouts and then myself, Joe, and a few other people. Seemed like we have meeting after meeting after meeting after meeting of scenarios that could happen. This guy did a great job for us, so just was a little text and McVay said sure, and kind of worked out.

BOB PAPA: There you go. We have a question from a fan.

JOHN MARA: One more thing. This is great. Appreciate you all coming out. You guys are fantastic.

**Q. Coach Dabs, I want you to call out your favorite play, and the next time you call it in the game I want you to call it Big George. (Laughter.)**

BRIAN DABOLL: We already have a play like that. I just call Big George and -- you want it to be a run play or a pass play?

**Q. A pass play.**

BRIAN DABOLL: A pass play.

**Q. Yeah, call it out.**

BRIAN DABOLL: You want it to be a drop-back pass?

**Q. Whatever you want.**

BRIAN DABOLL: We'll go F shift (indiscernible) right 64 F Pelican X gypsy, slam, alert.

**Q. So now in the book, now in your playbook it's called?**

BRIAN DABOLL: It's called Big George.

**Q. There you go! (Applause.)**

BOB PAPA: Right here it the left in the front. You got an O'Hara shirt on.

**Q. Damn straight. I knew he was going to be here.**

BOB PAPA: Is that the jersey that he used to wear? He can't fit in that now.

SHAUN O'HARA: I paid him. Yeah, you take Venmo, right? (Laughter.) (Applause.)

BOB PAPA: Next question.

**Q. This is for coach. Coach, your Draft Day performance is legendary. An unlit cigar after your first pick, and then you did a trade where you had to have people put in the thing in your phone. So, amazing.**

So my question is this: We're not the media, so please don't give us a general answer.

BRIAN DABOLL: Are you busting my balls?

**Q. A little bit, a little bit. What would be the one or two players from last year that you were looking to step up to another level, whether off injury or just being in the system longer? Who are you looking and what as us fans to look for to take another step next year?**

BRIAN DABOLL: What's your name?

**Q. Scott.**

BRIAN DABOLL: Well, Scott, I would say this is not -- this is not a just a general answer, but it's the truth. Everybody has to step up.

**Q. I knew it.**

BRIAN DABOLL: They really do. Look, you can't just go from the end of the season and anticipate it's going to be the way it was last year.

**Q. Sure.**

BRIAN DABOLL: That's the nature of the business we're in. Joe and I talk about this all the time. 30% to 40% of our roster is new, so it's a little bit different this year. The last two weeks or three weeks we been going through some phase two stuff.

The rookies now are a little bit further away from where our veterans are because last year we just got here.



**Q. Right.**

BRIAN DABOLL: So everyone was kind of on even footing. This year our veterans have been with us, the players have been with us, and all those guys have to improve, and it starts with me. I got to do a better job in a lot of areas as well, and that's why we're doing what we're doing right now.

We're a long way from the season, and we certainly got a lot of the work to do, and that's what we're trying to do.

**Q. No names? (Laughter.) No names. All right, I appreciate it though, coach. Great job.**

BRIAN DABOLL: Thank you so much.

BOB PAPA: Question here in the front.

**Q. The life blood of the organization are the season ticket holders and the people that actually pay to go to games. Now it came out about a month and a half ago that league is considering flexible Thursday night scheduling. I know you were very adamant against it, okay. How are we as fans supposed to try and book a trip and all of a sudden 12 days before everything changes? And you have a travel agency that supports the team. How are they going to handle this? My point is, if they're going do Thursday night, and they always say that division games are the most important games, you have 32 teams, 16 games, why isn't every Thursday night a division game?**

JOHN MARA: You know, I couldn't agree with you more. I am so adamantly opposed to any additional flex scheduling. I hate flex scheduling, to be honest with you.

**Q. We all do. (Applause.)**

JOHN MARA: This year for the first time they can flex you from Sunday to Monday night, which I think is pretty rough on the paying customers.

But to take a game that's scheduled on Sunday and move it back to Thursday to me is just unconscionable. I have spoken out against and will continue to speak out against it and will vote against it. (Applause.)

It creates so many problems logistically for us, but also these are games late in the year, and you're trying to make a run to get the playoffs and your team is beaten up a little bit, and now you got to have them play on another short week.

It just makes no sense whatsoever. I hate what it does to not only your season ticket holders, but to people like you who want to travel to a game who make these plans months and months in advance. It to me is unconscionable, and I'll continue to be opposed to it.

(Applause.)

**Q. My question is for Joe. Joe, most GMs that come into a new organization, a new team, want to put their fingerprints on everything, the entire roster. This is my guy. I drafted him. I'm attaching my hip to this guy. You came in, you didn't do that. Again, most players who have their fifth year option declined don't really see a second contract with that team. I don't know what the exact stat is, but it's not high. Daniel put his head down, went to work. Not surprised, but played up to what we know he can be, a franchise quarterback, a leader. I know all of us here are proud of Daniel, but what did you see in Daniel that said, this is my \$160 million dollar guy right here?**

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, that's a great question. Daniel is an unbelievable person. We'll start with that. He is a wonderful person and he works harder than anybody in the building. He is the first one in, last one to leave.

And then he has the physical skills. He's athletic. He can run, throw. He can do everything we ask him to do within the offense.

And again, he was a little upset that Dabs and I had a conversation with him. Hey, we're not going to exercise your fifth year option. He didn't blink an eye. Came to work the next day and put his head down and went to work. Dabs and his staff, credit to them, they did a great job with him.

Listen, we don't have egos. Our job is to win games. Like build the best team and go win games. So whoever drafted him, wherever they came from, whatever it may be, however much they're making, wherever they were drafted, it's going to be a competitive environment year in and year out, and we're going to play the best players.

So that's our mindset and we'll continue to do that.

**Q. Thank you. You guys made being a Giants fan fun again. Thank you guys. (Applause.)**

BOB PAPA: What are you drinking?

**Q. Stella. You want one?**

BOB PAPA: On the way home.



**Q. Coach, I'm a native of Hillsboro, New Jersey, where Shaun O'Hara played high school ball. Been a fan of you for a while. Question I had for Brian. What do you find unique, because you've had so many jobs starting at William & Mary, going to the Bills and now here, what do you find unique about New York Giants fans in general? (Fan yells out - unintelligible.)**

BRIAN DABOLL: Yeah, that's right. Yeah. No, I mean, look, this is the city to be in. It's wild how many people come up to you on the street, whether you're in jersey, out in the city, and they're so supportive. They're die-hard of the organization.

One of my favorite parts of going to the game is that drive from our facility, take the little drive over there to the stadium, and all the fans are out there tailgating.

They were great this year. They're loud when they needed to be loud and it was a packed house. Keep it coming. (Applause.)

**Q. Thank you. Mr. Shoen, first off, it's really a privilege to see you as a general manager of our organization. You restored some dignity. I know the fans and the locker room is really grateful.**

JOE SCHOEN: Appreciate that. Thank you. (Applause.)

**Q. My question to you is obviously even the most optimistic fans I think were impressed with what the team put out last year. How do you make sure that you can protect your long-term vision without being handcuffed by expectations that continue, and sustain it in the short term? Thank you.**

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, that's a good question. Thank you. Dabs and I are aligned in terms of how we want the team to look, the type of players that we want to bring in, not just talent-wise, but who they are as people and individuals.

We firmly believe in our philosophy in terms of how to build a team, and we think it starts with the right type of people that also have the right habits. So really talented athletes that have the right habits and are going to work hard.

And we firmly believe in that, and we'll continue to find those type of players and build the team through that lens.

He does a great job putting together a staff. We have a very talented staff. I think we're very lucky to have Wink back and Mike Kafka. They were both finalists for head coaching jobs, so...

(Applause.)

So I think not just the team, but I think that was our philosophy when not only he put his coaching staff together, but some of our personnel hires. We firmly believe it's about the people, and I think we have a lot of talented people in the building.

Not just players and what you see on the field, but coaching staff, personnel staff. We've got great support from ownership. You know, again, with the firm belief in our philosophy I think you'll continue to see us do this.

BOB PAPA: The follow up on that question, collaborative and people, what do you see in these two men that inspired you and felt that they can point this thing in the right direction? And obviously after one year, we see it.

(Good question, Bob, yelled from audience.)

SPEAKER: It's not a hobby for Bob. This is what he does for a living. (Laughter.)

JOHN MARA: All I can say, Bob, is about time I got one right. (Laughter.) (Applause.)

They both -- I think the thing that makes them work is their communication with one another. They're on the same page. There is mutual respect there. They don't always agree on everything, but when they walk out of the room it's the Giants decision, and you have to have that.

I have so much trust in them now and I've been with them for a year. But that to me is the most essential part of your organization, is the communication between the general manager and the head coach. Without that, you just don't have a chance.

You know, Joe has put together a great staff in our football department; Dabs has put together a really terrific coaching staff. That's what makes me optimistic going forward.

BOB PAPA: I think the word you guys used before is you guys are in lock step. You guys speak the same language. Coach, I want to hit you up real quick. A lot of people right now are probably wondering, what are you guys doing as a team to get better? You kind of break the off-season down into phases. What phase are you in right now with the team?

BRIAN DABOLL: Yeah, so tomorrow will be the last day of phase two. Really what that is is you're out there running routes on air, full speed, two times a week. Then you're doing a walk-through and meeting the other two times besides weight lifting.

Monday will be the first day we're together and able to go offense versus defense, albeit without the pads. It will be good to see what some of our new players we brought in free agent-wise can do competing against the other side of the ball.

Then, look, the rookies, we're trying to catch them up as fast as we can. It's like drinking out of a water hose right now for them. There is a lot coming at them. The coaches meet with them extra. They spend extra time with them. They're going to have to hold up their end of the bargain in terms of studying and being on top of their stuff.

We're into the competitive phase, if you will. It's still a teaching camp. We're working on fundamentals, communication, those type of things. But we're trying to lay a foundation so when we get back from training camp there is a good base for them to a grab hold of and utilize when we get back.

**Q. Hi, coach. I have a question for you. So last year we were in the bottom level of wide receiver separation, and now that we have Jalin Hyatt and we brought Darius Slayton back. Do you have any concerns for wide receivers separation this year?**

BRIAN DABOLL: Well, where did you get that stat from? (Laughter.)

**Q. PFF, Pro Football Focus.**

BRIAN DABOLL: Look, again, I got a lot of confidence in our guys. We've tried to make the room as competitive as we can make it. And not just with the receiver position, but we brought in D Waller.

(Applause.)

So look, it's everybody's job, starting with me and the coaches and the players, to go ahead and improve at their craft.

But I think we have a competitive group that have been working really hard the last few weeks. Got a long way to go, but glad we got the guys we're working with right now.

BOB PAPA: So I guess you're not subscribing to the PFF receiver separation.

BRIAN DABOLL: No, just, you know, sometimes I hear different things. You hear different things from -- whether it be my wife, my kids, fans, you know...

**Q. He definitely has his own way of doing things.**

BRIAN DABOLL: I got a tremendous amount of respect for them. You know, I got a lot of confidence in the players that we have. Certainly have a long way to go, but that's like a question -- what was your name up there again?

**Q. Charlie.**

BRIAN DABOLL: Charlie, good question. It's like the question I get back after we lose a game and my wife asks me, why the hell didn't you just run it up the middle a couple times? I said, Jesus, can't I get a -- I mean, we just lost. I'm getting hammered from all angles. Give me a break. I don't need it from you, too.

JOHN MARA: So last year, he's been here maybe two months, and my office window looks out over the practice field. I walked to the window thinking, I can't wait to see this offensive genius that we just hired and see some of the plays.

I look out the window and they're hitting golf shots on the practice field. (Applause.)

BRIAN DABOLL: Yeah.

JOHN MARA: So I said to him, WTF? You know what? I'll build a golf course out there if you want if it's going to work. (Applause.)

BRIAN DABOLL: I'm going to hold you to that now. No, today the other thing we did today, we have some competitive things that we do to try to build team chemistry, because that's one of our goals when the players get back in April, because there are different players here. It's not the same group.

So once a week we'll do some competitive type of game, whatever it may be. Today we did some free throw shots out there, so we had Thibodeaux and Tyrod's team won, but then after the competition with the players was over, I put it into eight groups.

So I did the coaches got to pick five, the defensive players got to pick five, the offensive players, defensive rookies, offensive rookies, the scouting staff, the trainers, then the support staff, and it came down to the scouting staff and Joe was the lead off for that team versus the offensive players.

Joe hit about six bricks to start out the final competition, so the offensive guys ended up beating the scouts. (Applause.)

JOE SCHOEN: Made it to the finals, though.



BOB PAPA: Don't feel bad, Charlie. I've got that look when I've asked him a couple questions on a Monday, too.

There was one game early in the season. The Giants won and I said to -- before we taped the Coach Daboll Show, Carl Banks and I said, Coach, man, great win. Looked like though you guys left some stuff out there. Like there was this one play.

He goes, you sound just like -- like, well -- he goes, yeah, the reason why Daniel didn't throw is because both guys ran the wrong route. How is he supposed to know they that weren't in the right place?

I'm glad he didn't throw it. Let's go to the next question.

**Q. Thanks, Bob. So I got a question for you, Joe. You've talked about how the draft is a puzzle, no one knows what's it going to be like. You pick 25 originally and then you trade up one pick to 24 and select Banks. What were the -- what was the logic behind that, and what were some of the other teams that maybe wanted to pick right in front of you? Was it maybe Dallas? Buffalo? They wanted to pick Banks and you were like, no, no, Banks is our guy?**

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, well, Banks was our guy. We were happy to get him. Again, when get there late and somebody is there that you covet, you don't want to lose -- I've done that before. I've went home and night and somebody asked for a sixth round pick, and you didn't get the player you wanted. You got a lesser player. You're not as jacked up or fired up about it.

So we had four players going into the night, and I told both these guys, if we get one of these four I'm going to be fired up. I'm going to get one of them before we go home. People are calling me throughout the draft behind me saying, hey, we would be interested in moving up to 25.

Well, if they're calling me, they're probably calling 24 and 23 as well, so you know there is somebody that is still on the board that they want as well.

So, again, you can't necessarily -- you don't know what they're doing in 31 other draft rooms, but you know they want somebody and they're calling.

So there are a lot of phone calls being had, and you just got to see if the value, if it's not too rich for you and you're going to be happy with what you get and what you might lose out on later in the draft giving up a fifth round pick for a player that you covet, you got to be okay with that, and we were okay with that.

Yeah, there was a lot of movement around us, and, again, the players that we were interested in, Banks was a guy we really wanted. It also fit a position of need and a good player, so we are ecstatic.

BOB PAPA: The good news is if you're in a pinch, you just have Dabs text the coach and the deal is done.

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, have Dabs take care of it.

**Q. For Coach Brian, general manager Joe, and owner John, my name is Brian. I want to thank you guys, because never in my wildest dreams would I think I would have this opportunity to have this chance to ask this question. As you know, a couple days -- about a week ago, Commissioner Goodell announced the schedule, and obviously this year the Giants have a lot more road games than ever before.**

How are you guys going to approach this season to help them become the toughest road warriors as possible? (Applause.)

BRIAN DABOLL: Well, you know, the schedule comes out and there is -- I know it's a big deal for the fans and it's great, but for me, I have an assistant, Laura Young; she's fantastic. What we have to do particularly I would say the first six weeks, is really try to develop a routine and a schedule for our players.

It's probably the toughest thing. That goes all the way to the start of July 25th when the players report. That's really the biggest thing for me in terms of how to get the players physically and mentally ready in the early part of the season.

And there is a lot of people involved in that. I've had a lot of meetings with Ronnie Barnes, our athletic trainer; with Sam Coad; with Loecher, our strength conditioning; with Leigh Weiss, because everything we do really affects the other parts of the organization.

The number one priority for us is our players, so we have to do the best job we can of trying to put together the right roadmap to help them be as healthy as they can be and ready to go.

Who we play, when we play, where we play, you know, this is my 23rd season in the NFL. It's different every year, so whoever week one is, that's who we get ready to play, and we'll take care of the rest of the stuff and the rest of the teams after that.

**Q. (Regarding beating Dallas. And Eagles.)**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

BOB PAPA: Mr. Mara, since we're talking about the schedule, there is a lot that goes into.

JOHN MARA: That's the first time you ever called me Mr. Mara.

BOB PAPA: There is a first for everything, right? What went into this season's schedule for the Giants? There were some things that you were asking for.

JOHN MARA: We didn't get very many of them, I'll tell you that. We always ask for as many 1:00 home games as possible. (Applause.)

Yeah. And as you can see, we didn't get very many of them. There are other things we ask for. We prefer to be on the road during the Jewish Holy days. That's an important thing for us.

We also asked -- having spoken to Dabs and Joe, they wanted two of our west coast games to be back to back so we could stay out there. So week two, Arizona, week three, San Francisco.

So that's what we asked for. Wasn't really confident we were going to get everything we asked for, but listen, Christmas Day in Philadelphia, what more could you want? (Applause.)

SPEAKER: And just the road question, this year for the 17th game, the NFC is the road team for all the 17 games. So every NFC team plays one extra road game this year with the 17-game schedule. That's why you have the 9 and the 8.

Who cares about playing on the road. Shaun has got a ring on right now, Super Bowl XLII Road Warriors it says on there. (Applause.)

There are a lot of wins on the road.

**Q. Your last request though, was we got the Birds at the end of the season, so we could dash their season right there. Squelch it, right?**

(Applause.)

BOB PAPA: One more in the balcony.

**Q. Gentlemen, thanks for coming out tonight. Echo other people's sentiments. You guys did an amazing job last year and all of you should be extremely proud of what you have done in bringing Giants football back to the standard that we all expect.**

(Applause.)

Just a question. I got a 14 year old at home. Huge Giants fan. They won the Super Bowl on his third birthday. Of course he was dead asleep so didn't get to watch it, but he wanted me to ask, being intellectually honest, how much do you think that team has closed the gap on the Eagles, who are probably where the Giants are going to have to go through and beat to get to where we know they can be, the Super Bowl? Do you feel this current team can compete at that level? Thank you. Loaded question.

BRIAN DABOLL: No, that's fine. I understand it. I'm so far away from that. Look, again, I said this before. I know it's a boring answer, but it's the truth. Each year it's such a different year, so where you ended up last year really has nothing to do with what you want to try to accomplish this year.

It's a long road ahead. There is a lot of games. We haven't even been to training camp yet. We understand where we were last year in our division. We were third, to be honest with you. There is a lot of work that needs to be done on our end. My focus really hasn't been on other teams this off-season. I don't think that's really the case.

Do you study the teams you're playing? Absolutely. Do you look at your deficiencies that you had from the previous season? Absolutely. But the first thing that I want to do is make sure our team is ready to go mentally and physically. Once we get into training camp we'll start figuring those things out.

But, you know, I got a lot of respect for those teams in our division, the two ahead of us. They put a whooping on us, and I'm not going to shy away from it, they did, so they deserve credit.

We're working to be the best team we can be. Again, long way away, but the guys have the right mentality. (Applause.)

BOB PAPA: John, just in wrapping up here, one of the really cool things that the Giants did last year was bring back some legacy games. For the guy that was talking there, if his son is 14, his youth was in the '80s and early '90s. Talk about the reaction to having legacy games back.

JOHN MARA: Yeah, we got so many positive responses to doing that. People love that uniform that we wore in the late '80s.

(Applause.)

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®



Yeah. And the way that we did the end zones and the wall coverings, it's like Giants Stadium back in the late '80s. We got such a positive reaction we decided to do it again this year. (Applause.)

BOB PAPA: Yeah, so this is a season ticket exclusive right here. John, why don't you reveal to the fans the two games in which the Giants in 2023 will make it legacy games in Met-Life Stadium.

JOHN MARA: Yeah, so we'll be doing that when we play Washington and when we play Green Bay, and the dates should be up there. Looking forward to that. (Applause.)

BOB PAPA: There it is: Sunday, October 22nd against the Commanders and then Monday night, December the 11th, against the Green Bay Packers. You all fired up for legacy night? (Applause.)

You all fired up for the season?

(Applause.)

Then let's hear it for Mr. John Mara, Joe Schoen, and Brian Daboll. Gentlemen, thank you.

(Applause.)

BRIAN DABOLL: Thanks again, guys. Appreciate it.

BOB PAPA: As you know, as you're long-standing Giants fans, the key to any franchise and the key to the Giants' success over eight championships in the history of this franchise, including four Super Bowl wins in five Super Bowl appearances, is that you've got to draft well. It's very important to draft well.

So what we're going to do tonight is have a little Q and A, so you can line up and ask questions as well. Please welcome to the stage, the Giants first-round draft pick, Deonte Banks. (Applause.)

DEONTE BANKS: How you doing?

BOB PAPA: Shaun, this is all you, No. 60.

SHAUN O'HARA: Yeah, this is right in my wheelhouse. You heard Dabs' wife saying why didn't you run more up the middle. Well, with the Giants second round pick, John Michael Schmitz from Minnesota, they're going to do just that. Please welcome JMS. (Applause.)

BOB PAPA: Deonte, we saw that video when you got the call, and then you knew that you were going to be going to play in a little Wink Martindale defense.

DEONTE BANKS: Yes, sir.

BOB PAPA: With that Baltimore tie.

DEONTE BANKS: Yeah.

BOB PAPA: Just talk about what that phone call was like for you.

DEONTE BANKS: Just really a dream come true. I guess everything you really dream of as a football player. (Applause.)

SHAUN O'HARA: I think we've already got a nickname over here. I heard a couple "Big Johns." I think that's going to stick. John, take us through that night for you. What was that like getting that phone call and knowing that you were going to be a New York giant?

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: Yeah, I mean, just happy to celebrate it with my friends and family, the people that have been supported me through there. I was just speechless when getting the call. Just took a moment to just realize everything I've been working for since I was five years old playing the game of football.

DEONTE BANKS: Yes, sir. (Applause.)

SHAUN O'HARA: That's awesome. 'Te, I got to ask you real quick. We saw the video after the Giants selected you. Wink Martindale is bear hugging Joe Schoen. When you first got a chance to see him in the building, he was in it the weight room.

DEONTE BANKS: Yeah.

SHAUN O'HARA: What was that like, seeing your coach in there throwing up some weights?

DEONTE BANKS: I mean, just like a cool little feeling, like he always working out. (Laughter.)

SHAUN O'HARA: What did he say to you? What does he want from you?

DEONTE BANKS: Just be me honestly. Just work hard.

SHAUN O'HARA: You don't care. Put me up against the No. 1 receiver. You're ready.

DEONTE BANKS: I'm ready for whatever, so...

SHAUN O'HARA: Wink told me a story today, and this is kind of like something for the kids that are here tonight as

far as dreaming big. He said that -- do you guys remember Jameel McClain? He played for the Ravens but he spent a little time with the Giants. Well, when he was with the Ravens he had a camp and you were a kid at that camp.

DEONTE BANKS: Yeah.

SHAUN O'HARA: And now you're in the National Football League.

DEONTE BANKS: Yes, sir.

**Q. Did you dream at that moment in time when you were in that camp and you met a real NFL player that, hey, maybe someday that could be me?**

DEONTE BANKS: I always thought this could be me. I never really had no doubt.

BOB PAPA: No doubt, no doubt. (Applause.)

All right we got a question right here. Fire away.

**Q. Who are you least looking forward to blocking in the NFL?**

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: Everybody. You know what? I'm just looking to get around my teammates. Going up against Dexter Lawrence in practice each and every day.

DEONTE BANKS: Yes, sir.

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: The best there is, so I'm excited.

**Q. I have a question for John.**

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: Yes, sir.

**Q. Obviously it's exciting being in the NFL and getting drafted, but is it a little more exciting knowing you get to block for Saquon?**

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: I mean, yeah. I mean, having one of the best backs in the National Football League is something that you want on your team.

So being a part of this group, so excited to have him on my team. Let's just say that.

SHAUN O'HARA: Can't believe we let Joe Schoen get out unfortunate here without that question.

BOB PAPA: Wait a second. We didn't let him out. They let him out.

**Q. John, what are you guys doing right now as an offensive line to prepare for this season?**

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: Yeah, right now we're going through the phase two of OTAs.

DEONTE BANKS: Yes, sir.

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: Just what I'm doing right now honestly is getting to know everyone, getting around the O-line, around the team.

DEONTE BANKS: Yes, sir.

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: And getting in that playbook. Getting ready to go, yeah.

**Q. I think he's ready to block Jalen Carter. What do you think? (Applause.)**

My question is coming from my ten-year old son Jordan, who's over here. He's very happy to have you guys on the team. Start by saying dad was lucky enough to watch Shaun O'Hara in Super Bowl XLII live, and I went to Super Bowl XLVI eight months before the poor kid was born and he hasn't seen any of those good years. Hopefully he's going to go to a Super Bowl himself, and I think you guys are going to be a big part of bringing us there.

Here is his question. Hate to put you on the spot, Deonte, but do you want to predict how many interceptions you're going to have this year?

DEONTE BANKS: I can't give you no predictions right now, my guy.

**Q. I have a question for Deonte banks. I've been a big Maryland fan since probably 2008. I was a Torrey Smith person so seeing you on the Giants is crazy to me.**

DEONTE BANKS: Yes, sir.

**Q. Who was the hardest receiver you had to guard in college?**

DEONTE BANKS: In college, I would say Marvin was a good look in competition, but we competed with each other so it wasn't really crazy, but it was a good battle.

**Q. Marvin Harrison, Jr.?**

DEONTE BANKS: Yes, sir. (Applause.)



**Q. Are you guys prepared for the opportunity to have to sing a song? At some point the vets are going to ask you guys to get up. I'm going to ask you guys, do you have something loaded? Do you have a song -- go-to song if they ask you to sing? 'Te?**

DEONTE BANKS: I actually do have a go-to song.

**Q. You got a go-to song?**

DEONTE BANKS: Yeah.

**Q. What is it?**

DEONTE BANKS: Fantasia, When I See You.

**Q. Okay. All right, all right. How about you, John?**

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: Man, I would say I'm more of a country guy. (Laughter.) Hey. Yep.

**Q. Hey, he's not singing for you. He's got to sing for his teammates, and that will go over well. Trust me.**

What are we thinking here, a record year?

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: I like Luke Combs right now. Big fan of him. So any of those songs.

**Q. Are you guys going to practice, or you got it down already?**

DEONTE BANKS: I think I got it down for real for real.

**Q. You got it down?**

DEONTE BANKS: Yeah. I can't sing it.

**Q. This is the Beacon Theatre, one of the most famous musical venues in all of New York. This is the place to do it.**

This is for both John and Deonte. What was your reaction to being drafted by the New York Football Giants? What went through your head at the moment?

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: I mean, I would just say the fans, how great of fans the Giants have, and...

**Q. Yeah!**

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: Just excited to be a New York Giant, honestly. That's all that was going through my head. Just to play for this team is a blessing, so...

DEONTE BANKS: Just to piggyback off what John said, yeah, just a blessing just to be a New York Giant, in a great city. We got great fans, so I'm excited. (Applause.)

BOB PAPA: Even better when you win here, right, Shaun?

SHAUN O'HARA: Oh, absolutely.

BOB PAPA: Question here.

**Q. This question is for both of you guys. Not being from the northeast, we all know that we all move a little bit faster and have a little bit more attitude. You guys have been here for a little bit. How are you guys adjusting to life in New York and Jersey?**

DEONTE BANKS: I feel like I'm adjusting real cool. I feel like everybody real cool with me. And I'm a good dude, so...

(Laughter.) Everything just be real cool.

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: I feel like I'm adjusting well. Growing up in a south suburb of Chicago area, going into the city, got that city life still, so I feel like I'm adjusting -- I'll adjust pretty well.

DEONTE BANKS: Yes, sir. (Applause.)

**Q. I got a question for both of you. What team are you most like looking forward to facing this season?**

DEONTE BANKS: I'm just ready, to be honest, for week one. It's the first game of the season. (Applause.) It's my first game.

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: I know it's probably a boring answer, but I'm just taking it one day at a time.

DEONTE BANKS: Yes, sir. (Laughter.)

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: Yeah. (Laughter.)

**Q. So, look, the Giants had two first round picks last year in Kayvon Thibodeaux and Evan Neal. Curious, have those guys approached you and given you any advice on how to navigate being a rookie here in New York and playing for the Giants?**

DEONTE BANKS: Yes, actually we just talked, so he just tell us like really just try to get a routine and just keep it -- take care of your body. That's the best advice I got so far.

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: Yeah, I would just say pigging backing off what 'Te said, get a routine going. You're going

to be going through a longer season, so get on your body, and, yeah, just biggest thing is no matter what you're going through, downs and ups, just respond through it.

So, yeah.

DEONTE BANKS: Yes, sir.

BOB PAPA: Last question right here.

**Q. What's up, guys. My name is Peter. So Deonte, who are you looking forward to most playing with on defense? Like alongside?**

DEONTE BANKS: Everybody, to be honest. Like I like everybody right now. Everybody been cool. I love playing with all of them.

**Q. These guys are well trained. You guys nailed it. Coach was on before and they're trying to hit you with a bunch of stuff. How has it been trying to process stuff mentally in what they're throwing at you?**

DEONTE BANKS: Really just take it a day at a time and just keep going. I just keep going.

(Applause.)

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: Yeah, I mean, you're not going to learn overnight. It's going to come with repetitions. Keep grinding and putting in good days.

DEONTE BANKS: Yes, sir.

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: You're going to have tough days, so it's all about that response. Just keep on going. I could definitely get that nickname going.

SHAUN O'HARA: Dabs talked about how he had a free throw contest. Did you guys participate in that?

DEONTE BANKS: We actually did. My group actually lost, but like their group didn't even get a shot off.

SHAUN O'HARA: Oh, boy? How did you do?

DEONTE BANKS: I did good. I nailed it for one. I made my shot.

SHAUN O'HARA: There you go. Money in the bank. You didn't get a shot off?

JOHN MICHAEL SCHMITZ: Yeah, let's just say one of the guys in front of me couldn't make his shot. (Laughter.)

BOB PAPA: Fans, how about a New York City, New York/New Jersey, metropolitan area welcome, Deonte Banks and John Michael Schmitz.

(Applause.)

DEONTE BANKS: Yes, yes. That's lit.

SHAUN O'HARA: That's awesome. Look at that. I mean, that's how heroes are made right there. They get a nickname out of the gate. His first pancake -- his first pancake I expect to hear the entire Met-Life Stadium on Sunday Night Football when he pancakes Demarcus Lawrence or Micah Parsons, I want to hear Big John.

BOB PAPA: All right, now it's time to meet some of the veteran players that obviously helped the Giants break that playoff drought, a playoff victory last year and brought a lot of thrills to Met-Life Stadium each and every week.

Please welcome, the quarterback of the New York Football Giants, Daniel Jones.

(Applause.)

All right, how about somebody from the defensive side of the football, please welcome safety, Xavier McKinney.

(Applause.)

We got to get a little offensive line love for you, right?

SHAUN O'HARA: Yeah.

BOB PAPA: Because he is becoming one of the most dominant left tackles in the entire National Football League, please welcome Andrew Thomas.

(Applause.)

I kind of feel like I should invite my boy, Sam Prince up here to introduce this next guy. The Giants fifth overall pick from last season, give it to us, Sam.

SAM PRINCE: Kayvon Thibodeaux.

(Applause.)

BOB PAPA: One of the new members of the organization, and I'm so happy he's wearing this number, because when I see this number I think of Carl Banks, I think of Antonio Pierce, a tackling machine. Please welcome, Bobby Okereke.

(Applause.)



All right, Giants fans, please welcome to the stage one of Daniel Jones' favorite new targets, Mr. Darren Waller.

(Applause.)

Fellas, have a seat.

Line up; got to be over 13 to ask a question. New York City rules.

Daniel, start with you. Just talk about the support that the fans gave you last year. I mean, being here the last couple years and the way things kind of turned around last year where for the first time it really felt like a home field advantage week in and week out.

DANIEL JONES: Yeah, I think throughout the season, really early on, we felt the push from the fans. Then thinking towards the end of the year, some of the games that came down to the fourth quarter, some of those final drives and having the fans into it, bringing that much noise, and especially X can probably tell you from the defensive perspective to have the crowd into it, you know, makes the offense a lot harder.

So, yeah, that was big time last year.

(Applause.)

**Q. Xavier, let's talk about the defense a little bit. What are you looking forward to most this season? Obviously you lose Julian Love through free agency. You get Deonte Banks. What has that addition been like, and what are we looking forward to this season?**

XAVIER MCKINNEY: Man, I think us as a defense and as a team, obviously we're going to be looking to build from what we've had in the previous years. I think we got something special going, and just the addition of Banks has been great. We got a lot of great guys on the squad, a lot of great guys on the defenses ready to work.

So it's going to be fun. You know, it's going to be really exciting for us.

**Q. Andrew, you've settled in as one the best left tackles in the National Football League. (Applause.) It's not hyperbole; it's just a fact. Now you got this young center coming in. Talk about being a leader and mentoring the younger players as they come into the program.**

ANDREW THOMAS: Yeah, first thing, talking to John, is first thing getting the playbook down as an offensive

linemen, especially at his position playing center, making the calls. It's just to be confident, so when you know the plays you know what the calls are, and makes it easier for the whole line to operate.

So just doing my best to give him any cues that I have, so we can have that camaraderie and we can be dominant on the field.

**Q. He is dominant. Looks so pretty out there, that kick slide, that punch. It's like poetry in motion. I know Kayvon Thibodeaux likes to seeing it in practice.**

Let's spice it up. Kayvon, we heard that you won the free throw contest in your practice, you and your team.

KAYVON THIBODEAUX: Yeah, we were 7 and 0. Look at all these guys. These are all losers right here.

**Q. Someone telling me in my ear, they want know how many you made.**

KAYVON THIBODEAUX: I think I was 7-0, seven games, one shot each time, seven shots.

**Q. Nice. All right, sounds good. This is year two for you. Obviously went through this whole process last year, becoming a New York Giant. How has this off-season been different for you?**

KAYVON THIBODEAUX: Man, I finally got an off-season. This is the first time that I got to enjoy it. Coming off of college, it's the whole -- this is like a circus, right? You come from the college season, you got the combine, pro day, you're training, and you come to OTAs, it's nonstop.

This has been the first kind of off-season I've had, and now being able to train and really be in it, in the NFL and see what it's about, I can hone in on things I need to get better.

Yeah it's been a blessing. (Applause.)

**Q. Bobby, obviously you're new to the franchise, but the Giants, with a rich tradition, eight world championships, five Super Bowl appearances, and you play a position that when you look at some of the greatest players in NFL history, whether it's Sam Huff or Harry Carson, a Hall of Famer, or Lawrence Taylor or Carl Banks, Antonio Pierce, Super Bowl champions, what's it like coming to an organization where linebacker means something more, especially to these fans? Because Giants fans -- you know that chant of "defense" in games? You hear them in basketball games, stuff like that. It started with New York Giants fans in the 1950s. They used to introduce the defense**

**before every game. They were the most popular part of the Giants teams of the '50s. What's it like coming to a tradition like that.**

BOBBY OKEREKE: It's incredible. The support, the love, the excitement I've felt since I signed, it's been really energizing. To be on this squad with all my amazing teammates, especially the coordinators and just this whole defense, we got an amazing group.

I'm excited to be a strong addition to it. (Applause.)

**Q. Yeah, we strategically placed you as far away from DJ as possible. I know you guys are on the same team now. You don't have to worry about any of that.**

D Wall, it's great to see you. (Applause.) Yeah. They're fired up, too.

Bob was just talking about the tradition and the history of the Giants linebackers. They also got a pretty good tradition with tight ends, too. This one I kind of pulled something out here. All right, last four years combined, you had 17 touchdowns; 12 of them have come in the red zone. What makes you so good in the red zone?

DARREN WALLER: Being good in the red zone I feel like means understanding that things are a lot smaller down there, so windows are a lot smaller. You got to be precise. Balls are going to be caught up top on the next level or going to be caught low.

So you got to understand those things. I feel like it's just a confidence thing having size, being able to jump, being able to run and know okay if you put it up there I'm going to be able to get it over a lot of people.

(Applause.) That goes a long way.

**Q. Darius Slay, for example. Like that would be cool, right?**

DARREN WALLER: No doubt.

**Q. What's up, fellows. Just want to say thank you for a great year last year. Appreciate you. Darren, welcome to Big Blue. Shaun, you're a legend. Real quick, just want to ask, are you guys ready to beat Dallas? That's it. That's all I want to know.**

PLAYER: Of course.

**Q. Daniel, hell of a season last year. What's your goal this off-season to make yourself a better quarterback for the upcoming season?**

DANIEL JONES: Well, I mean, I think the biggest thing right now, the phases we were in in the off-season was getting as much time as we can with all the guys. We brought in some new guys with Darren, Parris, several other guys, and just building timing, building chemistry, making sure we're getting on the same page and seeing things the same way.

I think I we're off to a good start. We got a lot of guys who want to work, which has been fun to be a part of.

(Applause.)

**Q. This question is for Kayvon Thibodeaux. So last year, your rookie year, we really got to see you improve and grow in this defense. I just want to know how you're feeling about the second year. Feel like you can grow some more?**

KAYVON THIBODEAUX: I think that that was the toughest part about last year, was not being able to accomplish all the goals as a team and individual that you want.

But I left a lot of room for growth. Now I know that four sacks is my bottom, so who knows what's the ceiling will be.

(Applause.)

**Q. This one is for AT. I just want to know what you think keys are for like developing as a lineman.**

ANDREW THOMAS: First thing I would say starts with your approach. I would say your stance is a big key for me, having your feet in the right place, hips aligned the right way, having your mental leverage, I think makes a big difference.

And then technique. Offensive line play is an art. You have to continue to work it every day, just the approach to get better each and every day. Even if it's one small thing. It could be as simple as your hand placement, but you're working on that continuously until you get it and it's muscle memory.

**Q. What is everyone's biggest personal goal for the season?**

PLAYER: Personal goal for me I would say is to be available for my team each and every week, and that's it.

**Q. Bobby?**

BOBBY OKEREKE: Yeah, I think just understanding



coming in we play in the hardest division in the NFL so do I have thing to help us be division champs.

**Q. Kayvon?**

KAYVON THIBODEAUX: We definitely want to win a Super Bowl, but I also want to get like 10 to 15 sacks on that, too. (Applause.)

**Q. Andrew?**

ANDREW THOMAS: For the offensive line, I would say just to be dominant this year. For people to fear us, run the ball, protect DJ, allow the offense to make plays, that would be a goal for me.

PLAYER: For me, I would say All Pro and Bowler.

DANIEL JONES: I'm going to say same thing as Bobby, taking care of our division and making sure we finish on top.

**Q. Bobby, free agency is a pretty crazy process I assume. For me, when I saw the notifications, I got excited. How was the process of going through different team to team and why did you eventually choose New York?**

BOBBY OKEREKE: Yeah, so I got a really great agent, Ryan Tollner, with Rep 1 Sports, and it was really just working with him and all my options. I think it was no secret to people, a lot of people had me penned going to Chicago. Matt Eberflus was my old defensive coordinator.

It was kind of a perfect storm here and I got a great offer. They had a need for linebackers. I mean, I got studs who I'm playing with, Xavier McKinney, Kayvon, Dexter Lawrence, Leonard Williams. I got an incredible front in front of me, so it's a perfect opportunity.

**Q. When you can come to New York, why would you go to the second city?**

My question is for Kayvon. There is a lot more primetime games this year. How excited are you to play primetime?

KAYVON THIBODEAUX: I mean, definitely when you're under the lights and the pressure is on, makes you play that much better. That's how history is made. I'm excited.

**Q. How you doing, guys? Just want to say I look up to all you guys. I think you're all great. I believe that you guys could bring us to a Super Bowl and get us our sixth ring -- I'm sorry, fifth ring, you know.**

But my question is for X Man. I'm an upcoming sophomore at the University of Alabama. My question for you is what kind of advice can you give me for work ethic to walk on the team, because I play DB/safety -- well, cornerback/safety, and I just wanted to know what was your advice for me? I look up to you? Like I'm fanboying right now, but you're like my favorite player, favorite safety, all that. When I found out that you got No. 29, that was my high school jersey number. I was just psyched. I look up to you. You're just like my favorite player, like for real for real.

I go on Instagram, I go on your live, I like all your pictures. I go on YouTube to look at how you -- like your film, everything. I look up to you, dog. You just the man for real.

XAVIER MCKINNEY: I appreciate that, bro. I would say the biggest I think thing is consistency. Make sure you go into each and every day with a purpose. Make sure you're intentional about what you do and how do you it.

Like I said, I think the biggest thing is just consistency, staying consistent over the days and making sure that the next day is better than the previous day. Every day needs to get better. You need to improve each and every day.

Just focus on that and you'll be good, bro. I appreciate the love for sure.

**Q. Darren, first I just want to thank you for being such an advocate for mental health. It really helps everybody to listen to your story, take something from it. (Applause.)**

So my question is: I'm curious how you'll be able to use your platform in New York to continue to advocate for mental health and sobriety and things like that?

DARREN WALLER: That's a great question. This being the media capital of the world, what I do when I approach the media is to keep it real with people. I'm somebody that's an NFL athlete. I've made pro bowls. Been successful at my position.

At the end of the day, I'm a human being. I face challenges. I have crazy thoughts that go through my head. I can doubt myself at times. I'm a real individual and I'm going to continue to paint that picture for people, because they can reach out and touch me. They can touch my struggle. They can touch what I've been through and be able to say, I've fallen on my face this many times and I can look at him and see he's still doing what he's doing, then I got a chance, too.

It's all about spreading that message and being real at all times.

(Applause.)

Thank you very much.

**Q. That's a great message. You guys are seeing here the impact you could have when you got guys telling you that you're their hero and they look up to you guys. You guys are doing a great job with that.**

DJ, I want to ask you, we didn't have a chance to bring Jalin Hyatt out here with some of the other rookie draft. He's at the rookie symposium. I think he's posing for his new football card. Have you had a chance to meet him, talk to him, and what are you looking forward to most about working with Jalin Hyatt?

DANIEL JONES: Yeah it's been great. He's a great guy. Seems like he wants to come in, work hard. He's asking all the right questions. Wants to know where to be, when to be there, you know, so that's been great.

You can tell he's fast. You can see the speed. Kind of leaps off the tape at you. I'm excited to keep working with him.

**Q. Thanks, everyone. Mr. Jones, I'm heavily into social media. I have to admit I probably been one of your harshest critics, on YouTube, on Twitter. I'm not going to deny, you've had a renaissance, a turnaround last year. That's only what my wife says. But you really turned around your season in 2022. What were your expectations coming into 2023 with all the changes to the roster, bringing in Parris Campbell, Jalin Hyatt, bringing back Saquon? You have the pieces. What are you expecting out of yourself this year?**

DANIEL JONES: Yeah, I mean, I think we all have really, really high expectations. I think me, the whole offense, the whole defense, as a team, we have tremendously high expectations.

But I think we understand the way we're going to get there is focusing on what's immediately in front of us and what we're doing day to day.

So I think we can be a great team. I know we can be a great team. We're putting in the work now to get there.

**Q. I play youth football, left guard. What's your favorite youth football moment? For anybody.**

PLAYER: I would say for me, when I used to play youth football I used to play linebacker, a little running back, you know what I'm saying? Come on now. Come on now, you know what I'm sayin'? Athletic.

But I would say scoring my first touchdown at running back. I was probably like nine or ten years old, but it was the best feeling. Can't do it like that anymore, so that was a good time. (Talking over each other.)

PLAYER: I mean, I don't know if I can pinpoint one memory. I just remember playing football as a kid was probably the most fun and carefree and just joyous time of playing football. Because you don't know what pressures is, you don't know what expectations are. There was no Twitter back then.

You were just outside playing in a street or on the field or just doing whatever you did with your friends because you loved playing football.

So it's trying to keep that inner child mindset when you step on the field. So hearing a question like that reminds me of how free it was to play the game back then, and we still have a choice to approach it the same way now.

BOBBY OKEREKE: I started playing football freshman year of high school, so for me it was probably getting my first sack in CIF as a freshman.

Yeah, I played defensive end and I had long arms, so that was my one go-to move. (Laughter.)

KAYVON THIBODEAUX: Yeah, I started playing really young. It's actually funny, I used to play offensive linemen, which I was super skinny but I was tall. I think the one thing I remember my coach -- I had no idea how to play -- my coach told me just, just take the guy in front of and you drive him as far back as you can.

If you ever seen the Blindside, I had a kid that was half my size, 50 yards down the field. Yeah, that was the last time I played offensive line, but it was fun.

XAVIER MCKINNEY: I started playing football when I was like five or six. Ever since I was playing it's always been fun, but I'm pretty competitive, so for me, I was trying to dog everybody else out there.

That's pretty much how my youth football went. I played running back and then I played -- started playing DB when I got to like my sophomore year in high school.

**Q. Daniel?**



DANIEL JONES: I started playing football in second grade and played kind of with the same team for a number of years. We won the city championship in fourth grade. That was a highlight. Got on the jumbotron at the Panthers game, so that was a big deal back in the day.

Yeah, youth football, some of the best memories still playing football. (Applause.)

**Q. Were you the quarterback then, too?**

DANIEL JONES: I played some quarterback. I played running back, a little DB. I was all over the place.

**Q. I think the theme here with all of you is the competition aspect. That is probably what we all loved at a young age and then now.**

Dabs was out here talking about you guys are in phase two right now. You're not really competing on the field right now. That's why you had the free throws and all that stuff.

For the fans here, there are two ping-pong tables in the locker room. You guys are competing every chance you can get. Who is the best ping-pong player here in the group?

PLAYER: Definitely me. (Laughter.) Definitely.

PLAYER: Some guys play a lot; some guys put a lot of the hours in. You just walk up there and play a couple times and go.

But, yeah.

PLAYER: I wanted to lie and say me, but I got to go with DJ.

**Q. You can cover the table. You got the wingspan. Is Saquon pretty good, too?**

DANIEL JONES: He thinks he's good. (Laughter.) No, Saquon is pretty good.

**Q. I just want to say hi, everyone. Congratulations on a great season. My question is for Daniel Jones. That other so-called fan kind of took my question, and I just wanted to add, I didn't critique you, I have an Instagram reel on my Instagram dedicated to support of you and just like all of your best plays.**

But to change my question, coming into New York, you had big shoes to fill, two time Super Bowl MVP Eli Manning. What kind of advice did he offer you and how big of an impact do you think it played on your career now and how

you've developed as a player and stepped up to be such a leader for this team?

DANIEL JONES: Thank you. Appreciate your support. Yeah, I think it was just the example he set every day and how he kind of went about his work, how you treated everyone in the building. How he treated teammates, how he communicated with people, how important every little detail was for him still.

As long as he had played, as successful as he had been, he was still in there all day watching film, talk to the offensive line, talking to receivers, staying after practice, throwing. I mean, every detail was extremely important to him, even late in the career with how much success he had had.

That made a big impression on me as a young guy. He's helped me a ton through the example he set and just being able to go to him for advice here and there.

**Q. This one is for Kayvon. What was your welcome-to-the-league moment? How did that kind of change your perspective on the NFL?**

KAYVON THIBODEAUX: Man, so OTAs is in right now, my welcome-to-the-league moment. So like I get in the NFL and I'm here and we start -- you know, when I got in as a rookie, AT is obviously not there and I'm fucking having a ball.

I'm thinking I'm hot shit. I'm like, I'm calling people back home like Yo, these guys suck. Soon as AT comes back I probably got punched in my chest so hard. I was like, oh, this is the guy they were talking about. All right. Here we go.

**Q. This question is for Daniel. You've had multiple offensive coordinators throughout your career. What makes Kafka special and different for you this year?**

DANIEL JONES: Yeah, I think he brings an interesting perspective coming from Kansas City and running that offense. And then you have Coach Daboll and the offense he's run.

So I think they communicate a lot and they've kind of put together an offense that's a combination of both of them. I think they both do a really good job mixing up the look, the personnels, getting the defense lots to look at with motions and shifts and kind of always keeping the defense on their toes.

So I think they're both really smart offensive minds, and Kafka has done a great job these last year. Been really

good working with him.

**Q. My question is for Andrew. First year in the league; lots of ups and downs. New York media I'm sure you learned very quickly, they're right on you. What did you learn about yourself and how do you kind of pull yourself back down to just focusing on the little things? Now you're, I would say, the best offensive tackle in the NFL, so congrats to you. Staying true to who you are, put your head down, going to work, just what do you attribute to that?**

ANDREW THOMAS: I would say the biggest thing is resiliency at this position. People don't really notice you until you mess up.

So that's something you have to deal with.

When it comes to media, they will always ask me about the other tackles and I always talk about running my own race. The mentality is I'm getting better every day regardless of what's going on around me. I have a good game, same approach. Have a bad game, same approach.

I think that's how I've come this far, and I still have so much farther to go. (Applause.)

**Q. Bobby, this is for you. Let's get away from football for a minute. Everybody gets hungry. Where have you gone to dinner in New York City?**

BOBBY OKEREKE: We had a team dinner at Catch. That was pretty good. But I got to say my favorite spot, Sushi of Gari. I want to say it's in SoHo or something. Incredible sushi.

**Q. How about you, Darren?**

DARREN WALLER: I haven't really been to eat in the city. I've been over at Clifton Village Pizza though, over there in Jersey.

**Q. Been to Natoli's?**

DARREN WALLER: I haven't.

**Q. My question was originally for Daniel Jones, but I turned it into for all of ya'll. So what is your guys' personal favorite thing about Brian Daboll? Compliments, I want compliments.**

PLAYER: I would say just his passion, his competitive spirit.

PLAYER: I would say you could talk to him about

anything. He's open minded. He's willing to listen.

So...

PLAYER: I would say his competitive edge.

PLAYER: He cracks the best jokes if I'm being honest. Every time you see him he's got something funny to say on the field.

PLAYER: I would say he keeps it real. He's the type of coach that will probably give you a hug but also chew you out.

So it's good.

PLAYER: I would say he empowers players. Doesn't want to take anything from your personality, how you play the game, how you shine. That's what makes him great. (Applause.)

**Q. I have a question for Kayvon. Before the draft there was a lot of people in the media like questioning your work ethic, if you love football. Obviously me and my family loved you the whole time. We were begging the Giants to draft you. How do you respond to like that criticism and like how do you just go about your business and know that what they were saying was just trying to create headlines? Obviously you demonstrated it incredibly this year. Had a couple monster games. What was the thought process during that time?**

KAYVON THIBODEAUX: You know, I think I was fortunate enough to kind of be in the limelight for a nice amount of time, like through high school, being a top recruit, college being a top recruit, so I kind of had an understanding for what was to come.

The media builds you up just to knock you down. So for me it was understanding that like AT said, I'm in my own race. I'm not really here to prove anything to the people outside of this stage or outside of the locker room.

As long as I continue to work and continue to prove to myself that I was worthy of putting on this Giants blue, then I'm good. (Applause.)

**Q. Darren, I wanted to know, how excited are you to catch balls from Daniel Jones, Danny Dimes as they call him?**

DARREN WALLER: I'm incredibly excited. Been excited to just work with him day in and day out. All the routes we've ran at Rutgers and just getting extra work in the

indoor after we get done running certain days, it's already been great. Just excited to continue on the process. (Applause.)

**Q. Earlier I missed this. Wanted to say something, which was asked. What was where you favorite Giants game, my first was in -- or so my father told me -- was in 1955. I've seen a whole bunch since then, but I'll tell you, my favorite game is going to be opening night this year when we say, who were those Cowboys. (Applause.)**

**Q. My question is for the Giants franchise quarterback Daniel Jones. Along the lines of criticism. So you've been very unfairly criticize from the second you were drafted by a lot of people who don't know what they're talking about.**

Your reaction to that is hard to say because you play things really close to the vest, but since you're among friends tonight my question is: How good personally did it feel to shove it back in those people's faces by playing as well as you did the past year? You have to have some satisfaction in that.

DANIEL JONES: I mean, I think we've gone around here, a lot of people up here have received a lot of criticism. That's part of playing the game, especially here in New York. I think it felt good for all of us as a team. We had taken a lot of heat the past couple years and hadn't performed to our standard, or anybody's standard, so felt good to have a successful season, get a playoff win.

There is still a lot we want to accomplish individually and as a team. (Applause.)

**Q. Before we let you guys go, everybody is talking about Sunday Night Football, and the season is almost upon us. I know it feels like it's far away, but I want to ask you guys, there is something that has been trending lately in the NFL, and it's game day attire, like the walk-in outfits.**

DJ I'll leave you out of this one. I think we already know your outfit is straight out of Gap.

But for the other guys, I want to know, outfits already laid out? KT, we just hope you have a shirt on. We have the outfits laid out for Sunday Night Football yet?

PLAYER: Before you answer that question, I just want to say that I have the best drip out of all these guys right here.

**Q. He laid down the gauntlet.**

PLAYER: Can there just be a vote by the crowd on who has the best drip?

PLAYER: You see the pictures. (Laughter.)

PLAYER: And he has a stylist, guys. He doesn't pick it himself. Pick it myself.

PLAYER: Not at all. Not at all.

KAYVON THIBODEAUX: The no shirt, that was me.

**Q. I think Bobby and D Wall got something so say about that, right?**

DARREN WALLER: Nah. They got it. I'm good.

BOBBY OKEREKE: I got a little fashion taste. New York is bringing it out in me a little bit, so we'll see.

**Q. Can't wait to see the outfits and the W as we take down those Cowboys on Sunday Night Football. (Applause.)**

All right, thank you guys so much for joining us here tonight, and thank you all for being here at the Beacon Theatre in New York City.

Your 2023 New York Giants.

(Applause.)

FastScripts by ASAP Sports