

New York Giants Media Conference

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Mike Kafka

Press Conference

Q. Mike, can you just talk a little bit about you have a new title added to your offensive coordinator title. Just what that means to you, what different responsibilities you have, and what discussions have you had with Brian as far as calling the plays on offense this season?

MIKE KAFKA: Yeah, so it's certainly an honor to have that title. I don't take it lightly. Some of the responsibilities I've done with Dabs and going through the off-season, number one kind of being a part a little bit more of the interview process. We've hired some new coaches, some new staff.

So being a part of that, how those inner workings of those decisions happen.

And then sitting in on building out this off-season. So sitting in on the planning, listening to our health department work through our injury guys and their progress, and building that into our off-season program. That's been really cool to be a part of, really the backbone on how we're going to do this thing.

Q. What about the playcalling? You came back. Obviously something I assume you want to do. Where are you with that?

MIKE KAFKA: Yeah, every year is different. You got to go through the evaluation process, and this year is no different. It's day one of phase one, so long time to go. But I'm excited and I'm excited in my role, and doing whatever we can do to get better each day.

Q. Congratulations on your promotion.

MIKE KAFKA: Thank you.

Q. Curious about something. When you have a quarterback like Daniel Jones' injury history, I know that you can't coach scared. You have to plan accordingly. But that being said, he is coming off the ACL, two neck injuries. How much does that type of



injury history factor into how you construct the offense moving forward?

MIKE KAFKA: Listen, Daniel is a tough kid, and I know he's going through the rehab and attacking that thing. It's been cool. I see him in here every single day working his butt off to get right.

When you talk about one specific person on offense, it's never about just one person. It's an 11-man operation. You got to take into account everyone's ability and where everyone is at, and then you try to build an offense around all the players and playmakers that you have.

That's what we're doing right now. We really dug into that this off-season as a staff. As we continue to go through the process, we just finished up free agency, going into the draft, adding players there as well, it's going to be an ongoing process.

Q. In terms of Daniel, his running ability is a big part of what you have done in the past. Do you maybe look to shift some of that away from him while he's recovering or until you have a better feel for how well he's going to respond in those situations?

MIKE KAFKA: Yeah, we'll just have open lines of communication with Daniel and all the players. You want to be able to gauge all of them. We'll see where they are and his comfortability, and put together a game plan on offense that we really feel good about.

Q. What is it like to know that you won't have Saquon Barkley?

MIKE KAFKA: Well, first and foremost, Saquon is a hell of a person and player. I was very lucky to be around him for the couple years. I wish him nothing but the best.

I think where we are right now, we are at day one. We have a lot of new players that have come in. We're trying to get introductions and get them into our program and how we want to run our offense and start from -- build it from day one on and create trust and create some energy within the offense.



So these new guys are coming in and some of the guys last year as well, they're building on that. So we got a lot on this right now as an offense we're working through. Saquon was great for us and he's a great player. Again, wish him nothing but the best.

Right now we're moving on to what we have to get accomplished, and that's getting our guys together and working towards our goals.

Q. What's it like to be the one coordinator who is still with the Giants?

MIKE KAFKA: I haven't really thought about that. I'm lucky and happy to be here. Looking forward to getting after it this off-season.

Q. Paul asked you about expectations for playcalling going forward, but we haven't talked to you since the end of the season. What was your reactions to the time it got taken away from you last year?

MIKE KAFKA: Yeah, I don't know if that's been out there or anything. All I know is last year is last year. There's a lot of things we need to get better at, from coaches, players, everybody. We just got to improve.

So I'm not going to go too far into the past. I put that my rearview. I've learned and grown from it, and am really excited about phase one, and today is the first day of the start.

Q. Different gears, you obviously were there in Kansas City and worked closely with Mahomes his rook year. What did you learn from that development process that if you're in that position with a rookie quarterback that you would apply?

MIKE KAFKA: Yeah, you have to have a sense of urgency, but there is also a sense of urgency in learning, helping him teach and having him learn the offense and learn how to be a pro.

But you also have to have some patience with that as well, understand that whoever that player is, doesn't have to be just quarterback. Really any rookie. You try and give them bite-sized pieces they can really hold and take with them and they can continue to build on those lessons.

There will be some opportunities for growth. You take that and build on it and just keep stacking each and every day.

That's how you really get to the end goal.

Q. I know last year was last year, but when you look at offense as a whole and what you guys went through, when you look at this year, what are some of your key points you look at and say you know what, these are things we have to change in order to be better than last year?

MIKE KAFKA: It's really an ongoing process. You look at we have to protect the quarterback better, create more explosive plays, run the football better.

There are some fundamental techniques we need to get cleaned up. There is a lot, and those are just a few to name off the top of my head.

I really believe we're in a good spot as a staff. We're in a good spot mentally. Talking with the guys today, we've been in meetings for about an hour and a half, so seeing their energy and attentiveness to go and learn the system. It's going to be an exciting off-season.

Q. I know you said you're happy to be here and anxious to get going. A lot of speculation, and I know you don't want to look backwards, but how would you describe your relationship with Dabs right now?

MIKE KAFKA: Yeah, no, I love working with Dabs, for Dabs. It's been a collaborative process. Have we got all the results we wanted each and every day, sure we want to go win every single game, but sometimes that doesn't happen.

We go through the ups and downs of a season and we're all competitive and want to win. That's what I love about him.

Q. You mentioned protection. You made a lot of the additions to the O-line this season. What do you make of those and your early plans for how that will shake out?

MIKE KAFKA: Yeah, so Carm, our new offensive line coach, we have great room and great influx of some new players and veteran players, and so we're going to take the veteran guys we have, young guys we have, and continue to develop and build in that room.

I'm excited for that room. Carm comes from a similar system, so there is some terminology that carries over so we were able to get through this process a little bit quicker than if it was a coach that didn't have as much of a background as he has.

He's doing a hell of a job and ready to roll. Spent all morning in what O-line room.

Q. What did you see in there just today?

MIKE KAFKA: Just energy. Just felt it. Guys asking great questions, creating the dialog we're looking for and coming together as a group. Five guys play as one.

Q. Thanks for doing this. After you interviewed with Seattle to be their head coach, they also requested an interview with you to be their offensive coordinator. Why do you think the Seahawks thought you were interested in a lateral move, and were you interested in making a lateral move to somebody else's OC?

MIKE KAFKA: I must've did a good job. No, it was a great opportunity there. I love the people there. Jody, John, it was a great experience. But that's what it was, it was a great experience that I can carry over into the future.

Q. So were you interested in lateral moves or only in the Giants OC job?

MIKE KAFKA: No. I'm here and excited to be here with the Giants.

Q. What did you make of this year's top whatever it would be, first round we'll call it, what do you make of this year's first round quarterback class?

MIKE KAFKA: Yeah, all a little bit different. I like the class. Smart class. We have been able to meet them throughout the combine and pre-draft process. Really sharp guys with a lot of the ability, so really excited about this group. Going to be cool.

Q. You've been a player. Is that an awkward situation with Daniel? Do you have to address with him as somebody who spends a lot time with him, hey, we're looking at quarterbacks, or do you just ignore the elephant in the room?

MIKE KAFKA: We look at every position every season, every year, every draft. You are looking every group. You're looking at quarterbacks, running backs, tight ends, O-linemen. Where can you find a way to make your team and offense better, your offense better.

I know in my role I'm evaluating these guys and giving all my information that I can to Joe and his staff and Dabs so they can make the best decision for the team.

So I think -- and I'm not going to speak for Daniel -- but I think any time you go into player acquisition you try to find the best player or best person for the job.

Q. I'm curious, what do you look for? What's important for you when you do go through that quarterback process? I know a lot of people need to see them throw the -- some coaches say I need to hear them throw. When you go through that what's important to you?

MIKE KAFKA: There is a lot of things that are important to me in a quarterback. You know, leadership, just that ability to kind of control a room, control a huddle. That kind of "it" factor. You look for that. The more you talk to them the more you get comfortable with them.

A lot of times it's -- the first time you meet somebody it's like maybe one of the other parties may not be as comfortable, so you try to have these exposures with guys so you can really understand how they tick.

You want to understand what fires them up and what things give them issues so you have a plan as a coach to build a guy up and how you can kind of prevent weak spots. If they have a weakness and I have a strength, I can cover up his weakness with my strength and vice versa.

You try to find that "it" factor with a guy you want to be around that you know is going to make the other guys better around him. Whether it's the quarterback room or other position, some guys just have that. I know we have that with Daniel, with Drew, with Tommy. Those are guys that command and do a hell of a job in the huddle and command the leadership of a team.

Those are guys you want to be around.

Q. I know you said you didn't want to rehash last year. Offensively it was a tough year for you guys, especially the first half. What did you learn about yourself as a coach during that time?

MIKE KAFKA: Yeah, resiliency. It's never easy. The players feel that too. The players, they are the ones between the lines working it out. So as a coach, we're all in this together. You want to continue to communicate, try and solve problems whenever they come up.

So what I am most proud of from that whole thing is how the players responded the last half of the season when we had a bunch of injuries really throughout, couple different quarterbacks, different players jumping in different roles.

I was really proud to see these guys step up and dig down deep and pull out some wins for us. That was cool to see and be a part of. Although it's not the results we wanted, it's something we can learn and grow from and have a

better year this year.

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