

# New York Giants Media Conference

Monday, April 15, 2024  
New York, New York, USA

## Bobby Okereke

Press Conference



**Q. Last time we spoke to you a lot of uncertainty with the coaching staff. Since then, what's your reaction to the turnover and obviously particularly with Wink?**

BOBBY OKEREKE: You know, it's the NFL so there is player changes, coaching changes every year. I loved Wink, loved playing for him, but very excited to be a part of Shane's defense.

Got a great feel of the energy that we're going to cultivate this year with the scheme we're going to run, the defensive style, so it's been a great first day.

**Q. How can you describe the scheme or style? How much different do you expect it to be? How big is the learning curve going to be?**

BOBBY OKEREKE: Shouldn't be too much. I mean, emphasis is really going to be on our style. Just physicality, full tilt speed to the ball effort. We'll get into the scheme stuff later.

Just feels like everything is going to be simplified.

**Q. I want to get your take on this new ban on the hip drop tackle and how much more difficult that makes your life as a defender?**

BOBBY OKEREKE: Yeah, definitely another thing for us to be aware of as defenders. You know, it's tough. They tell you, run your feet on tackles so you can run through this guy. At the end of the day, our job is to get the guy down.

You know, it'll be an emphasis for us in training going forward focusing on that. I assume it will be an acclimation period for all of us.

**Q. How much more difficult has the defense's job become with the safety rules they're putting in, including when you sack a quarterback you can't land with your body weight on them or leading with the helmet when a guy turns and now your helmet makes**

**contact? Talk about that.**

BOBBY OKEREKE: I mean, it's tough because player safety should always be the emphasis. But at the end of the day, we all have a job to do. This is how we get paid, feed our families. This is our livelihood.

It's kind of a tug-of-war between the two and just trusting the league office and everyone involved to come to the right conclusion.

**Q. Just wanted to get your reaction when you hear the news that you guys are acquiring Brian Burns. I know you have players of impact on this defense. When you bring another one in, what is your reaction? When did you find out? What kind of player do you believe he is?**

BOBBY OKEREKE: Yeah, I was very excited. I mean, he's a dynamic pass rusher. Seeing him for the first time in person, he's a big, physical guy. Just excited. Going to bolster the whole defense, especially the defensive end room. It's only going to bring up the play of Kayvon and Azeez. Everybody is excited.

**Q. Do you like seeing a lot of those guys in front of you? Shane talked about being aggressive with that front. That puts a little bit more pressure on you guys in the middle?**

BOBBY OKEREKE: 100%. All starts with Dex up front. He's a man among other men, so, yeah, just the group working together in continuity is only going to help everybody.

**Q. One of my last stories I wrote with Wink he was comparing Xavier and you to Ray and Ed Reed, and now everyone is gone essentially except you. As a football player this time of year, how do you adjust to the new teammates coming in? And obviously I'm guessing you said good-bye to some pretty good friends.**

BOBBY OKEREKE: Yeah, for sure. That's the nature the beast in the NFL. It's a year-to-year operation. In season,

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

it's a week-to-week operation. The best thing for us is to take it day to day, day at a time approach.

So much turnover in the league from players to coaches. I have lifelong friends in Indianapolis I played with and some of those guys I only see a couple times a year at weddings or off-season. We understand that's the nature of the beast in the NFL.

**Q. What's the challenge for yourself this spring?**

BOBBY OKEREKE: I think just double down on my leadership. Coming in last year as a free agent I was trying to feel my way around, understand the dynamic of the team, and growing my leadership role.

Now coming in, starting fast really. That's the emphasis Dabs that has put on all of us. So from leadership standpoint starting fast. From a conditioning, strength standpoint, get myself in top shape so I can go out there and perform.

**Q. When he said start fast, do you think he's fast forwarding in a way to the season?**

BOBBY OKEREKE: 100%. That's the approach we have to cultivate now.

**Q. Going to quote you now. Feels like everything is going to be simplified. You hear that a lot when a new guy comes in. If it's too simple they say we got to get more scheme. When you have a lot of scheme, the guy comes in and says we are going to play fast and physical and violent and not going to make guys think too much. What does that mean to you with what he is saying about what this defense is going to be?**

BOBBY OKEREKE: Yeah, it's a dance obviously. It takes both. It takes scheme and just takes the physical aspect of the game.

People talk about playing fit ball and football. You can play fit ball and everybody is in their A gap, B gap, setting their arm and fundamentally sound defense, and you can play football where everybody is playing physical and violent and coming downhill.

So got to find our happy medium. Just love the energy and love the start that we've made this first day.

**Q. It does sound like if Shane can -- if this preference can work, that he wants to get pressure with the front four, right? Which is different than in the past. Those guys are going to be challenged. You go get them and everyone else does their job. Do you sense that and**

**how different and exciting or maybe not exciting is that for you?**

BOBBY OKEREKE: Yeah, I got a good feel. You know, especially in Wink's defense last year we got to blitz. A lot of multiples, moving parts. So I was very fortunate to play on that defense. It was another tool added to my tool belt.

So now take some of those skills, skills I learned in my previous years in Indianapolis and add it to this style of defense, it's only help me be a better player and other players as well.

**Q. Sack numbers might go down a little bit.**

BOBBY OKEREKE: Might go down a little bit, but if I'm improving in other areas like interceptions, forced fumbles, as long as the team wins, I'm a happy guy.

**Q. Tell me about what the key is to forging a relationship with a defensive coordinator. I imagine you probably haven't had the conversations yet, but imagine you expect to have the green dot again and be the extension of Shane on the field this season. How does that begin? How does that relationship start out at this time of year?**

BOBBY OKEREKE: Yeah, just communication, developing that rapport with each other, the new coaches, him with us as players. Yeah, just constantly talking to him about the way I see the game, him talking to me about the way he sees the game.

Yeah, if I'm fortunate enough to wear the green dot again this year I'll be consistently communicating with him, figure out how he likes to call the game and understand his mind so I can predict some calls he might make.

Yeah, that's the emphasis more than anything this OTAs period, everybody gelling together as a team.

**Q. You talked about the addition of Brian Burns. This is a front that had a few guys leave. What is the potential of this front seven heading into the season?**

BOBBY OKEREKE: Yeah, I think we have potential to be a very physical, very violent and fantastic defensive front. I mean, you talked about it. Burns up front; Kayvon building off an incredible year, too; Dexter being the beast he is; me, Micah McFadden, it's a very talented front.

Just going to keep competing, working hard, developing each other, that relationship within the unit. And I think it'll be a great result for us.

