

New York Giants Media Conference

Monday, March 31, 2025

New York, New York, USA

Joe Schoen

Press Conference



JOE SCHOEN: Fire away.

Q. Quarterback room, interesting mix with Russ and Jameis. What made you think that two kind of different personalities could work? Why does this work for you?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, both veteran guys, both played a lot of ball in the league. We had three quarterbacks last year sitting here, so no different than most years past.

As you guys know, we been doing this for a while. We like to go into the draft being ready to play a game. Russ, again, winning record last year. Threw 16 touchdowns. I don't think we've had somebody do that since 2019. Ten time Pro Bowler, so excited to get him. Leadership. You know, he played well in stretches last year.

And Jameis, same deal. Played a lot of ball in this league and can still play, and excited about the way the room looks right now.

Q. Can you take us to how you got there? Like the quarterback -- obviously you went after Stafford first and then you were in on Rodgers and then ended up with -- sign Jameis first. Take us through how that evolved and happened.

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, there were parallel tracks on all that. Again, where we were, I think I told you guys at the combine and Paul's company put that nice picture on the back of the paper with the helmet on, taking a lot of swings. I told you guys we were going to take swings at the position.

I knew that going into it Tommy was the only one under contract. We were looking at not just trade options, but free agency and we'll also look to the draft. So we got a pretty good feel what the landscape looks like, who is available, how they're going to be available.

As we started to go through it, you know, we ended up

landing where we did. That was one of the plans as we went through it, hey, this is also a plan that if we end up with Russell and Jameis, we're good with that.

We did have conversations with other quarterbacks and other teams, and this is where we're landing.

Q. What made you decide to go the Russ route instead of waiting -- I mean, everyone is continuing to wait on Aaron -- all right, let's get the guy now as opposed to keep waiting?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, all situations are different. We actually offered Russ when he came in on the visit. I know it seems like, oh, boy, they waited. I think that negotiation was 11 days. These things don't happen overnight. No different than Jameis. Took five days to get that one done.

I know it seems like it was dragging on, but there were conversations behind the scene being had. Some people have different timelines in terms of when they want to do things, and Russ was a guy that we brought in on a visit, had a really good visit, hit it off with the coaches, myself, and we were comfortable going that route.

We had two guys for under \$15 million in that room that have played to a lot of games, and one that led a team the playoffs last year.

Q. When he came in for the visit, were you at that point more on the Russ side or still waiting for Aaron and kind of were you waiting on Russ or were you waiting on Aaron at that point when you talk about the negotiation?

JOE SCHOEN: Well, when he came in on the I guess Thursday for Friday, yeah, we were still looking at all options. As we're going through it, we just felt comfortable with Russ once we had him in the building to get a contract done with him.

Q. How close were you guys with Stafford?

JOE SCHOEN: You know, we had conversations. Ultimately where he is in his career he was able to stay in



... when all is said, we're done.®

his house. He's got four kids that are young, and he was able to stay with the organization he was with.

Ultimately, that was his decision.

Q. How much does that change how you operate the rest of your offseason?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, if something like that would've happened, I mean, again, hypothetically if we would've got him, yeah. As with anything, any deals you do, it alters the amount of money you have, the draft capital you have, whatever it is, it alters your plans going forward.

Q. Was there a point where you thought you were going to get Aaron? Was that close?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, with these, even Russell, even Jameis, until they agree you don't really know. You know, again, I'm happy with the two guys we got. We talked to a lot of defensive free agents, I should say agents, and ultimately where we landed, good with the guys we got.

Q. How important was it for you? You talked a lot about being up front with guys when you bring them in; give them your pitch to make sure --

JOE SCHOEN: Uh-huh.

Q. -- those guys are paying attention to what's going on. How do you kind of navigate those waters in terms of negotiating multiple guys at the same position, especially a position that not many opportunities to go around in a room?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, you shoot them straight. You shoot them straight on the opportunity. The thing that's unique about the quarterback position is they do homework on your roster, too, so they're looking at where can we go put our best foot forward.

Those guys, Russ, Jameis, when they came and visited they did their homework on Malik and some of the offensive weapons and where we are. You know, they wanted to be in New York, so that was good.

Q. Last year Russ came in and left, you know what I mean? Really no starting job open for him at that point.

JOE SCHOEN: Uh-huh.

Q. When he came in did you specifically say, you come in, you sign, you start?

JOE SCHOEN: When? This year or last year?

Q. This year.

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, he'll take the first team reps when we get out there in April. Probably be a better question for Dabs tomorrow. He's going to take the first team reps when we go out there April 21st or whenever it is they come in.

Q. Was the expectation he would be starting for the season or first team reps only?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, again, it's March 31st so that's a good which for Dabs tomorrow. He's going to come in and take the first team reps early on.

Q. When you talked to Jameis, he agreed beforehand?

JOE SCHOEN: Again, we were already negotiating with Russell. There were two deals going on at one time. You got to communicate and shoot these guys straight.

You know, Jameis was aware of what we were doing.

Q. With where you are with those two veterans, how does that affect the quarterback pursuit in the draft?

JOE SCHOEN: Like I said a little bit earlier, going into it we can go any direction. We can go play a game right now, so it doesn't force you into a corner or force you to have to take something based on need.

So gives us optionality to go many different directions.

Q. Shooting them straight, Russ coming in to be the starter, did you tell him what your plans are at three?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, I didn't tell him what we're going to do at three but I said we're open to everything. Yeah, you can't give a promise. You're not going to take a certain position or something like that. That's not fair.

Q. We talked at the combine. You said would you'll know later on. Last year moving up wasn't -- turned out to not really be an option, right? It was almost impossible to get there.

JOE SCHOEN: Uh-huh.

Q. How do you feel about that this year? Moving up to No. 1 realistic, or what have you kind of found out about that so far?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, there is still pro days, particularly,



because the position I know you're talking about, Colorado doesn't go until Friday. Miami just went last week. Last week was a big day for pro days, some of the schools that went.

We'll continue to gather information. There is still information coming in. I think most of the clubs -- again, it's incomplete still until you get all the information. We'll see on that.

Q. Is it going to be difficult for you or any team -- there is knowledge two defensive players in this draft up at the top, Carter and Hunter that are special. Is it going to be hard with for any team and you with three especially to pass on one of those for anybody?

JOE SCHOEN: For anybody? What do you mean?

Q. I mean, for what will be available at three? I would think those defensive players will be ranked higher than anybody else on the board. I would guess.

JOE SCHOEN: Again, we're going to continue to gather information. Still a little bit incomplete. Two of the players I'm assuming you're talking about haven't even worked out.

We're still gathering that information. Again, we're in a position where we can take who we think is the best football player at that time.

Q. There is the old best player available, best player available, best player available. When you are also looking at quarterback, is it almost like, yeah, there is best player available at 21 other positions, but then the quarterback has to be graded a little bit differently? Or maybe the prospect grade isn't the same, but he's a quarterback so you look at it uniquely?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, if you're talking about where we're picking, they got to be able to be a franchise quarterback that you're winning the NFC East every year and your ultimate goal is to win the Super Bowl if you're taking a guy that high.

They got to be able to check those boxes.

Q. How important is it to you to get a quarterback -- obviously signed two veteran quarterbacks, but they're not long-term deals. So future down the line, how important is it for you to get a quarterback in this draft at this point after signing those guys?

JOE SCHOEN: Again, we set it up where we don't have to. We can go several directions. Ultimately in theory I understand what you're saying. You want to put them in

there and say, hey, here is our franchise quarterback for the next 15 years. Got to be one available and they got to check a lot of boxes.

Q. Even if you don't take one there, do you feel like you would like to take one in this draft regardless whatever pick it may be?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, if it matches up and the value is right we can look at many positions and take a guy.

Q. There is precedent, but it's not common. Do you believe you can find a franchise quarterback not in the first round?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah.

Q. I know it's Russell Wilson, et cetera. Is that a sound plan to go into a draft with?

JOE SCHOEN: What's the plan?

Q. In other words, thinking of if I don't get the guy in the first round --

JOE SCHOEN: What if there's not a guy?

Q. Then you don't take one.

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, the assumption is there is going to be a guy. Like I understand the narrative of that. As we do our homework, if there is not a guy, we'll take one that checks the box. If there is not a guy, that's not a good plan.

Q. For sure, yeah.

JOE SCHOEN: So if there is another guy in the second or third that can become a franchise quarterback, heck yeah, you would love to do that. We're going to do our homework on all the quarterbacks and all the positions. We set it up where we're not backed into corner and we have to take any particular position.

Q. Is that difficult, Joe? Like it's year four. Ultimately you want to have your long-term guy that you believe in. Would it be hard thought to be like, it's another year; the guy wasn't there. He's not there so we're not forcing the issue, but also now we still don't have the guy. Is that hard to think about, compartmentalize, that kind of thing?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, in a perfect world, you're absolutely right. Franchise quarterback, I think every GM here would sign up for that. You got to go through and check all the

boxes and there's got to be one there.

Q. Since the you had a relative blank slate except for Tommy being on the roster in the quarterback room, what goes into building a quarterback room in your mind? I would imagine got to be a little different than other positions. You bring in two veterans who have their resumes, but talking to people, couldn't be two more different personalities. Do you factor that in when you're sitting down with the coaches and figuring out how they're going to mesh behind the scenes, not so much on the field?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, Dabs had a really good rapport with both guys when they came in. They've known each other for quite sometime, so the coaches will manage that, the personalities. They're both professionals and been in the league for a long time. You know, both provide leadership in their own different ways, which is important.

Q. How much did you factor in those two guys or whoever you would bring in with the idea that you may be bringing in a rookie quarterback? Not that it's their job to be a leader or a mentor to them, but they'd be around those guys on a regular basis.

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, I have not been around the guys. You do a little bit of research on that. How would this guy be with a young quarterback. Both of them, again, been doing it for a long time. Both got leadership skills and check a lot of those boxes.

Q. Why wasn't Daboll at Miami's pro day?

JOE SCHOEN: He doesn't go to any pro days. He went last year to LSU because we couldn't do a private with Jayden. Pretty much knew we weren't going to get to two, so Jayden was like, hey, I'm not going to do that.

Q. When you look at Russell Wilson, just his bio and watch the games, clearly his career has --

JOE SCHOEN: Who is this.

Q. Russell Wilson. Career has been in descent. Fourth team in five years. Lost his last five games last year. When you look at that, how do you say, we can still make him No. 1 as our quarterback? What he has done versus what he has done lately? What makes you think that you can push that back up?

JOE SCHOEN: Again, like there is this pool of players that you can choose from so you're looking at what they can do and accentuate the positives.

Again, 6-5 last year; threw 16 touchdowns. He has thrown 20 touchdowns I believe every year of his career except for two, and he didn't start all 17 games.

So touchdown pass is relatively high; interceptions are low. He was able to win games this year. Again, leadership, ten time Pro Bowler; expect that play to continue.

Q. I know the offseason isn't over, but now you have ten returning starters for the offense. Would you think quarterback, the upgrade there, is enough to make the offense really propel?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, we'll see. It's March 31st. We went through our offseason needs, quarterback, backup quarterback. We played seven the last two years; played four this year.

Swing tackle was important. We addressed that with Hudson. We've had ten different O-line combinations the last two years. Where the offense is and playing seven quarterbacks and more than ten different O-line combinations last two years plays into some of that.

No. 2 receiver we talked about. Able to get Darius back. We tried to get him done at the bye week in-season; we weren't able to. Fortunate to get him done at the start of the free agency.

GVR we brought back. Glue guy in the O-line room. Very good for leadership. Was very good for Kubas and JMS, so that was important to us. Some of the offseason needs we had on offense, we were able to address those.

Q. Did Runyan have surgery or is he rehabbing it without surgery? He said he was thinking about it.

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, he's been back in the building and he's good. He'll be good to go this spring.

Q. He didn't have anything?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, I'm not going to get into specifics of that. He'll be good to go this spring.

Q. You said one of the reasons Brian went to LSU's day is you knew you weren't getting to No. 2, getting up there. Are you getting the vibe that it's going to be hard to get up to 1 or 2 again this year, or is it probably more receptive to that?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, back to -- I think everybody is still gathering information on the prospects due to the calendar and pro days and the way things are going. I think any of those conversations moving up, back, will probably be

more I would say couple weeks from now, something like that.

Q. Are there any prospects you're not meeting with I guess to follow up?

JOE SCHOEN: No. We have a pretty thorough process. Yeah, again, didn't mean we didn't meet with Jaden. We are still going to meet him. I think it's big from a historical value from, hey, when these guys are free agents in four, five years, I look back on a Josh Allen draft. We've got intimate knowledge of Sam Darnold and Baker Mayfield and Lamar Jackson and Mason Rudolph and Josh Rosen. We did a lot of work on those guys.

That is core because that carries forward to one day when they are free agents or if there is a trade potential at that position. It's also important to spend time and get a feel for that position in particular.

Q. You knew going into last year the idea of how young you were going to be in the secondary and you were going to rely on young guys.

JOE SCHOEN: Uh-huh.

Q. This year you obviously made two big moves in free agency. We haven't had a chance to really talk to you about Holland or Deebo. Curious your thinking bringing in those two guys, especially at safety, where a year ago Xavier left so there was this idea that maybe you didn't value safety as much. Now you brought in Holland at a pretty significant number. Not as high as Xavier, but...

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, especially when you count the cap increase in there. Percentage of cap and what you paid him versus what it was last year. Excited about those guys. Not only that, again as we try to build something that is sustainable, you got Dru Phillips, Tae Banks, Deebo, Nubin, and Holland for the next three years on contract together.

So put Dexter in there, Brian Burns in there.

So you got a core group of good football players that will be together for the foreseeable future as we build it. Ball skills and instincts, both those guys have that. Good football players.

Like I was just telling Charlotte, we spent a lot time in Buffalo with Jevon Holland. He would've potentially been in the mix potentially if we didn't take Greg. Still have a Zoom on my phone I was looking at the other day. Deebo, the ball skills, PBUs, taking the ball away, where they were

age-wise.

Both of them are -- I was looking at the age of our roster and where Jevon is. I mean, some of the guys going into year four he's younger than quite a few of those guys, so checked a lot of those boxes. Good football players. I am excited about what the defense is going to be able to do.

Q. Good with his leg, Deebo?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, he's good. I don't know if you saw on Instagram, he was doing flips and all that stuff, so we feel good about it.

Q. You mentioned Russ playing so many games in his career and obviously he started so many games. How confident are you that last year with that calf injury, that's not a sign of things to come with him being up there in years?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, again it's hard to predict. It's football. There are muscle strains, breaks, all that stuff. So it's hard to predict that.

Over his career he has shown a lot of resiliency and toughness and hasn't missed a lot of games.

So...

Q. With Evan, I think we saw at the combine that you wanted to come back for spring. (Regarding right tackle.)

JOE SCHOEN: Good thing about Evan is he's going to do whatever he can to help the team, whether that's guard or tackle. When they come back in April, again, we still have the draft, so they come in that Monday before the draft.

The team will look different here in four weeks. When he comes in he's willing to do whatever he can do to help the team. If that's tackle or guard, he's open to it.

Q. That conversation happened with him and his agent, that he's willing to do whatever?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah. Yep.

Q. Do you feel like you improved the trenches enough this offseason?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah. I mean, again, it's the starting five from last year. Again, when Andrew was healthy, you know, I think the offensive line was playing well enough for us to win.

You know, we addressed the swing tackle position which last two years unfortunately with Andrew's injuries that has hurt us. So, again, we still got five picks in the top 105 so not done building a team. I like where we are but we've also got more work to do.

I'm excited about the opportunity here in three weeks when the draft starts.

Q. Joe, big picture, how much does the perception of where the team is on the outside concern you? Is that something that pops up on your radar? Do you pay attention to it at all?

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, I mean, we got to go out and win games at the end of the day. We won three games, so we have to do better job. I've got to do better job. Again, free agency I think we added some good players. I'm excited about them.

Again, I'm also looking forward to the draft and the draft picks that we have. Again, we got to go out and do it.

Q. Is it something that ownership talks to you about or is it something that...

JOE SCHOEN: Yeah, I have conversations with John and Steve on a daily basis, and they understand where we are, where we're going. They understand what we've done. Have had really good conversations from the end of the season all the way up to today.

So, yeah, we're good.

Q. What does John not speaking here this week signify to you, if anything?

JOE SCHOEN: I talk to me all the time.

Q. No, to us I mean.

JOE SCHOEN: He talks to me all the time. I don't know.

Q. There is no precedence for it really. Is that an organizational decision or his decision? I'm asking you.

JOE SCHOEN: I haven't talked to John about it. I have been on the road. I haven't been back in the office in eight days. I haven't talked to John about that.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports