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Brandon Brown

Press Conference



Q. Obviously every off-season is exciting. This year, this whole lead-up to the draft, with the number three pick, the quarterbacks out there, was more spicy, exciting, interesting for you and you guys?

BRANDON BROWN: I wouldn't say it's more spicy. When you look at the draft process, we want to attack it by, one, the quarterback process. We also have to look at what's the best player available. We're happy we landed with Abdul. We had two years of watching great tape of him, seeing him play off the ball, but also rushing.

Getting together with Shane and Dave and figuring out how can he be multiple in your defense and help our rush. That was a big emphasis, rush coverage, versatility, creating turnovers. He helps us out with that.

Q. You've talked about that in the past, the idea of making sure the scouting staff, personnel staff, the coaching staff are all on the same page. You know if you're considering drafting a player, what will they do with that player.

BRANDON BROWN: Correct.

Q. How important was it, because he possesses such a diverse game, you want to see how he's going to be used in your system?

BRANDON BROWN: Good question.

When you look at Abdul's versatility, you know he can affect the quarterback in multiple positions. That was the biggest thing. When you have Burns, KT, Abdul, how can you get our best players, our front seven, aligned and on the field as much as possible to help affect the quarterback.

I think when you look at his early tape at Penn State, you can see him playing stack (indiscernible). When you have a premium athlete like Abdul, he can run from a stack linebacker position, rush over a guard. Same thing with

Burns, it gives you the versatility to flip-flop. With KT, to create the best matchup on a week-to-week basis.

The ability to be multiple was really advantageous for us in terms of evaluating Abdul. Actually seeing through application of it. It's not a hypothetical projection, we've seen it.

Q. In the quarterback process, what was your contribution to that process? What was your part in that?

BRANDON BROWN: Yeah, it was a comprehensive and arduous process where you kind of look at the coaching staff and the scouts were on it on two different timelines.

When you look at the quarterbacks, from a scouting perspective, we have two years on back and business of seeing these guys live, where the coaches get the off-season, they're playing catch-up for us.

We have the touch points of the All-Star Games as well as the private workouts, the 30 visits, combine. Then when you have the process, the culmination as you kind of build this funnel, as you get later and later in the spring, you get to watch tape together, figure out what best fits, what are the non-negotiables and understand what is going to pay a premium in the system, what can be emphasized based on Dave's vision.

The collaborative process, like I said it's long. This is our second year in a row doing a deep dive into it. We're happy that Jackson is our guy, the way that we came away with it.

Q. At what point did you process with Jackson? At what point did you kind of say, That guy can work for us?

BRANDON BROWN: When you look at these players, they are their walking résumé. Every benchmark matters and contributes to how they would fit for us.

Obviously you have your two years of tape with Jackson. Then you get to the Senior Bowl, we're lucky enough to



have coaches that were involved in coaching there. But the cool part is when we got to Senior Bowl, we get to sit down with other players. You talk to them about, Hey, if you have one guy to bring to the NFL with you... Jackson was a common theme that came about. It was players from different sides of the ball, demographics. He's kind of got that every-man feel, which was really unique.

When you get through the spring process, we do our aptitude testing as well as our private workout, private dinners, he checked all the boxes with us and we're happy we were able to get him.

Q. Guys that showed up in Mobile or...

BRANDON BROWN: Guys at Mobile, guys that played against him during the regular season, guys that were on the same team with him at Mobile, but not Ole Miss.

When you get to your private workout, you have all your skill guys show up for you at a private workout, it shows how they think about you as a teammate. When you go to the Pro Day, he's cheering on Walter Nolan on the bench pressing. He's there early when he's not even doing the lifting portion of the workout.

The guys see what kind of equity he builds up with them. He has that moxy where guys like to be around him, they gravitate towards him. They see that he puts the work in.

So it was a glove fit for us.

Q. Every year at the draft you hear somebody say, I thought this team told me they were going to draft me and they didn't draft me. How difficult is the fine line to walk between showing a player love, telling him you're interested in him, and not leading him on to believe that he's your guy that you're going to pick?

BRANDON BROWN: For sure. When you get to the combine or early in the process, you're still in the fact-finding part. You have a good feel or you should have a good feel for what the player is on the field, how he can fit into your system from just a skill set standpoint.

But then as you have these call it off-season benchmarks, you figure out the intangibles. You're negligent if you make that decision on a player before you go through the full kitchen sink process with them.

It's how can he process? What is the work ethic that he puts in? What are his, outside of football, interests? What drives him? What's his support system like? All those things contribute to really what's his floor, what's his ceiling.

At the end of the day we're looking at the draft, there's a lot of risk analysis that goes on. Then you factor in the medical component. You find some of that medical component stuff later on which either creates an opportunity for a player or makes it more risky than not to take the player.

Q. You were talk about risk analysis. You know you can get him at three, obviously take Abdul, just not knowing if Jackson is going to make it.

BRANDON BROWN: Well, I think when you take Abdul, he was for us the talent was a no-brainer. You look at opportunity costs, right? What are you giving up potentially for the player you're taking? With the help from NASA, which is our analytics crew, that we affectionately call them NASA. Take our area scouts, they hear the word on the street. Scouts talk. You hear from other buildings where guys may be on the board.

There's so much dead time in the spring before the draft, you're starting to hear where guys potentially may fall. As we get all this information, agents, third-party sources, when is your best opportunity to strike?

We knew once we got into the 20s, there was going to be an opportunity for Jackson. What striking point? What would be the conversation we'd have to give up?

Q. You and Joe work closely together now, to this point. In that point, you're in the draft room, we got to see it after the fact when the team released a video of Joe, just you can see I don't know how I would describe it, but the emotions when we pull the trigger, and the relief when it finally hit. From someone that was in there and had to watch it transpire, what did that feel like to know that here's a quarterback you guys like, but you just don't know until you know when you pull that trigger?

BRANDON BROWN: The first thing, I have to give my hats off to Joe for how systematic and streamlined our processes were, where nothing happened that we were surprised about.

Leading up to the draft, we have these strategy sessions where we go through hypothetical scenarios. If we take a player early, if we trade back into one, what does that look like. It's no different than practicing. You take those reps so when game day comes, on draft day, you're ready for whatever. There's no curve ball surprise where you're caught flat-footed.

When we got into the 20s, we knew there were going to be striking opportunities and potential deals that could have

been done with multiple clubs. We were happy that we were able to keep picks 65 and get Darius Alexander later. These are some of those scenarios we worked through.

For it to come to fruition, seeing that sigh of relief from Joe, everything that we planned for, doesn't always go according to plan, but this one planned out the way we did, Hey, we may be in this position. What does it look like? For the way it came together, we're really happy.

Q. You've been a part of the evaluation process of a lot of players. Evan Neal, he's a right tackle, an offensive tackle. Now he's making a position change. From a developmental guy who looks at these guys, tries to project, why can he be a good forward in the NFL?

BRANDON BROWN: Yeah, I think when you look at the job description in our system for the guard, can he create movement at the line of scrimmage? Can he keep the interior firm in pass protection? We've seen Evan do it before. We need the flashes to be consistent.

He's been fully bought in with the move. Just knowing that leaning on your strengths, not that many men that are as big as he is inside at guard and playing with better balance. Carm and James have been working with him throughout this spring. Evan is putting in his work.

We're excited to see what he shows in training camp. Excited to see that he has the physical tools and skill set to transition inside. We just need to see it consistently.

Q. He looks like a prototype tackle. Does that 6'7" hurt him at guard? There's not that many 6'7" guards. How does that translate?

BRANDON BROWN: He's shorter than 6'7". I get what you're saying. He's a big man.

When you look at the prototype size, you can look throughout the league, offensive lines like Baltimore, et cetera. There are guys, some of the guys in Philly, that are larger than typical prototype.

What is the job description and the technique? If you're asking him to pull out in space and do a lot of redirecting at the second level, that is not his game. He's a power broker. He's a guy that can create movement. He's a guy that can absorb power, anchor in pass protection. We have to keep improving the technique, work on his hand usage and his balance. James and Carm are committed to that.

Q. When Darius and (indiscernible) were scouted, you

mentioned getting two years of tape on Jackson and Abdul. When you look at a guy like Darius, a mid-major school, what is the kind of process evaluating them, seeing how they can fit with less film?

BRANDON BROWN: So this is really a moment. Hats off to our area scouts. It's early identification. They do a lot of the unseen work. When you look at Darius Alexander, Brendan Prohett identifying him early at Toledo.

When we see him play against Pittsburgh, zone drops, has an interception. Finding out the background that he once was an offensive lineman, had coordinator changes, he became a father really early. A lot of the hidden work that he's done and obstacles that he's overcome and come on the right side. Him showing up at Mobile wasn't the first time we had exposure to him. It created an early checkpoint and touch point.

When you look Skatt, same thing. We were hearing things about Skatt when he's at Sac State. You look at our area scouts, Hannah and Jeremy, those two were really the driving force in terms of identifying Skatt early.

Not just the highlights and the broken tackles that you see, but the unseen stuff. At practice, he's got some things in the pass games that are untapped. Then you watch the call it Texas game, you see him utilizing the pass game a little bit more.

When we go through the process with him, we weren't worried about 40 time, all those other things, because we had so many touch points and live looks in practice, that he wasn't a guy that popped on the scene late. We took him through the fall. We got to see him live. We're happy. That's the thing where we preach to our scouts early identification. Scout with your eyes, not with your ears.

Both of the scouts on the west coast, Brendan Prohett with the Toledo work, and one of our other scouts, they did a really good job. It's part of our core values that Dennis Hickey driving the scouting on the college side in terms of overseeing a lot of the calendar work of how we divide up the labor, of going to schools early, the amount of looks each school gets, the amount of live looks each school gets. There's a method to the madness. A lot of unseen work that goes on in the fall.

Q. Russell Wilson's body of work speaks for itself in the league. What convinced you all that at this point in his career he'd be a good fit?

BRANDON BROWN: Well, Russell, he's been a guy that when you look at what he's done from Seattle to



Pittsburgh, the mesh and fit for our scheme. We knew we needed to push a ball down the field a lot more. You guys have seen him in practice. That's an ability that is unique for Russ.

You look at the leadership component. When you see what Russ has done since he's got here, within the first two weeks he's bringing Jalin Hyatt out to L.A. and they're working out privately. He's getting all the skill guys together down in Atlanta. Earlier this week scheduling a dinner with the whole line and running backs.

That leadership component... Remember, our nucleus has been really young throughout our time here. Him having that better leadership on the offensive side as well as having the ability to complement what Dave wants to get done from the quarterback position, we thought it was a really good fit.

Q. You have brought back 91% of let's call it contributors, which is a really high number for a team that won three games. Most teams would think youth reset the roster. Why did you do that? Is that faith in the guys you have that they didn't play to their peak? Is that a sign of youth? What do you see as bringing back so much of a team that only won three games?

BRANDON BROWN: That's the last thing that you mentioned, sign of youth. That was the big thing when we talk about that 91%. I think we only have six players left on the roster from when we got here in 2022. But look how young the nucleus is.

There are strategic additions in terms of free agency. You look at the secondary. We had one of the youngest secondaries in the league. You drop off Jevon Holland, where we loved his character, even coming back out of Oregon, knowing the job he did down in Miami. You look at Paulson Adebo, a guy who if it wasn't for injury, would have been amongst the league leaders in interceptions last year. Have the strong character work coming out of Stanford.

You look at two guys that can help shape the secondary, then you look at the veteran pieces we added on the defensive line and also the front seven. Whether it's Golsteyn or Ledbetter or Roy Robertson-Harris, guys that have skins on the wall that can help complement our young group. Obviously the quarterback room with having Russ and Jameis, experience was paramount.

When you look at our youth, that is our nucleus, but help supplementing it with leadership and versatility and guys that can help supplement not just in age and leadership standpoint but a versatility and skill set standpoint was

really important for us.

Q. You mentioned 40-yard dash before, not worrying so much about stats. How much has having in-game GPS times contributed to this scouting and evaluation process?

BRANDON BROWN: We look at GPS data, the NGS data, all the game day metrics, it's all a tool in our process. Like I mentioned NASA before, our analytics department. Joe does a phenomenal job of including them not only in the draft process, but in free agency.

We can extrapolate certain metrics of, Hey, does it correlate with the scouting report? When our pro director or any of our pro scouts has a report on a guy in free agency, and you say, Hey, he has third-level speed and can pull away, or you has sideline-to-sideline speed and he can close and cut off backside. The data, is it contradictory or is it giving us evidence and support?

When you look at the data in itself, we're always finding ways to really call it poke holes and have checks and balances in our processes. It's a supplemental tool.

We're going to continue to do it. We're going to continue to implement AI which we talked about earlier this week. They're all things where if you're not taking advantage of all those tools, there's another team who is, and you're being negligent.

Joe has been really great in terms of opening the lines of communication and being collaborative when we get to the chance to add different sources and tools to help us make decisions.

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