

Jacksonville Jaguars Media Conference

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James Gladstone Liam Coen Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Who wants to lead off?

Q. How different is the process leading up this year compared to last year?

JAMES GLADSTONE: A little less frantic in terms of how fast everything happened last year, getting not just scouting staff on-boarded, but on-boarded to new procedures, modes of operation.

I think some of the familiarity has helped the flow in the way that we operate on a day-to-day basis, the schedule, the routine, what the coaches expect. That's been very clear and concise throughout the process.

I think it's just allowed us to maybe get to different or deeper dialogue maybe a little bit quicker on some of the guys that we're really honing in on.

Q. How different is it actually knowing your roster now compared to last year?

JAMES GLADSTONE: That's the most helpful piece, being able to accelerate a lot of the conversations where at this point last year we were in true discovery mode. We were learning on the fly. Now we get to leverage all the information and experiences we've had with everybody on our football team up to this point as part of our decision making.

It allows those conversations, like Liam said, to be a bit deeper, get a little bit further into it, more efficient manner.

Q. (Question about Travon.)

JAMES GLADSTONE: I think it was a pretty important piece. He's somebody that I think by season's end, I shared with the majority of you in the room, that he was somebody we wanted to align ourselves with beyond just the contract that we had at the time.

His commitment to our football team, his commitment to his teammates, it seeps out of his soul. It was very easy to see what his piece to our puzzle meant. The scheme fit, the priorities we have on our defense just all really matches up in a real way.

Glad he was able to earn himself that opportunity and know he's going to take advantage of it. He's doesn't take it for granted. He's is the type of human being that you feel comfortable making a decision like that about.

Excited about the evolution we'll see moving forward with not only his usage by that entire defensive front and those guys behind him as we get into year two of the system.

Q. Liam, as you look at the draft, how much do you have to project whether a guy knows how to block?

LIAM COEN: It's a tough one. It's what you're projecting with both Y and F. What Y has enough athletic movements and athleticism in hands and ball skills and feel to be able to run the route tree. What F essentially, with so much of the spread offense, some of those guys not being in a lot of those situations, you're projecting a little bit. Can they do it? Can they block at the second level, linebacker, safeties, what do those matchups look like for the player that we're talking about?

Yeah, there's a little bit of a projection, especially at that position because you're seeing so many different ways they're being used. Then you look at how much the tight ends were used or the extra O-linemen were used in the NFL this year at the Y position, but also what the F or the U could be in some of those multiple tight end personnel groupings.

Q. It seems like you are operating from a position of strength in terms of the health of the roster, but you still have 11 picks. Are you happy with the positions you have put yourselves in?

JAMES GLADSTONE: Yeah, really excited about it. Those slots that you're thinking about are more contributing slots. When you're talking about first-year players, typically

that's the expectation, is finding a way to contribute, offer a positive impact.

It can be a little bit more challenging on the early end of a season as a rookie or even towards mid-season for that to come to life. In the instances that does, that's great. That's usually above the expectation, especially when you're talking about pick 50 and beyond, which is where we find ourselves.

Excited building off of last year's crop knowing it was south of 11 picks. A couple undrafted college free agency that were able to find their place. Look forward to being in familiar territory this go around and being able to leverage prior experience in navigating the waters here in about two weeks' time, have some fun with it.

Q. Best available player approach? Do you limit that? Is it best available player, but if this happened or this guy is around...

JAMES GLADSTONE: I think you'd like to say it's best player available. It's always going to come with a little nuance. You're going to compare across positions. Where there's a clear visual for contributions, a vision from our coaching staff to see that player's skill set come to life. You would typically appreciate that fact that could come to life sooner than later. All that stuff has to be weighted against each other.

When you have two like players, one position allows maybe an earlier runway, you lean towards that direction. It's not so black and white all the time. That's the type of dynamic you would want to be able to watch in at each pick point that we're not pigeonholed to one or two positions, but we have all of them where we feel like taking a comfortable shot if the right or best players presents themselves.

Q. How hard is it to balance that getting a guy for immediate impact with looking at another position where there's value? Your roster is pretty set, but you have to look down the road a little bit.

JAMES GLADSTONE: Right, it's hard to say it's some black-and-white answer. It's typically going to come with a lot of layers to it. Ultimately you have to make what you feel like is in the best interest of our team in the now and for the team for the future.

But we're ready to go win some football games. Whoever can help us do that, we're going to try to add to the fold.

Q. As far as Travis Hunter, without getting too far into it, is he tracking to be ready to go for whatever timeline

you guys have established?

JAMES GLADSTONE: Yeah, for all intents and purpose, he'll be limited through the off-season program with eyes on return to play at full tick in training camp.

Q. How much do you enjoy evaluating defensive players?

LIAM COEN: Good question (smiling).

JAMES GLADSTONE: Almost as good as your tight end question (laughter).

LIAM COEN: I've always enjoyed watching tape. I've watched a lot of evaluations when my dad was recruiting D-III players in New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, watching all positions. You gain an appreciation for the game as much as anything. So you gain an appreciation for all that comes with it.

Now, is it easier or more fun to watch positions at times that have a balance? Usually I tend to lean that way (smiling).

I think it's cool to see the impact and effect that the other side of the ball has, what that player can maybe do to help truly our team, not just in defense but also on teams, special teams, what that looks like.

Trying to have an open mind to some of those nuances that a defensive player could possess a little bit more or different value than a tight end, right, or a different position that we're talking about on offense.

I've actually come to enjoy it. I found that there's a lot of ways obviously that you can impact the game without touching the football and having an impact on every single play - as boring as it is (laughter).

JAMES GLADSTONE: The most fun about watching flim with Liam, when I'm just doing it by myself, I'm focused in on typically a single player going from one play to the next in large part evaluating what that guy's doing.

When you start bringing a coach's lens into the conversation, they start diagnosing scheme on all 11 on offense, how does that match up against what we're getting in the look from the defense. Three minutes later we're moving onto the next play (laughter). It is a classic. You get a Ph.D. every off-season of trends schematically when you start diving in with our coaching staff on a lot of the draft work and free agent work.

That's always a level up for our scouting staff, analytic



staff, that are in on those conversations, get an idea of some of those layers you might not otherwise keep top of mind unless you're focused on the schematics.

Q. Does that make your job harder?

LIAM COEN: Of course it does.

JAMES GLADSTONE: Absolutely not. I get to process at a slower tick.

No, it's good, I get to take a pause a little bit and think about it differently. It opens my mind.

LIAM COEN: Gets a little dry.

Q. (Question regarding the assistant coaches.)

JAMES GLADSTONE: That's a critical piece. As I think back to our opening dialogue as to taking the position, me sitting we podium with Tony and Liam, Mark and T.K., pure collaboration is what came to mind in our decision making. Without it, it becomes very challenging to showcase a clear visual for how a player's going to fit our environment, how a player is going to fit into our team or a position group.

So I think in order to come to that conclusion, we got to have a lot of back and forth, a lot of insights being brought to the table and see where it is that we have alignment and where we don't.

In the instances that we don't, we keep watching more. If we're unable to find a common space, which we are in some instances, you got to move on to the ones that you can and be okay with whether or not the players that you're not go find success elsewhere knowing it wasn't going to be a match with us or come with clarity. When it isn't, it's hard to try to say, Let's force this.

You feel me on that?

Q. What are the challenges of having to wait till 56? Are there challenges that come with it? Will it be an excruciating first round to sit through knowing you don't have that option?

JAMES GLADSTONE: Liam has been through it before.

LIAM COEN: A lot longer before.

JAMES GLADSTONE: There is no doubt about it. We have waited longer.

LIAM COEN: We were having a blast hanging out at the beach house.

JAMES GLADSTONE: 104 was our first pick. We get to cut that in half a little bit. We have two weeks, one day for now, till our pick for now, right? That kind of thing.

You always are going to stay agile. You're never bored. You're always thinking through what might we be able to do. I think that mental gymnastics certainly is an engaging element regardless of where your first pick point is.

Q. Do you not do mocks when you're that late?

JAMES GLADSTONE: No, we do scenarios. We walk through, hey, if this pot of players is there, which one do we feel most comfortable targeting, knowing that at our next pinpoint or few pick points, these are the players we feel like may be in scope, how do we feel about the combination of these different players together, so on and so forth.

Yeah, we're working through that a little bit. Obviously that stuff on draft night, there's no telling. All it takes is one team to take a player you want, you're moving on to the next you were eyeing up.

That may, in fact, alter what we do on the pick point behind it, the pick point behind that. We're trying to chop through that as best we can.

Q. How do you track tendencies of other teams, the perceived needs of those teams? Do you do more of that when you have a pick this late?

JAMES GLADSTONE: Yeah, all teams, just like offenses and defenses throughout the year, have typical tendencies that they lean into. They break those tendencies, which is always fun. We try to do the same and be aware of our own so that they can't totally be leveraged against us.

I think that is a very, very important piece to our mapping of where we might need to get ahead of somebody or be able to jump in the draft or feel comfortable if we were able to move back a certain amount that we're not at risk for losing out on a couple players that we want to target.

That's an important piece to that strategy, is being in tune with a lot of those elements from each club or even trees of decision makers.

Q. How many different scenarios do you think you'll have run through? More at 56?

JAMES GLADSTONE: I don't know that it's any more as much as it is you probably hone in on your hot list. You're pretty refined at that point. We got a really intimate and

detailed understanding of who and what we want, those types of elements. It trims the list a good bit.

While there's 250-plus picks, it's nowhere close to us saying these are our priorities, 250 plus. It's a lot fewer and farther between. It allows us, even if we were picking earlier, to kind of focus that conversation a little bit.

LIAM COEN: (Indiscernible) going through that process. Okay, he is taken. Who we taking? Going through that process, finding out who people like.

JAMES GLADSTONE: You just took this guy, now you're probably not taking that guy at that slot. Are you cool with that?

Q. Liam, does it help that you're evaluating guys that are coming out of high school, when you were coaching college, you probably don't get to look at that as much, do you have to convince him not to take an offensive lineman?

LIAM COEN: Trust me, yes. If they don't play hard, it's hard for Tony to get around that.

JAMES GLADSTONE: Regardless of position.

LIAM COEN: Regardless of position.

JAMES GLADSTONE: If they don't block or tackle at a high clip (laughter).

LIAM COEN: We're working on him. I appreciate that about Tony because it's our culture. It's what we want to be, is physical and tough. That can't be something that we sacrifice.

Then to say, yeah, there's a lot of players that are coming out that I've recruited intimately in terms of being in their houses. Coached them in college, a number of guys that we've evaluated, then also been in some of their homes, at camps, seen those guys.

Yeah, that's a cool part, is to see the evolution of those guys, to know maybe a little bit more of the background on some of those players that I was fortunate enough to be around in the SEC. A lot of guys that went other places that we had on visits or that I went and saw off campus.

I really appreciate that part. I mean, that was the best part I thought about recruiting in college, was going into high schools and seeing the players, seeing them in their environment, meeting the coaches and their teachers.

It brings back some memories, yeah, for sure.

Q. You and your staff are connected to the process. What is it like for you seeing James in the scouting department?

LIAM COEN: Yeah, it's really cool. You're in the lab so much in football during the season with your coaches, whether that's schematically, personnel, fundamentals, technique, but also philosophically. I get a new perspective. Not a new perspective, but just a different lens of culture, of belief, of exactly what we're hunting up, that alignment showing up of core beliefs, what you believe in as an evaluator, a coach, as personnel.

It's really cool to hear different perspectives from some of the guys in the room that we're sitting there watching tape with, seeing that. But a lot of the times it's very much in alignment, which is fun.

Q. James, what is the strongest position group in this draft?

JAMES GLADSTONE: That's probably hard to say. I think the good part is, based off of where we're mapping things out, there's a lot of depth at positions that we feel like we're going to address.

Beyond that, as it always seems to be the case, is when it comes to the rush, there's a good chunk of defensive ends in this crop in comparison to maybe some of the others, which I think will make for an exciting first round. Typically when you can rush the passer, there's going to be a priority, a premium that gets placed off that.

Q. James, many believe that defensive tackle is the weakest position group in this year's draft. They say they're very good against the run, but don't create any pressure inside. Is that agreeable? Are there complete defensive tackles in this draft?

JAMES GLADSTONE: There's no reason to think that guys that we might label as incomplete become complete by the time their NFL career is over. There is development that occurs and surprises people. That's why day three and undrafted college agents become Pro Bowlers and All Pros. To cap that as a concrete sort of outlook is hard to do.

I think there will be plenty of people that, four or five years from now, surprise a lot of the remarks or counter a lot of the remarks that can be said.

But to that end, it's typically the case that the guys on the inside, they tend to do a pretty good job at holding up against the run more than they would rush the passer.

That's typically the case.

It's actually more abnormal to be somebody that is sacking the QB at a regular tick on the interior. So by default it's typically going to be the way you described on the defensive line.

I think there's plenty of reason to think over the course of the next four years, some of these guys are going to surprise the narrative.

Q. (No microphone.)

JAMES GLADSTONE: That's not something we've gone into. Obviously he's under contract with them. Not at liberty necessarily to even talk about it.

Q. Liam, when you get the players back here, what do you want your initial message to them to be?

LIAM COEN: You're chomping at the bit, especially after going to the owners' meetings, talking some smack, having some fun. It just feels a little bit closer to getting the guys back in the building.

The entire message is we're attacking this off-season, and we're attacking the details, we're attacking the relationships, our communication, because there's new, there's change, there's different communications and relationships that need to be blended and matched.

Pouring into each other from a detail standpoint, I think that's going to be key and critical. Getting better with less time. I think I mentioned that last week. We were fortunate last year as a first-year staff to have an extra week, right? We maximized the entire off-season with less time as a coaching staff and with the players, being extremely dialed into everything that we're trying to improve on.

Those areas I talked about of stink that we need to work on, then continuing to focus on the fundamentals and techniques, which we always want to coach. We're attacking everything that we're doing this off-season.

Q. Liam, Bhasyshul and LeQuint did some things as rookies. What are elements you are excited to see improve in their games?

LIAM COEN: You look at what Tuten showed in terms of getting downhill on it, inside the tackles that really wasn't on his tape in college. I think we can do a better job of giving him some opportunities, a little bit more, that fit his skill set as well in college, get him going in some of those instances, as well in the pass game, in the screen game. I

thought he did a great job. He had the one fumble against the Colts. Ball security is what we honed on a lot. We really tried to work on. That wasn't just with him, that was with the whole group.

Year two, let's be more creative. Now you learned ball security at a premium, what we're looking for, the standard, now let's go take it to the next level.

LeQuint I think showed so much in terms of the toughness, physicality, the care factor, third down runs that he was really good at for us. I know he had 60 catches or so in college. So that's an area I think we can continue to lean into him as well.

Q. James, what scout on your staff has no filter at this time of year?

JAMES GLADSTONE: I'd like to think that we're in a spot where everybody's in that bucket.

Q. Have somebody in mind.

JAMES GLADSTONE: We cultivate the watercooler conversations to make it less a boardroom style, more of if you were just catching me at the watercooler, what would you bring to the surface, what would you talk about and make it sound like that, not a buttoned-up report reading.

I do think it's very important to get to the actual sentiment and the root of how you're feeling about a player, a dynamic position conversation, all those types of things, without trying to work around your real feeling on it.

Sometimes the idea that I got to be buttoned up or filtered can get in the way of the root coming to the top of the consideration or the unfiltered sentiment coming to the top.

We've tried to get to the place where everybody fits that mold. I think it's starting to show itself less where it's any one individual and it's actually in a very positive way unfiltered.

Q. James, are you able to gauge if you're a lot higher on a prospect than you think around the league? If so, how do you gauge when to select that player?

JAMES GLADSTONE: That's an awesome question.

I think it does become apparent in the instances where let's just say the world is saying a player is going early, but you don't see the vision for how they would fit here. We just don't like 'em as much as maybe what you would label the 'mock draft' world is saying. The flipside of that is you don't see this guy anywhere, yet there's a lot of appreciation in

some instances.

What we'll really focus on is taking players that we feel have a very clear fit within the way we operate, regardless of what that might mean in terms of the outward perspective, right? It's what fits us. It's what makes sense to us.

At the end of the day if they help us win football games, that's a win for the Jaguars.

LIAM COEN: You don't care about the draft (indiscernible)?

JAMES GLADSTONE: Typically it's not the spot we put the energy in.

I wasn't good with grades even back in elementary school, so... Why be good at 'em now? It's wins and losses.

Q. (Question about Carson Beck.)

LIAM COEN: Yeah, I think you look at his production and different things that he was asked to do at Georgia, both underneath the center and the shotgun, turning his back to the defense, making I guess you call it NFL throws from a route tree standpoint, from a timing and rhythm standpoint.

I think he's been really well-coached. Then you go to Miami and you're operating a little bit more shotgun, spread, so now you're seeing a little bit more of the baseball shortstop. I don't know if he played baseball, but like spit. Georgia, more play-action under center, let the ball get down the field a little bit. Now you're maybe able to see some of the shorter, intermediate window throws that he was able to make this year.

I remember watching him in pregame in '23 when we were at Georgia. I was watching him throw the ball pregame. I was like, Dang, that thing is coming off his hand pretty good.

Haven't been able to meet him or anything like that. I think he's got a shot.

Q. Because a coach is your friend, the expectations and the workload, how the players responds, does that track or help you make decisions on how guys are going to respond?

LIAM COEN: Absolutely. I think our scouting staff, they gather so much information from the university, the school, the director of ops, the athletic trainers, strength and conditioning, coaching staff. You have so many different resources.

To be able to call the head football coach, not just because he's a head football coach, but because we have a shared interest and value of standards and of how to coach and how to go about things, what a player can and cannot take in terms of coaching, how they handle coaching, how they receive information, how they best learn. Those are really important conversations when it comes to some of the information that we're gathering.

Look, you try to gain as much, but also not try to make too many phone calls that you're maybe muddying the waters.

But I think some of those guys that you're really close with, like John and Brad White, for instance at Florida last week, two weeks ago, yeah, you're able to have some real conversations and get real intel that way.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you.

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