

Jacksonville Jaguars Media Conference

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James Gladstone

Draft Day Press Conference



Q. James, if you could come up with a theme maybe for this year's draft class, what would it be?

JAMES GLADSTONE: Yeah, I think it was exactly that. It was higher volume of draft capital and ensuring we could prioritize guys that match and align with what I've spoken a lot about, which are the intangible elements, elements that don't always lie on the surface but are beneath the hood, and I think it's very clear internally that we were able to do just that, and really excited about what lies in front.

Q. When you look at a guy like Parker Hughes, who you added with the last draft pick, what jumps out at you?

JAMES GLADSTONE: There's a ton to point to. Obviously the fact that he's somebody who can run very fast, find the football, track it down and get ball carriers on the ground is going to be really helpful to our cause. I've got to give our coaching staff, our scouting staff, who in collaboration monitor the undrafted college free agent landscape and prioritize guys at each position, there was a lot of heat from not only position coaches but also our special teams coaches and our scouting staff coming into the process that made sure that he was never an afterthought and somebody that over the course of this past month, Liam, myself and Camp were able to really become intimate in understanding what he would offer and be able to towards the end of the draft feel good about submitting his name.

Q. The state of your starting lineup, also your two-deep going into the weekend, did that allow you guys to take some more developmental prospects today, especially that you could just spend this year smoothing out the rough edges?

JAMES GLADSTONE: You know, I feel good about these guys that we have selected or in fact have agreed to terms with in undrafted college free agency competing for spots and doing their part to level up our play and the competition across the roster, while at the same time

knowing that there's going to be some development required for sure, really knowing that those guys are going to pour into it.

We're not going to invite anybody into this building who isn't a strong match for it, and the idea that those that we have are, in fact, built to thrive and be the best versions of themselves because of the environment and that alignment with what they're actually built of and made of I think is really clear in this crowd.

Q. Back to Parker, A, you found him; B, in terms of linebacker, linebacker philosophy looking back at your time with the Rams, where things stand now after two draft cycles in terms of priority of the off-ball linebacker position, where you have found value, how would you evaluate that?

JAMES GLADSTONE: Yeah, to go to the first portion of that question, just like with any of the prospects, it typically comes from the area scout, so A-Rob did a great job bringing his name to the table early in the down which had a ton of heat, which ultimately funneled upward for our cross-check to then our undrafted college free agency committee and then ultimately through that layered portion of interest, up to coordinator level, myself and Liam. So that's kind of the transition of ultimately his viewing and interest level.

But as it relates to the second portion of that question, certainly think you can find quality players at a ton of different intervals, and we certainly had success towards the latter portion of drafts and also undrafted college free agency in Los Angeles, specifically at the linebacker position.

But nonetheless, I think that instincts are certainly going to be something that reigns supreme in that space knowing that a lot happens fast, and in the specific interest of Parker, that stands out in a real way.

Q. What did you like about Wesley Williams?

JAMES GLADSTONE: A ton. That dude gets after it. He's got the makeup that aligns with everything that we



covet, and the fact that he's able to disrupt both the run and the pass is really a helpful piece to our cause because we don't want to be too one-dimensional defensively, and in particular we want to stop the run. Knowing that he can do his part to disrupt, while at the same time maintain fundamentals and techniques, it's a really exciting piece.

Q. 25 blocked kicks for him, too.

JAMES GLADSTONE: It's impressive. I know I went and watched those specifically towards the latter half of last week because I hadn't stumbled into them. I just stumbled into something that we call did-you-know, and it was a little nugget that our analytics crew puts together on each player, and as I'm just reading, I'm like, you know what, I've watched all of his defensive snaps, all of his games, but let me go watch these blocked kicks specifically, and then it forced me to go back and watch his special teams snaps, and even on a number of the kicks that he didn't block, he was creating disruption and getting really close in a lot of instances, as well, so that's certainly more than just happenstance. It's a unique piece that he offers.

Q. Why is he good at it?

JAMES GLADSTONE: It's hard to explain. I know he cares, so that's probably the first thing because so many guys have talent, but the mindset is the differentiator, and I think in that instance, it's certainly something that I think plays its part.

Q. C.J. Williams said the Jags were interested enough to go back and watch every game from last season. What did you find about C.J. in your research on him?

JAMES GLADSTONE: I did not know that nugget. I felt like I held that one close to the vest, but nonetheless, I think he fits the bill for a lot of the things that I have long appreciated in wide receiver play. With both the guys that we drafted at the position, they are extremely tough, extremely good blockers. They are extremely good at attacking the football.

So really excited about both him and Josh entering the fray.

Q. With Josh, 528-pound squat --

JAMES GLADSTONE: Man, that's impressive.

Q. Have you seen that on film?

JAMES GLADSTONE: I have not seen that, but I have watched his football play, and I can understand how he's able to do that when he's got five guys on his back and

he's still standing. So that's not all that surprising. But yeah, he is an impressive human being.

Q. A couple walk-ons late, college walk-ons. What does that tell you --

JAMES GLADSTONE: A couple walk-ons early. You've got to love it. I think that is a part to me that says a lot. If you can start there and ending the conversation of being a potential draft pick, it says a lot about what you can overcome, being able to -- when your back is against the wall, be able to find your path to success, and certainly something that we think about when we're prioritizing guys.

Q. How does Cam fit?

JAMES GLADSTONE: I think very clearly. He's got a superpower that he offers in a real way, and that's catching the football. Obviously, his production over the course of his college tenure speaks volumes, being one of, if not the most productive, pass catcher in college history, depending on how you look at things. I think for how we operate, for how Trevor best operates, having a big target like that isn't a bad thing, especially when it comes to red zone play.

Q. You mentioned the theme was volume. Did you go in with that plan? Did you go in with the plan that you wanted to get as many draft picks and maybe not overall selection --

JAMES GLADSTONE: Yeah, that was a big piece to even my walk-through in the interview process. A higher volume of draft capital was what we were seeking, knowing the more answers you have, the better probability you'll have for successful selections, while at the same time you can have a few more misses than you do hits.

But nonetheless, it was cool to lean into that as a part of this draft. I know with 10 more that lie in front of us in 2027 as it stands, we're going to have a healthy three-year run in terms of count.

Q. What's your favorite or most memorable call from the past three days?

JAMES GLADSTONE: I don't know if I can say that on air. There were definitely some entertaining moments. You always appreciate those calls, knowing that they can be so meaningful for the guys that are across the line. While there were a ton of emotions for them, there were also a ton of emotions on our end.

To see our coaching staff, our scouting staff who have poured in a ton of time and energy into coming to ultimately a big decision, it's really just a moment where I find myself



being grateful, a moment of gratitude to be able to be the one to dial.

But it's certainly a meaningful moment, and the most entertaining ones I'll probably have to keep offline.

Q. Now that your second draft class is done, how much different was this process compared to your first one last year?

JAMES GLADSTONE: You know, I think certainly efficient in comparison. Not being in a position where you have to translate two different systems, two different languages, it just allows lines of communication to be far more fluid. So I think that was a really helpful piece to our process and one that I have to imagine will only continue to get more refined and better as we move forward.

Q. When did you form an interest in Zach?

JAMES GLADSTONE: Gosh, I want to see three weeks ago was when I really poured in. That was another one where our area scout had a ton of interest. Our undrafted college free agent committee surfaced him to the top and got us really pouring in at a deeper level across our over-the-top scouts coordinator level, myself and Liam, and if I'm not mistaken, he ended up being the player that was listed in the annual article of go ahead and figure out who this guy is. Brian Xanders ended up knocking on my door after reading it and saying, you know what, I think he may be somebody that is going to become more publicly aware here soon or may become of interest to others if they're able to figure it out as well.

But nonetheless, certainly excited to bring him into the organization knowing that he's got really a cool background and one that is not all that different than some of the others that we drafted in overcoming the odds and earning their place.

He was really, really effective in rushing the passer, creating disruption this past season.

Q. How do you compare what you got out of this draft to what you wanted to get out of it?

JAMES GLADSTONE: Oh, that's a great question. So I can say as a part of maybe the day before kickoff on Thursday, we ended up putting players in slots across all 11 picks and can, in fact, say that we were able to nail 10 of those 11, and we only made 10 selections. That was a pretty fun outcome, knowing that we were able to map it as cleanly as we were.

I don't think that had anything to do with skill but maybe a

little more luck than that. But that was a pretty exciting piece.

Q. When guys are transferring schools so much more now than five, ten years ago, does that make the scouting process for you guys, the investigation process any harder or any more difficult than it used to be?

JAMES GLADSTONE: It makes it interesting. It makes it a little bit more of a chase, while at the same time when guys are only in one place for a short period of time, you may not get a full picture, so it's only a glimpse typically, so you'd like for there to be a little bit more of a long-term standing position for you to source intel from and not just someplace that they may have stopped, not just called some version of a stay.

But I think it helps when people are really intimate with the player that you're listening to their perspective on, and so that bouncing around can make it a little more challenging, while at the same time maybe you get a few more different perspectives on the matter.

I don't think it hurts, so to speak, but yeah, it definitely makes the chase a little bit more entertaining.

Q. Kind of mapping out the draft, have you ever done that before during your time in LA, last season --

JAMES GLADSTONE: No, that was a fun exercise this year. I can say to a certain degree, I would, but I wasn't making the decisions in Los Angeles, so that was probably more on my own or off to the side, whereas this one was obviously I had a little bit more control over what direction we actually went.

I know that Jake does that on his own, Jake Temme, and it's fun to look over and cross-reference a larger list of players that he would love to choose from and have that be a part of the conversation.

But yeah, that was a unique one for this cycle.

Q. Did you expect to be able to hit it like that?

JAMES GLADSTONE: No. No. So that was fun. That was a blast. Yeah, Liam and I were just laughing about it. That was an oddity, I think. I think that was an outlier. I wouldn't anticipate that being the case even moving forward.

Q. How would you evaluate your pass rush after three days of the draft?



JAMES GLADSTONE: That's hard to say that it's any different than where it was towards the end of last season. I think the exciting thing from my vantage point is we got some really good football players across that defensive front, and our scheme is prepped to tie not only the rush playing but also the back-end coverage together in a way that's going to make it really impactful.

Q. Cameron had the left ankle at the combine and pro day...

JAMES GLADSTONE: Yeah, that could impact just how quickly he's able to hit the ground running. We'll assess that a little more closely upon arrival, but that's a fair question because it could, in fact, delay his start to on-the-grass play. Everybody else is good to go.

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