

New England Patriots Media Conference

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Bill Belichick

Draft Media Conference

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BILL BELICHICK: I'm going to have to make this quicker tonight. It's interesting how it always is on the draft. Stevenson, a big back from Oklahoma, hasn't had a lot of carries, think he's certainly a player that's got a lot of good football in front of him. Kind of unusual to go back to back from Alabama and Oklahoma, but that's just the way it worked out.

As always, really appreciate the cooperation from Coach Saban and the University of Alabama staff and the same thing at Oklahoma with Coach Riley and his outstanding staff as well.

That brought us to McGrone. McGrone is a good football player, replaced Bush at Michigan, and had a really good career there. Had a knee injury last year, missed the end of the year. We're not really sure what the expectation of availability is for him, but we're prepared certainly to not have him available this year, but we'll just have to wait and see how that goes. There are no false expectations here. He should have a good recovery and be a good player. We'll just have to see what the timing is on that.

Bledsoe's a versatile player at Missouri, did a lot of different things for their football team. Was in a couple different systems, defensive staffs out there, but through it all, it's a very athletic player, high school quarterback, point guard, defensive safety, very, very instinctive player.

Then Sherman, the tackle, has played both left and right tackle, also has some experience at guard. So also see how all that plays out. But in '18, he played left tackle, then moved to right tackle, and they had a grad transfer come in and play left tackle. Then he moved back to left tackle this year in '20. So left, right, left. Army football. Again, we'll see how that goes. Certainly has some versatility. Again, maybe also able or suited to play guard. We'll see how that goes.

Then Tre Nixon, receiver from Central Florida, very productive guy, played opposite Gabriel last year, played with Harris, who was drafted a little bit earlier this year. He's a guy that's had a productive career down there.

Then I would say, just to kind of wrap up the day, with Ernie Adams, this is last draft, and certainly he's been a huge part of the draft process with the New England Patriots, going all the way to Coach Fairbanks to the Giants to Cleveland, back to New England. The acquisition of a lot of great players, all the process that goes into drafting, grading players, scouting players, setting up a grading scale, trading really every single thing that is involved in that. Ernie's had that seat and that role and been a part of all those things in the Draft room.

As always, it was great to work with him again over the weekend here. So that's a quick recap of where things are at. We'll just take the free agency process with the undrafted players as it comes and see how that goes and just keep working through things. There's still a lot of work to be done. We certainly had players come to our team after the draft process is over -- David Andrews, J.C. Jackson, J.J. Taylor. You can go right down the line. There have been a lot of them. We'll continue to work through the draft and rookie process now and try to improve the team in any way we can.

Q. On McGrone, I know he didn't have a ton of experience at Michigan, came out early. Was his age a decision, was that part of the process to take him just young, might have to take the year off, but kind of be coming in at 2022 at a normal age for a rookie?

BILL BELICHICK: Well, the ages are getting younger all the time. Well, for the players, not the coaches. We just keep getting older.

McGrone played a lot of football there. There's plenty of football in McGrone, plenty against good competition as well. I don't think his amount of playing time is an issue. Unfortunately, wasn't able to finish the year this year. Just see where he is. He's been a productive player on a good defense that was well coached by Coach Brown and played with Josh and Chase and plenty of other guys. Thomas was drafted. Pay was drafted. We've got a lot of good football players there. He was part of a really good group.

Q. Two from me, Bill. Is Ernie retiring from all his responsibilities with the team?



BILL BELICHICK: I just want to give -- just give an opportunity here, as we close out this draft, to thank Ernie for all he's done and recognize all that he's done. That's really what it is.

Q. And then with Stevenson, only carrying the ball 165 times in college, at least at Oklahoma, drafting him in the fourth round, did that speak to the power of obviously what was a very small sample of him that he was impressive in those snaps, whether it was running or pass protection or even catching the ball?

BILL BELICHICK: Yeah, absolutely. All the circumstances that go with this, which is honestly becoming more and more common, but junior college, came to Oklahoma, played, then missed whatever it was, five, six games, the last game of '19 and then the first however many games this year in '20.

So, right, so not a full season, and also working in with some of the other backs they have there, Brooks and Sermon and so forth. He's been a productive player, any opportunities he's had. Sort of like Barmore. Barmore's number of snaps were maybe not as high as some other players, but certainly his production on a per snap basis was high, as was Stevenson's. We look forward to working with him.

I think Stevenson's best football is in front of him. He's big. He can run. He can catch. He's certainly going to need a lot of work on some of the other finer points. That's what we're here for. I'm sure he'll be ready to get to work and do it.

Q. Bill, you mentioned how much it meant to you to work with Ernie. For those who wouldn't know, how would you characterize his contributions to the organization over the years? And given this news, is this the time to reveal what pink stripes meant after all these years, if you're familiar with that?

BILL BELICHICK: No, I'll pass on that one. Yeah, I think Ernie's contributions are historic. Again, they traverse several decades and so many different areas in every corner of the room and then some. He's literally been involved in every single aspect of the football program at every level that you could possibly be involved in.

He's done an outstanding job on all of them, but not all coaches have the kind of involvement that Ernie's had in the Draft process throughout his career, and his knowledge, experience, and decisions and organization and being part of the process and the way he set it up and taught it to all the people who have come through here from Scott and Nick to all the scouts and so forth.

Really he's had a big hand in it again, going back to the foundation of when it was laid in the middle '70s with Bucko and Chuck and so forth. It's on a major level, but at some point he can talk more about that.

Thanks very much. Appreciate your time. Thank you.

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