

# Houston Texans Transcripts

Training Camp Report Day

Monday, July 25, 2014

(Transcribed by Seth Medvin)

**T Duane Brown**  
**QB Ryan Fitzpatrick**  
**TE Garrett Graham**  
**CB Kareem Jackson**  
**WR Andre Johnson**  
**LB Brooks Reed**  
**DE J.J. Watt**

**T Duane Brown**

(on what it is like having Andre Johnson back) "He got a standing ovation from us. We're all very excited to have him back. He's a huge part of our team. He's been my teammate my whole time here and a guy that I really look up to as a professional. It's good to have him in the building."

(on how often he's seen a standing ovation on the first day of training camp) "It's the first time I've ever seen it. But I think that is just a testament to how much we respect him. He is ready to go to work and we're ready to work with him."

(on what the realistic expectations are for the team this year) "I think realistically we can do whatever we set our minds to accomplish. Right now, we're just having the mindset of training camp, having as a productive training camp as possible. I think everything else will fall into place. We all believe in everything that Coach O'Brien is telling us. We're just going out there and working right now. We're not looking at playoffs. We're looking at training camp and trying to get better every day and being the best team possible and every man doing their job and being accountable."

(on the standing ovation Andre Johnson received) "It was before the meeting started. I don't want to say he interrupted the meeting. Before the meeting started. Yeah, just kind of a slow clap."

(on the different feeling under the new coaching regime) "It is just a sense of urgency here. We want to win and everything we do is pointed to winning. We're all doing our jobs and we're all excited. You know, everyone is excited. We're not forgetting the past, but we're learning from it and we know what it feels like, and we don't want that feeling ever again. We're all excited about this season and the possibilities."

(on how the staff is instilling a sense of urgency) "I think first and foremost, us as players as professionals, we're all competitors. So I think all that lives within us naturally. They've all been around winners. They've all been winning during their careers and they know what it feels like and they know what it takes to get there. We all believe in that. We all believe in what they are telling us and believe that it will work. So we're buying in, and this is where it starts."

(on new offensive line coach Paul Dunn) "All O-line coaches have pretty much the same philosophy and what they try to get accomplished. One thing I will say about Coach Dunn, he's really helped me out on, as well as I think a lot of the younger guys, is just technique. He's very huge on technique. For an o-lineman, specifically a tackle, technique is everything. You could be the best athlete in the world, but technique is what is going to make you successful. He really harps on it and preaches it daily, never to lose your fundamentals, and that is something that I think will help me out a lot, as well as the other guys."

(on offense getting together and staying in touch before the start of training camp) "We all kept in touch for the most part. Mainly just making sure we're all tuned into what is going on and locked in and not having it be everybody coming in and having to start over. Just kind of keeping everything fresh in our

minds. For the most part, everyone was trying to enjoy their time away. But we all stayed in touch to make sure we were still going over the playbook and things like that on our own.”

(on what ways the team is better than last year’s team) “We’ll have to see. We haven’t done anything yet. Right now we’re all just committed to being the best players that we can be individually and as a collective unit. We still have to go through the grind of training camp and we still have to go out there and do it for four quarters for 16 weeks. Right now, I think we have a load of talent. We have a great system and great scheme in place, but we still have to go through and do the work.”

(on his weight) “I’m about 322 right now.”

(on if he more comfortable heavier than he was the year before) “I feel great right now. Last year I was about 20 pounds lighter. While I liked the way I looked, it wasn’t as effective as I think it could have been. I feel a lot more effective and I feel stronger, but I haven’t sacrificed my athleticism at all. I’m looking forward to it.”

### **QB Ryan Fitzpatrick**

(on what it was like seeing Andre Johnson back with the team) “It was good to see him walk in the building. Obviously he’s a guy that is well respected, not just here, but around the league. Anytime you have someone like that on your team it’s a great thing. He’ll be a great player like he always has and a great leader for us this year.”

(on if he has enough time to get on the same page with WR Andre Johnson) “Yeah, for sure. We’ve got a decent amount of time in training camp and throughout all the meetings and the hotel room and all the time we’ll be spending together. Not just Andre, but everybody on the same page and up to speed. For a lot of guys, training camp is a difficult time in terms of the physical strain on your body and all that, but it is also a time that a lot of quarterbacks look forward to, to get everybody back in to it and kind of the mental grind for us is something we look forward to.”

(on what he has to do to get on the same page as Andre Johnson) “It’s one of those things that I haven’t thrown to him at all, so there is going to be some stuff, but I’ve thrown to a lot of different guys in my career and I’ve seen a lot of tape on him and so I think it will be something we’ll be able to get on the same page pretty quick.”

(on if it’s even more important to be on the same page with everyone because he’s on a new team) “It definitely is. Not just me personally with a new team, but everybody here and learning a new system. There is so much communication that has to go on in the meeting rooms, in the hotel rooms just to be able to transfer it all on to the field and so that is a big deal for us. It’s just making sure now with OTA’s behind us and mini-camps and the good solid base we built there just to continue to take steps forward because we have a lot of work to do.”

(on if he feels like the leader of the team since he’s been named the starting quarterback) “For me I am who I am. I have to go out there and be myself and do the things that I’ve done throughout my career and I’ve learned a lot of different lessons, but not try to be anybody I’m not. Go out there with enthusiasm and with the knowledge I need to have throughout the week, throughout the day in terms of the stuff we are putting in and be the guy that is out there that can run the show.”

(on how he attributes his success in the red zone during the 2013 season being ranked third in the league) “As a quarterback in the red zone there just can’t be much indecision. There has to be a lot of stuff pre-snap, a lot of things you go in to a game with a solid game plan and knowing the type of throws, whether they are back shoulder or high balls, low balls – there is a lot of different timing aspects and things you’ve got to be able to do down there. You have to be able to make those quick, split-second decisions. I think that maybe I guess that was a testament to the hard work and the stuff we did in practice. Practicing those exact game-like situations and being able to react as quickly as possible.”

(on if he thinks he'll be able to get Andre Johnson more touchdowns in the red zone) "We're in the business here of scoring touchdowns and so I don't necessarily think we are going to rely on one guy or the other. It's hard enough in this league to get touchdowns let alone trying to pick a certain guy to get them to. For us we are going to be worried about scoring touchdowns and a lot of them, not necessarily who is getting them."

(on his mentality when Andre Johnson was holding out) "Yeah, all of that was kind of Andre's business. Upstairs – they were dealing through that. For me, there was so much focus put in on coming in and learning the system with the guys that were here. Just going through that daily deal with the mental exercises and everything of trying to learn it because this is something that you have to be on it every day to learn this offense. There is new stuff thrown at you every day and you've got to put your time in. It was a really productive off season seeing the willingness for all those guys to put the time in and learn. Like I said earlier, to continue to see that throughout camp and to continue to make strides with that progression will be a good thing for us."

(on how he spent his time the past month) "It's always a good time. It's like the calm before the storm. I've got a lot of little kids running around my house, it's like a great time – daddy time. I can be a good husband for a little bit of the time. It's kind of that for me. It's a great time to spend with my family, to enjoy some of those days and stuff with them, but it's in the back of your mind the whole time just in terms of the excitement and getting back here and getting to work, but it's certainly a nice little refresher to step away from this building for a little bit and spend time with family."

#### **TE Garrett Graham**

(on what it is like having Andre Johnson back) "It is always great to see Dre (Andre Johnson) in the building. Here like everybody else, ready to go."

(on being one of the key guys at tight end heading into this year) "It's exciting. We've got a good group of tight ends this year and I think we'll all be able to contribute. Just looking forward to continue to learn the offense and get going."

(on if it feels good knowing that Andre Johnson won't be a distraction moving forward) "Again, good to have him here. Good to have all of the guys here. As a team, I think we're ready to go and ready to get started."

(on the relationship with Ryan Fitzpatrick) "I think we're very comfortable and have built it since OTAs and even before that. I think it's something we'll get even better at as camp goes on, obviously. Really look forward to working with all of the quarterbacks."

(on whether he spent any time with Bill O'Brien on his own during the past month) "Here and there. He was back and traveling for a while and back with his family, so not as much."

(on the development of Ryan Griffin and the tight end group) "He's been doing great, a lot improvement. He's come a long way with all of us in just learning this offense. The group as a whole has come a long way. C.J. (Fiedorowicz), obviously, has been doing some great things. As a group, we're a pretty tight knit group and looking forward to getting started tomorrow."

(on the biggest difference between his role in the new offense compared to previous years) "Probably the formations. We can line up in a lot different things and use that to our advantage."

#### **CB Kareem Jackson**

(on Andre Johnson reporting for camp) "Man, we're all excited for Andre to be back. He's definitely a piece to this puzzle that we have here. And for us, with all us being here working together definitely offensively and stuff, it's a major thing for us to all be on the same page so to have him here is definitely a great thing."

(on the standing ovation Texans players gave to Andre) "It was cool, something Arian started. You know Arian's just got to poke at him a little bit. Like I said, we're all excited for him to be here. Just looking forward to doing some good things this year, so it's definitely a big thing for us all to be here to try and get on the same page. So for him to be here today is definitely good for us."

(on being in the last year of his contract) "I think for anybody going into their last year it's probably going to be a big year for them. Just with the new coaches and just the whole vibe of the team. I see it as a big year for me just to be around here and be a leader, just to do things right around here and hopefully everything happens in my favor."

(on how he approaches the last year of his contract) "No, like I said, my main objective is to get in and just work, just work hard. I mean, if things happen, if they started to talk or whatever that'll happen but to me that's not my main concern right now. My concern is to come in and work and do everything that's necessary to be a part of the team."

(on whether the locker room was ever bad or negative) "No I don't think it was ever a negative locker room or bad locker room. I think with any team if there's a coaching change there's always going to be a different vibe so for us we're just going into things being positive. Everybody is buying into the new systems offensively and defensively so I think that's the biggest thing, and what everybody's being positive about. We're just so excited to have that change. We're excited to get to work. It's almost like starting a new job. We never know what the outcome is going to be so we definitely have to go out and work as a team, and like I said buying in is definitely a key for us."

(on the excitement of training camp) "I'm like a kid in a candy store. With the offseason just working on your own and you know all of that is leading up to going into camp, and getting ready for the season. All offseason that's what we work for. This is what we work for. To come here and to finally go into camp and to be around your brothers and the coaches and stuff and to get better as a team and to go to work as a team all to get ready for the season we're definitely excited, and like I said the whole time off you're just anxiously waiting."

### **WR Andre Johnson**

(on what changed and what made him report to camp) "I just love playing the game of football. Being here, being around my teammates, you know, there is nothing like being around that. I talked to everyone upstairs. Like I said, I keep what he talked about between me and them. That's pretty much it."

(on the reception from he received from his teammates) "Everyone was excited to see me. I was just as excited to see them as they were to see me. It is the first time that I've been away from my team as long as I have. It was a little different, but it is what it is. I'm here; I am ready to work and ready to go."

(on if it was a tough decision to come in this morning after what he has been through this offseason) "No. Like I said, we talked about everything. I felt comfortable, and like I said, I love playing this game of football. I'm going to play football. I don't plan on walking away from this. But like I said, we talked about what we talked about and I am comfortable, and I'm here."

(on what he will do to catch up with the offense) "That's my job, to make up for the time that I missed. How I do that? I'm going to work my butt off, like I always do. I'm going to work my butt off and make sure that I am ready to go when it is time for the real bullets to start flying."

(on whether the front office made any assurances about his future) "Like I said, whatever we talked about I keep between me and them. That's pretty much it."

(on what he thinks about Head Coach Bill O'Brien and what his new coach said his role would be in the offense) "Me and Bill, since he became the head coach, we've had great dialogue. Having phone conversations and different things like that. Just from what has explained to me, it seems like it is going to be a lot of fun. It will be a little bit different for me. It will be a little challenging as far as me learning things because it is different from what we've been doing in the past. Like I said, it will be a challenge, but I think

it will be a lot of fun for me. Like I said, I'm going to come in and catch up on the things that I need to catch up on and get ready to go."

(on saying losing was the reason for your frustration and now his confidence going in with this team) "I feel very comfortable with where the organization is going. I think a lot of what I said in the offseason had to do with the things that have happened over the past eight, nine years or so. Like I said, talking to Bill (O'Brien) this offseason and the conversations that me and him have had, it has all been positive."

(on how difficult the last couple of months were for him personally) "I wouldn't say it was real difficult. I just think when you've been through so much with an organization, and I've been here going on 12 years now, there has been a lot of things that have happened. I've never really just voiced my opinion on it, but I think at times there comes a time where when you don't agree with something, things need to be said. That is pretty much what it was. I think it was more frustrating just for me not being around my teammates. That was probably the most frustrating part. Other than that, I wouldn't say it was frustrating."

(on fans being upset with the possibility of him not being here) "Just from being around, when I would have probably been at a mall or something like that, it was never nothing negative. I think if anybody had something to say negatively it was behind my back. It was nothing said to my face. It was nothing negative said to my face. If anything was said, I never got any wind of it. It was a lot of positive things. People were telling me that they are praying for me and things like that. They understand the way I felt. It is kind of crazy, man, when you've been at a place for a long time, you kind of build a relationship with the fans and things like that. This is my home now. I've been here for so long. I was in Miami my whole life, and now I've been here going on 12 years. This is my home away from home. I think I've built a great foundation here and built a great relationship with the fans. It has all been positive."

(on whether he wants to finish his career in Houston) "That's my plan."

(on something specific that changed his thinking about the potential holdout) "I just think over time when you see the way things went and sometimes when you voice your opinion about things, sometimes you don't feel like you are heard. It gets frustrating. For what happened last year, with the 2-14 and things like that, I mean, it wasn't only frustrating for me. I understand that it was frustrating for everybody. Everybody has a right to feel the way they want to feel, and I felt the way I felt. It is what it is. None of that really matters now because I'm here. I think that is all that matters. I'm here. I'm with the team."

(on what is different in the culture of the team) "I can only tell you, just from talking to Bill (O'Brien), the conversations we've had, the few hours I've spent with my teammates, just the whole atmosphere of just being here the past few hours is totally different than it has been in the past. Guys are excited. The atmosphere is more upbeat than probably it has ever been. I think this staff that came in has just brought a winning attitude. They make you feel like you can go out and do that. They are giving us the confidence that if we go out and do what we are supposed to do that we will be successful. It has been all positive so far."

(on how important it is for him to finish his career here) "Like I said, that is my plan, but at the same time it is a business. Nobody ever thought that Jerry Rice would wear another uniform. There are a lot of guys that have played this game that you never thought that you'd see them in another uniform, but it ended up happening. A lot of times you have no control over that and I understand the business part of it, but if everything works out in a perfect world, I hope this is the only place that I play."

(on if he were to finish his career here how special would it be to him) "It would be great. It would be great and I think it would be fun. I think it would be great for the fans, for the city; great for me and my family. But when that time comes it will be addressed. I'm here right now and that is all that matters."

(on how meaningful his offseason conversations with Bill O'Brien were) "It was very meaningful because he is the head coach. From the first time I met him, we didn't really get to talk much the first time I met him because it was at a Rockets game, so we were standing there trying to talk, but everybody was coming up to us and trying to take pictures of us and things like that. After I really got a chance to sit

down and talk with him, I liked him. I felt like he was straight up with me. He told me what his plans were. Over time, the more we talked, the more comfortable I got with it.”

(on whether he considered sitting out the entire year) “No.”

(on the difference in the systems and the new challenges he is facing) “It is going to be different. It is going to be a challenge for me. After being in the same offense for eight years, you know, there is some different terminology and things like that. Different words, a lot of different formations and things like that. Like I said, it is up to me to catch up, catch up to speed with the other guys. I’ll do that. I’ll make sure that I do that and that I am ready to go.”

(on when he decided he was going to return to the team) “I don’t know. You guys seem like you had the inside scoop. Y’all tell me.”

(on conversations with Ryan Fitzpatrick after reports stated Johnson had frustrations after the Texans did not take a quarterback early in the draft) “It’s funny because you hear all different types of scenarios. It was about not drafting a quarterback and all this crazy stuff, whoever came up with those things, but it’s not about that. Like I said, I had bigger concerns. Like I said, all of that has happened, it I doesn’t matter. I’m here, here with the team. A lot of people probably thought I wouldn’t be here. I’m here and that’s all that matters. I’m going to work my butt off like I always have over the past years and get ready to play some football.”

(on how he would feel if the team was not competitive again in 2014) “I couldn’t answer that question. I couldn’t answer that question until something like that happened. With my feeling and like I said, from what I’ve experienced over the past few hours with my teammates and being around the coaches, you know, there is a new regime, and I don’t get that feeling. Like I said, I’m excited about the upcoming season and it is up to me to catch up get ready to go. So, I’ll be ready.”

### **LB Brooks Reed**

(on what position he will play at the start of training camp) “Right now it’s up to the coaches where they want me. I’ve been doing inside all OTA’s and offseason but I’m prepared to play both. I feel like I am versatile enough to where if someone were to get injured I could fill in at outside or fill in inside. Really, I’m pretty interchangeable at those two positions. And I have some experience at outside backer so I feel pretty comfortable doing that if they wanted me to move there.”

(on what the coaches have told him about his position) “What they tell me is to just know both going in and I’m sure I’ll get reps at both at some point during camp.”

(on the difference between the positions) “Well, they’re both a little different. Learning inside definitely helps outside. Generally you have someone making the call on defense which is usually the inside backer. If you were playing outside and you already know you could recognize formations, you could make the call and you can help guys on that side and you don’t need to ask, in that regard.”

(on his position of preference) “I’m more familiar, I guess, with playing outside and I enjoy that. I’ve been setting the edge for a while. Inside is kind of unknown right now. We haven’t thrown the pads on but I’m kind of excited to see how I do with that and the challenges that inside backer pose. I feel like I’m built for it and I’ve prepared hard enough to play that position and to be good at it.”

(On Brian Cushing being on the PUP list)

“I honestly have not talked to him about that so I have no idea. I swear! I’m not just saying that, I promise. Not crossing my fingers.”

(on his offseason) “I stayed in Houston for the most part. I trained over with Arian for a few days. I was here a lot. We have a lot of good guys with Fitz and his crew and I’ve been working really hard as opposed to going back home like last year. So we got a good crew of guys here to get good workouts in. I stayed here with a few other guys and stayed in town and did that and wandered around Houston and tried out different spots and see what everyone else is up to.”

(on a scenario where he'd play both positions) "Yeah, if someone goes down, like I was saying, or someone gets too tired or what have you, I can go in there and do both. That's the whole point is to do well enough at both so they trust me that they know that I'm versatile enough to go from playing outside to playing inside. And really that's what camp is all about, seeing if you can hold up in stressful situations."

(on the challenges of playing both linebacker positions) "It was at first but as soon as you learn the rules of this defense it applies to every position and as soon as you know what's going on around you and not just your specific position and you know where guys are at on the field then it's much easier to pick it up. For me, learning inside was more of a challenge because you had to learn where everyone was. Outside you're kind of out there on the edge by yourself and you're not too worried about what the other guy is doing next to you. But middle you have to. So now I kind of have a better perception of what's going on so it really did help me if I needed to move outside."

(on Max Bullough) "Max is an awesome player. He's come in here and just put in the work. He's a very smart player. He looks natural at the position. He's a hard worker and he's athletic. We'll see with the coming days but he looked pretty good in OTA's."

### **DE J.J. Watt**

(on starting another season) "It's great. It's really exciting to be back. It's always fun when football is in the air. Just like the fans, we get excited about it. We get revved up and ready to go. It's going to be fun."

(on how this year compares to last year) "Obviously a new coaching staff brings some changes with it but football is football, so you go out there, you work as hard as you possibly can, you try and be a great a teammate. Obviously, with the new staff, you want to get in the playbook as much as you can to learn the system but the best part about training camp is that every day is an opportunity to get better. So every single day that I step on the field, you get a chance to work on a skill. You get a chance to work on a technique and you get to improve and you get a few weeks to do so. There's really no time of the year quite like training camp where you can really dramatically improve throughout just a few weeks."

(on what it's like to have Andre Johnson back with the team) "It's good. It's obviously good to have your whole team here."

(on what the feeling was to have Andre Johnson back with the team) "It's good to have him back. You never really like to make too big of a deal out of it. He's a great football player and we're very excited to have him on our team."

(on what the expectations for this team should be this season and if it's a playoff team) "We're looking to get as good as we can get every single day. We're going to work every day to be as good as we can be. It all starts Saturday. We're going to go out to the practice field and we're going to try and improve that day and then Sunday and then Monday. It's not the answer you want to hear but that's what we're going to do."

(on if he feels that there is a different culture around the team this year and when he picked that up) "I think any time you change staffs, there's obviously going to be things that change. So yeah, obviously there's a little bit different feel. It's a good coaching staff. We have a good staff. They work very hard. They're energetic. They're very smart and it's going to be fun to play for them."

(on if he finds himself more energized than he did last year with all the changes around the team) "Did I lack energy last year? That's my answer. I feel like I'm always energized. I get to play this game. You never know when it's going to end, you never know. Some kids, their career ends in high school, some kids in college, some people only get to play a few years in the league, some people get to play a long time. As long as I get an opportunity to play this game, I'm going to cherish it and I'm going to be energized to play it because there are so many people out there that wish they could play it. There are so many thousands and thousands of people that would love to be in our position, so it would be awful of me

to waste the opportunity or to take it for granted. So of course I'm going to take every single day for what it is and I'm going to try to make the most of it."

(on where he is at adjusting to a two-gap, 3-4 defense) "I'm learning the defense. I'm doing my best to get in the playbook, make sure I understand it and make sure that we're doing what Coach Crennel asks and I'm going to go out there, I'm going to try and make plays like I always do."

(on how much he is looking forward to playing with OLB Jadeveon Clowney) "I'm looking forward to playing with all my teammates."

(on how exciting it will be to see what a No. 1 draft pick can do in the defense) "It will be exciting to see all the rookies and see how they perform and how they handle the situation. Training camp is a good time for rookies to get their feet wet. Once we finally put the pads on, it will be a good opportunity to see how they perform in a situation like that. So it will be exciting."

(on if he did anything "outside the box" in the four weeks following mandatory minicamp) "I really enjoyed this four-week period. I went back to Wisconsin and really kind of kept a real low profile, just trained. I got a chance to hang out with my family and friends. Didn't do a whole lot. Right at the end, I spent two days in Los Angeles to do a couple things here and there. But really for the entire four-week block up until those last two days, it was in Wisconsin kind of working away, staying quiet, laying low. To be honest, it was one of my favorite offseasons yet because that's what it's about for me. That's when I'm having the most fun, when I'm hanging out with my family and friends and when I'm training to get prepared."

(on if he changed anything about how he prepared his body for the season) "No, not really. I feel like I try and, obviously every year come in as big, fast and strong as you possibly can. Try and gain muscle mass and keep quickness and speed and explosion along the process. Just come in the best athlete I can be and let them decide how they want to use that and do what I can. Just trying to be a good leader, trying to provide a good example and help the young guys along the way and be the best teammate I can be going into this year. I'm really looking forward to the opportunity. Should be fun. Looking forward to seeing you guys. Make sure you stay cool out there."