

Houston Texans Transcripts

Thursday, September 17, 2015

(Transcribed by Omar Majzoub and Ellie Pardee)

Head Coach Bill O'Brien
Defensive Coordinator Romeo Crennel
T Oday Aboushi
QB Ryan Mallett
NT Vince Wilfork

Head Coach Bill O'Brien

(opening statement) "So just a couple things to start off with, a couple roster moves. We claimed Oday Aboushi. He was with the Jets previously and was on the wire and we claimed him to the 53. Add some depth on the offensive line. We traded Keshawn Martin to the New England Patriots and probably will be some more moves, who knows how many towards the end of the week here leading up to game time.

Talk about something else, obviously during the game I made the change at quarterback from Brian Hoyer to Ryan Mallett. I thought it was in the best interest of the team at the time to make an announcement to them on Wednesday and basically just let them know that I was going with Ryan Mallett as the starter against Carolina. I forgot I told my wife and I think she must have called Ian Rapoport, so these things get out there. I understand that everybody has sources and there's no secrets in the NFL, I really do. I get that.

Ryan will be our starter against Carolina. I said all summer that it was an extremely close competition. I went with Brian early in the season here because I felt like he was the most consistent quarterback during training camp. I felt like when Ryan went into the game, he added a spark to our team. Felt like he moved the ball down the field. He was decisive, had some energy, showed good leadership and we scored 10 points.

It's not an indictment on Brian Hoyer. I still have great respect for Brian as a player and as a person. I still think he's a great leader in our locker room and he's a really good teammate and he's handled this very well this week and he's gone out there and practiced well. I'm asking him to do the same thing now that I asked Ryan Mallett to do a few weeks ago.

I know that it's out there, there's something out there I learned from our media people about the Hard Knocks episode and all that. Look, I'm not going down the road of Hard Knocks. To me, that's the problem with Hard Knocks. They have a two-minute conversation that maybe would be a half-hour conversation. They take one snippet out of it, talk about all the things that go into choosing quarterbacks and things like that.

What I try to do is make the best decision for the football team that points us in the direction of winning. Right now we're going to go with Ryan and I know the question will be, 'Are you going to stay with him the rest of the season?' Look, it's Ryan's opportunity to go play well for our football team and lead our team offensively. At all times I always reserve the right to make decisions, positionally, staff-wise, whatever it takes, whoever plays on the field, whoever coaches what, that lead us toward winning. That's my job. With that being said, I'll open it up to questions as it relates to Carolina."

(on RB Arian Foster's status) "Yeah, as you guys saw there, he was out there today and we're just slowly incorporating him back into practice. I wouldn't expect him this week but you never know."

(on T Oday Aboushi's history with Offensive Line Coach Mike Devlin being one of the reasons they added him) "Sure, anytime you've got a guy on your staff that's coached that guy and been a part of that guy's development, I think we always want to try to get that input and Mike gave us good input. He has a lot of respect for Oday and hopefully Oday can come in here and add depth and battle hard to play for us."

(on the offensive line going up against a strong Panthers defensive line) “Look, I think that our offensive line is coming along. Did they play a perfect game last Sunday? No, I don’t think anyone did offensively. I think we’ve got to coach better and we’ve got to play better. But I do think that we’ve got a lot of versatile guys up front, tough guys, guys that are good teammates and they’re working really hard. I think we’ve had two good practices yesterday and today, so looking forward to those guys going out there and playing well on Sunday.”

(on the option of letting T Duane Brown not play and have more time to recover) “You know I think that’s always part of the thought process. It’s more of a probably, not to pass that off to somebody else, but that’s probably more of a medical question. I think that’s something that we have a conversation about. I would definitely put him in the day-to-day category.”

(on if T Chris Clark is up to speed) “Yes, he’s got a good football IQ. He’s a veteran player. He started a Super Bowl. He’s played a lot of games in this league. We noticed him when we went there to scrimmage Denver last year during the preseason. He’s a versatile player and we’re glad to have him.”

(on how much better he feels about playing QB Ryan Mallett now as opposed to last year) “I don’t know, I think every year is different. I would say that, I feel like the guy went out there during the game and played well. Look, did he make every throw? No, he missed the one throw to (Garrett) Graham on the sideline, but I thought other than that, he made a lot of good throws in the game. He threw it on time. He always plays with a good tempo, which is important to us and like I said before, it’s his opportunity.”

(on QB Ryan Mallett throwing the ball quickly) “Yeah, he has an understanding of coverage. He has an understanding of our offense. He knows that he can’t stand back there and hold it for very long, especially like was just brought up. This is a good defensive line. There’s going to be a lot of pressure. He knows that a lot of times the ball is going to have to come out. That’s something that he’s pretty good at.”

(on what he’s seen behind the scenes from QB Ryan Mallett that gives him confidence to make him the starter) “Look I think, and I’ll say this, I think during training camp, again another Hard Knocks episode, he overslept the practice and I think that was a wake up call for him. I think that since that time basically being demoted at that time and then missing practice, oversleeping, I think the guy has really come a long way. That’s a short period of time, but he’s put in a lot of time in the meeting room, he’s practiced well. I thought last week he had a good week of practice. Like I said all along, it’s been very close between the two of them. We have two quarterbacks. It’s Mallett’s turn now, his opportunity to go out there and play well and we’re looking forward to seeing him play well.”

(on if T Duane Brown can’t go, what will change offensively) “I don’t think it changes anything, no.”

(on how much time the offensive line needs to spend at their secondary positions in order for him to feel comfortable putting them there) “It starts all the way back in the spring. It’s the training that takes place from when OTAs start, all the way through, and then training camp, OTAs and training camp where you’re getting the bulk of your reps. Now you’re into the season, you’re not getting as many reps. You’ve got to lay a good foundation during the offseason for that, and I think we did that. Mike Devlin does a really good job of coaching all those guys on learning all five spots. Even though, like for instance Brandon Brooks, Brandon Brooks can play center. He’s played center quite a bit for us in practice. That’s something that could happen at some point in time. Obviously Jonesy (Ben Jones) can play left guard. He did that last year. There’s a lot of versatile players up front. We really like those guys as far as playing ability and their versatility and their toughness and their ability to be good teammates and play the role that we ask them to play. (Offensive Line Coach) Mike (Devlin) does a good job of coaching them.”

(on QB Ryan Mallett’s decision making) “I think he’s a decisive quarterback, I really do. I think that’s one thing, look is it always the right decision, no, but do we always make the right decisions with play calls and things like that, no. I think he’s a decisive player, and that’s what we’re asking him to do is go out there and be a decisive player. Let it rip and go play quarterback.”

(on if T Oday Aboushi will compete for the starting left guard position) “No, I think anybody that’s signed onto the 53, and I’ll say for the practice squad too, I think all those guys have a shot to compete. They go out there on the practice field, I made it clear to our football team this morning. In the last 24 hours, as an organization we made a lot of moves around here. We traded a player, made a quarterback decision, talking about a lot of competition in practice for guys as far as starters and things like that, moving guys around and asking them to do different things. That’s what this organization is about. It’s a competitive league. It’s a league about winning and these aren’t moves that are made in haste. These are moves that are made with a lot of thought and anybody that’s on that practice field has a chance to win a job and compete.”

(on if it’s hard personally to make position changes with guys he’s known for a long time) “I think if you’re true to yourself, you’re true to your players, and you’re very honest with them from the start, I think that’s important. Go out there, you’ve got to play well. If you don’t play well or we think we need to make a change based on what we see, then we’re going to make a change. I think that’s every position. I think as long as you’re honest and up front with the players, you try to make the best decisions for the group. That’s the thing as a head coach, you can’t make a decision based on a relationship with a player. You have to make a decision based on the 53-man roster and you have to make a decision based on winning. That’s what (Founder, Chairman and CEO) Mr. (Bob) McNair pays me to do and that’s what I’m trying to do.”

(on what the difference is in consistency between the two quarterbacks) “I think that when you look at training camp and you go back, I felt like it was very close. I felt like when I talked about consistency with Brian (Hoyer), I think that he was a bit more consistent, but it wasn’t like leaps and bounds more consistent than Ryan (Mallett). I felt, like I said, when Ryan went into the game on Sunday, I just have an instinctive feeling that he led the team and he was decisive in what he was doing, and we’re going to give him a shot to do it on Sunday.”

(on if he saw the same thing from QB Ryan Mallett on Sunday that he did in the two games he played last year) “Yes.”

Defensive Coordinator Romeo Crennel

(on what he expects this game to be like for OLB Jadeveon Clowney since he’s going home and what he’s seen from him on the field so far) “He was able to get out there last week and make a few plays and knock some of the rust off. If he has a good week of practice, then we’ll probably see him more plays this week. I think he’s excited about going home, and he always wants to do well. He’s that kind of guy. He’s a competitive guy. I think that he’ll give a good effort.”

(on OLB John Simon’s performance in the last game) “John is John. John was like that last year, consistent, probably he’s gotten a little bit better, but he gives great effort. He’s a consistent player. He fits in in our scheme, he knows our scheme and he always gives you effort.”

(on how Panthers QB Cam Newton’s running ability is a threat) “Well I think that each week the game plan has to change, and this week it’s a big change because of the option game. They hand it off, the quarterback keeps it, the quarterback throws it all off the option look. So you’ve got to make sure that you have all your assignments taken care of, which sometimes can slow some people down. He’s a big, strong quarterback that can run, so if you let him run, he’s going to gain yards. They’ve got good, strong, hard running backs that are a factor also, got a tight end with good skill that he can throw to. They’ve got some speed receivers who show some speed, not the all-world receivers to this point, but Cam takes most of that on his shoulders.”

(on how he plans to combat the Carolina tight ends) “Well we try to do a couple different things from time to time, maybe assign different people to him, assign two people to him, try to disrupt the route, and so you can kind of mix those things up so that he can get a beat on how you’re trying to defend him.”

(on CB Kevin Johnson’s performance last weekend) “He did okay, I like Kevin. Kevin is a good player. I think he’s going to be a real good player in this league. I think he gets better every day. He’ll get better every game and so he was competitive and he’ll try to make plays. I think he was pretty good.”

(on if he got what he expected from OLB Jadeveon Clowney in the first game) “Yeah, about so. Like I told you, he’s a rookie, he’s going to make rookie mistakes. So he wasn’t perfect, but he had good effort, he showed the ability to be a factor in the game. I think that that will continue and the more plays he gets, maybe the more of a factor he’ll be.”

(on what went into his decision to make a change at quarterback when he was the head coach in Cleveland in 2007) “We went into the game and we just felt like the other guy was going to be better for the team. So that’s why I made the change when I made it.”

(on if it’s a tough decision to make a quarterback change) “Sure. Well I think when you make a change, it’s a tough decision to make anytime, but when you look at the parameters of why you’re making the change, and generally you make the change for what you feel like is the betterment of the team. So then it’s well-justified, so you go make it and see how it works out.”

(on if he feels like he needs more guys in the rotation at defensive line) “Well probably from a depth standpoint, if we had another guy that would be better. Particularly as far as practice goes, help a little bit more in practice. We got what we got, and we’re going to try to play with those.”

(on what the biggest difference is between this year and last year with OLB Jadeveon Clowney) “That he understands the defense better and what we want from the defense in his position. I think that’s the biggest thing. He might be stronger, probably is, because he’s been in the weight room all the time and not on the football field. Hopefully he’s stronger. I think he understands the defense better and how to play his position better.”

(on how far away OLB Jadeveon Clowney is from playing a full game) “Well like I told you before, we have to work with the medical people and kind of got him on a pitch count and the more that he can do, the more we’ll probably give him to do. As he goes along, if the knee does not become a problem for him, then we’ll add to the load. As long as that’s the case, then that’s the way it’ll be. I don’t have a timetable for that. I don’t think the trainers even have a timetable for that.”

(on what the communication is like between the training staff and the coaches as far as OLB Jadeveon Clowney) “It’s always a back and forth thing. In this deal you have to work together, what the coach’s expectations are, what the doctor’s expectations are, what the trainer’s expectations are and you put it all together and come up with a plan.”

(on going up against Carolina’s tight ends after struggling against the Chiefs’ tight ends) “Hopefully, we were hoping that we could’ve done a little bit better job against the tight end last week. This week we’ve got another good tight end that we’re facing. Like I just mentioned, we’ll try to mix some things up on how we attempt to defend him to try to keep him off balance. Sometimes good players are going to make plays. We just have to limit the number of plays that a player can make. That’s going to be the focus.”

(on if the Chiefs offense did anything with their tight ends that the Texans weren’t expecting) “No, I mean we’d seen the things that they ran against us. He did a good job of running the routes for one and then they hit us in some soft areas in our coverages, which allowed them to make some plays. They did a good job.”

(on if OLB Jadeveon Clowney reminds him of anyone he’s coached and if he’s seen his high school tape) “No, I’ve never seen that tape, but he does have tremendous ability. He’s got tremendous size, ability, speed, all those things that can make for a great player. Along with that, you’ve got to have a great work ethic, you’ve got to have your head on straight, and you’ve got to do it on the football field. If he gets to the point where he does it on the football field, then he’ll be a great one.”

T Oday Aboushi

(on his initial thoughts after getting claimed by the Texans) “I was excited. I was excited. (Offensive Line Coach Mike) Devlin drafted me and I had him for two years. Coming in, being familiar with what he expects and the way he wants things done has put me a little bit ahead of the learning curve because I know what he expects as a player and I know what I need to do.”

(on Head Coach Bill O'Brien saying every player on the roster competes to start) "I agree. I came in here to compete and to win a starting job and to help the team win, do whatever I can to put the team in the best position to win. Control what I can control, whatever reps I get at whatever position."

(on how complicated it is to pick up the offensive system) "I think the complication comes in the details and terminology. I think for the base, for the most part, being under (Offensive Line Coach Mike) Devlin and kind of knowing his terms and the way he goes about things, so that's a little familiar to me. I think it's just a matter of picking up the details and how they want things done and how they want plays run."

(on the process of getting claimed by the Texans) "It happened quickly, I'll tell you that, it happened quickly. Texans claimed me, next thing you know I was on a flight, packed a bag with a bunch of things missing, and then booked it down to Texas. It's a fast process, but it's better that way. There's not much time to really think about things. You kind of just get up, go on, and jump in the mix."

(on what he forgot to pack) "A lot of things, socks, you name it. I missed a whole bunch of stuff. I need to do some shopping."

QB Ryan Mallett

(on what he wants to accomplish on Sunday) "I think the first thing is get a win, that's all that matters right now. We're 0-1, half the league is 0-1, so we need to get to 1-1. We're going to have to play well. They've got a good defense, so we need to go play and execute better than we did on last Sunday."

(on if he feels like his hard work has paid off) "Yeah, but it's not over. It's just beginning. It's Week 2. There's a lot of weeks left in this season to put that hard work back into use and to continue to work just as hard."

(on comparing this situation to coming in last year) "No, every situation's different. It is what it is. I'm just going to go out there and try to help my team."

(on if he is more confident) "Like I said last year, I don't really ever lose my confidence in my game. That comes from the preparation that I put into every week and the gameplan. That's where I get my confidence."

(on if he is more comfortable) "It's football. I've been doing this for a long time. Maybe not every week, week in and out, but hopefully that's how it is from now on."

(on not putting too much pressure on himself) "The preparation. That's what it's about. You need to know what's going on, know what they're doing, what we're doing in every aspect of the gameplan."

(on the Panthers defense) "They're really sound. I don't know if Luke (Kuechly) is going to play. If not, they still got a guy behind him that's really good. He gets them lined up. He's the quarterback of their defense. We're going to have to play football. We're going to have to play hard-nose football."

(on the Panthers defense playing well vs. Jacksonville last week) "Yeah, no question."

(on what it was like when he was told he was the starting quarterback) "You feel bad when it's one week or whatever. But also at the same time, you're excited to finally get out there and show what you've been working towards."

(on being angry after losing the quarterback competition in the offseason) "I wasn't angry. I was upset because just the work I put in. I felt like I should have been named the starter, but it was what it was. It was a good competition. We got a good room, so we'll continue to support each other and be there in each other's corner, just like I was for him last week. He'll do the same for me. It's a team effort."

(on what it means to him to earn the starting job) "I think I just started working even harder after that. It's my dream to play in this league every week, every down, so I'm going to keep chasing it. I'm going to do what I have to do to achieve that."

(on if he got in a groove vs. Kansas City) "I felt we got it going okay, decently. Still got to play better, still little things that we can correct."

(on if the gameplan changes when facing talented corners) "Every week's a different gameplan. Every team's got different players and every player has different strengths. You've just got to study those guys and really know what they're good at, what maybe they're deficient at that you can attack, so we'll see what happens."

(on if he has to change his style with different offensive linemen) "No, we work so hard interchanging even throughout training camp and stuff, as far as mixing and matching, just for situations like that. Because during the season, stuff happens. Guys go down. Guys come back. Guys do whatever. It's part of the confidence of meeting and meeting extra with your guys and the preparation we put in during the week and then in the offseason and all that, so to me, it's the same. I've got to go in there and play quarterback."

(on if he is looking forward to having RB Arian Foster back) "We'll see."

(on if what has happened this year makes him an even hungrier player) "I feel like as a player, to myself, I always wanted to be one of the hardest workers on the team. As a quarterback, I feel like you have to be. I feel like I might have stepped it up a little more even this year. All I'm trying to do is go help my team get a win this week. That's all I can do. It's one game at a time, one play at a time. We'll see what happens."

(on what it means when Head Coach Bill O'Brien says he wants him to 'let it rip') "Throw the ball, throw the ball."

(on how the wide receivers played vs. Kansas City) "They made plays. Our job is to get them the ball and let them do that because obviously I don't run a 4.5. I'm not going to run anywhere, so I'm going to try to get those guys the ball and let them do that."

NT Vince Wilfork

(on his thoughts heading into the Carolina game) "It's a good week to get back on track. We've had a couple good days of practice and hopefully we can show on Sunday. Going on the road is always tough, especially early on in the season and with a team that you're really not familiar with playing. I think we've got to do a real good job, as a team, on the practice field, in film, on and off the field understanding what they do and how they want to attack us, what they're successful doing and try to get our heads wrapped around this stuff. It's going to be tough but at the same time, it's the National Football League. We know it's going to be tough, but we have to be ready to play on the road."

(on Panthers QB Cam Newton's ability to run) "He's a great athlete. He's a good quarterback. He's still young also, but you could just tell that each year he's getting better and better. He's not afraid to get out of the pocket. He's not afraid to stay in the pocket. That's one of the things that when I look at him on film, you really can't say he's automatically going to beat you on the ground because he does stand in that pocket. He takes some licks but he keeps on getting up and also he delivers some good footballs. You've seen he's grown over the years, ever since he was a rookie, he's grown a lot. He's going to get better. We have to do a real good job up front and understanding that he can hurt us on the ground and in the pocket. We have to be very disciplined rushing him. We've got some guys that know how to rush the passer. This is defense is built a certain way to be able to get to him, so hopefully we do a good job of that. It all starts with the running game. Between Cam and (Jonathan) Stewart and those guys over there running the football, they do a real good job of mixing it up. We've got to be on our Ps and Qs come Sunday."

(on how his body is feeling) "Body feels great. Never had a problem with it, so I feel good. Like I said I'm just trying to be here and do what I can do for this team and help us win. We've all got to play better. That's one thing we said to one another, hold each other accountable and get back on track this week. It's going to be tough getting back on track, but it felt like any other game I've played in my career. It wasn't an issue."

(on the quarterback change) "I told you, Cam Newton is a real good quarterback."

(on the quarterback situation with his own team) "I let Billy O. (Coach O'Brien) talk about that. We go with the flow. It's not a big deal for us, and we're not going to make it a big deal. That's just how we do it. It's the National Football League. There's a lot of changes that happen around the league. We let Billy O. handle those decisions and whatever he feels we need, he'll do."

(on playing Panthers' QB Cam Newton differently since he can run) "I think with the defense we have and the guys that we have rushing the passer, I think they're very disciplined when it comes down to rushing. One thing as a defensive lineman you never want to handcuff him and say you can't do this and can't do that and be hesitant to rush. I think we understand that and we've got great guys over there rushing. We just have to be smart. We're very disciplined when it comes down to that. We understand one another, where we're going to be and we know what we have to do. We'll keep it like that and hopefully we can get done. If we need to make changes, we'll make changes in the game. As far as right now, we understand what we need to do and how we need to rush. We really still need to get out there and we can't go in there saying that we can't do this, because it'll cost us in the long run."