

GENERAL MANAGER TOM TELESCO DAY 1 AVAILABILITY **Thursday, April 23, 2020 | Hoag Performance Center | Costa Mesa, Calif.**

On when you knew you were trading back into the first round:

"When? Oh, I don't even know. We had a couple positions targeted but quarterback position kind of takes a little bit of precedent and — with Justin [Herbert] today."

On QB Justin Herbert:

"He brings us a lot. I think the combination of his physical skills, his style of how he plays and his makeup. It's just really intriguing to us. He's a big, fast, dual-threat quarterback with plenty of room to grow. We really love his quarterback potential, his quarterback makeup, his leadership skills, his toughness, his mental toughness, being able to handle adversity — especially as a quarterback. He'd have some games where — and all players have this and teams have this — where we have a bad first quarter, we have a bad series, we have a bad half and come back in the second half and put the team on his back and won some games that way. That just shows the resolve that he has. Obviously, being on the West Coast and a Pac-12 player, he's someone that we've had a lot of exposure to especially being a four-year starter. We've seen a lot of him. We like his skills, like his traits, like his makeup so these are players you'd like to work with."

On if he was concerned Herbert wasn't going to be there at pick 6:

"When you get to this point thousands of things go through your head. We had talks with different teams in front of us and behind us, really. Nothing really made sense for us. We just felt at our pick we'd be able to sit and seal a player that we really like and still leave us with some ammunition that we ended up using to go up in the back end of the first round to take [LB] Kenneth Murray. A very rewarding day for us. A lot of work for a lot of people to add a player like this. Everyone is pretty excited. I look tired and sound tired, but everybody is pretty excited."

On Herbert in the quarterback class:

"I don't know how you want me to answer that. Like I said before, he has the physical skills that we really like. The fact that he's big, strong and fast. He can pull it and run with it if he has to and he can throw it. We think there's a lot of growth there, too. The big thing is though, that he has the physical traits, but he has the great work ethic and drive to be a great player and to get better and to improve. We just think that total package was something we were really intrigued by."

On what was it about Herbert that made the team decide to take him:

"The discussions you have, especially the weeks leading up to the draft and going through different scenarios of who could be there and depending on who you take who it could affect you taking later on. You don't pick six very often. Hopefully we never pick six again. I know as a general manager, if you pick six too many times it's going to be somebody else making these picks. When you're up there and you have a chance to take a quarterback you think down the road could be a possible franchise quarterback, especially with the type of makeup and physical skills he has, he's just someone that's hard to pass. Quarterbacks are very difficult to find. It's a very difficult position to play and we think he has a lot of attributes that have a chance for really positive success here."

On face-to-face meetings with Herbert:

"I'm not — he has a great head on his shoulders — and I'm not so concerned about him being the face of the franchise. He's a rookie player who plays a very high-profile position — I get that, he's a quarterback — but we also have two quarterbacks here, right now, that we're happy with. There's no pressure on Justin to walk in on day one — we're not asking him to come in here and carry the football whatsoever — just asking him to come in, start competing, start learning and we'll take it from there. Really not asking him to be the face of the franchise. That's not what we'd ask him to do and it's something I wouldn't even have to tell him. I think he has great maturity and one of the things that's helpful when you're a four-year starter in college. You've been through the ups, you've been through the downs. It just seems like he's been brought up the right way from his family and he's been coached very well at Oregon. Those are all traits and attributes that we'll need at this level."

On seeing Herbert at the Rose Bowl:

"I did. We had numerous scouts see him throughout his whole career as well. A lot of exposure to Justin. I mean, for our scouts they have exposure to everybody but like I said, when you're a four-year starter, we've seen a lot of Justin over the years."

On seeing Herbert playing against USC and Wisconsin this year:

"Yeah, there's different ways to win and he's shown that. He can move the team. He can put points up in different ways. In the USC game, he finished strong in that game. [He] had a great second half in the Rose Bowl. He did a lot of different things to move his football team, doesn't turn the ball over very often and he puts wins on the board. Like I said, there's a lot there to work with and we're excited about it."

On competition with QB Tyrod Taylor:

"There's always competition, but when you look at where we are right now, where everything stands, I think [Head] Coach [Anthony Lynn] has said it, Tyrod [Taylor] is in the driver seat. You would never tell anybody that there's no competition. There's always going to be competition and we'll see, once we get on the grass whenever that happens, we'll go from there."

On Herbert's run game:

"It's a good tool to have. Especially when you're 6-6, 240, to be also fast and pretty athletic. Chance to go in the pocket with him and if nothing's there, maybe go pick up 8-10 yards on the ground. It's part of his game and it's part of his game that we like."

On trading up for LB Kenneth Murray:

"It takes a lot to do that. As a personnel staff, it's — you hold on to your picks, you'd actually like more picks — but he's a player that was just a premium player for us, someone we had rated very high, and we just think he fits our defense to a tee. He's long, he's fast, he's physical and plays with a really violent mentality. You can just kind of feel him on the field with the presence that he plays with. He's another three-year starter. He was a captain [at Oklahoma]. He has great leadership qualities. I think as he grows and matures, he'll be a leader here at some point down the road. Really well-coached at Oklahoma, both by his defensive coordinator and head coach. He is a player, our scouting staffs, our coaching staff, our head coach are really, really excited about. This is the guy that everyone's trying to table on for weeks on end. We felt like when it got to a certain point, it gave us that opportunity to go up and be aggressive and get him — fully knowing that we gave up a third-round pick to do it, but we felt like he was worth that."

On Herbert messing up a formation with the Chargers:

"I did hear that story. He was on with [Offensive Coordinator] Shane Steichen and [Senior Coaching Assistant] Rip Scherer and I know Rip had mentioned that — I don't know exactly the whole story at this point — but Rip had mentioned that the kid seemed like he felt so bad that he missed something, I don't know what it was. He does have a bit of a perfectionist personality, which is good to have, I think. He wants to do everything right all the time, which we all do. He's very competitive and he wants to do everything right. These meetings they sit down with offensive coordinators and quarterback coaches with different teams and they look at different terminology and philosophies. It's hard work. These interviews are very difficult work especially for quarterbacks. Especially doing it the way we do it this year where we're doing everything over zoom. It's funny our — Shane and Rip thought he handled it just fine, really handled it like a pro and handled it very well. I can't remember exactly what the story was, but it didn't bother us."

On knowing Herbert was worthy of being the sixth pick:

"He's someone that we thought during the fall we thought was one of the top players in the country. It wasn't like something that happened overnight."

On Herbert's personality:

"I'm not a psychologist so I don't know introvert, extrovert very well, but I just want every player we have to be themselves. I don't — whatever their personalities are. I just want them to be the best version of themselves. No matter what your personality is, you can lead. We've seen him lead. I've seen him lead on the field with his own eyes. Our scouts have seen him leave on the field. We've seen him lead in practice. We've met with him. Seen a lot of him at the senior bowl where he's around all different players he hasn't played with before and watched those players follow him. I love his makeup. He has great mental toughness and great resolve — which if you're going to play this position in this league you're going to have to have — more so than a strong arm and size and speed and all that you have to have mental toughness and great resolve, be able to handle adversity and handle everything that goes along with being a quarterback in this league and I think he has all that. I love his personality."

On Murray being surprised:

"They're both great leaders. I think Justin is a three-year captain at Oregon, maybe. Kenneth is a two-year captain at Oklahoma but two totally different personalities, as you might have seen if you've talked with both of them already. Kenneth is much more — I don't know if he's outgoing — but he has that defensive personality. We just think he fits really well with what we do. His tape is pretty easy to watch to see how explosive and how much range he has and how he'd fit with our defense with [Defensive Coordinator] Gus [Bradley]. And we just think he has some of those attributes that he can be a — down the road, we don't ask kids his age to come in here and lead the football team he's going to come in and follow for a little bit — but kind of learn how we do things and hopefully we'll see his career blossom and he gets older."

On where he sees Murray playing linebacker:

"I think he could play any of the spots that we would ask him to. Whenever we get on the field, hopefully as soon as possible, we'll see where everything shakes out."

On picking Murray over other linebackers:

"Well, I'm not going to go into comparing players that we took and didn't take. There are no winners when you do that. Our draft board may be different than another team's draft board, may be different than your draft board. That's just the way that it is. I don't know what else to say more about Kenneth Murray. He's one of those guys that, between scouting staff and coaching staff, boy there was a 100 percent buy-in to add him to this football team."

On giving up second and third-round picks:

"I mean, you never know. We're not out a second-round pick because we just used it in the first round. So, we're really just out a third-round pick. Potentially, tomorrow could be a long day. Watching 60-plus players come off the board — there's going to be a lot of players that we like. You never know. It's not like we're going to take tomorrow off, put it that way."

On the intangibles he likes in Herbert and Murray:

"I guess with Kenneth, he has one of those magnetic personalities. It's almost like he's built to play defense. I think that helps, especially in the position he plays and the style the plays. We feel like he's going to fit in very well with our guys on defense. I had mentioned already, with Justin, the intangibles and makeup that a quarterback has are so important. It's difficult to grade things, as a scout, from the neck up. It really is. It takes a lot of evaluation, a lot of talking with people. We think he has those traits, and it's one of the reasons we're excited to have him."

On past Oregon quarterbacks struggling in the NFL:

"Well, I really see no correlation between a player who plays for a school right now versus a player who played there two, three, 10 or 15 years ago. There's just no correlation there at all. He's played with a great football program, very good head coach there. Just an excellent program. He was a four-year starter there and he's got a lot of snaps under his belt, but he still has a lot of room to grow, too. So, we think there's a lot there. I just don't see any correlation between him and any other quarterbacks that have been there."

On the duration of round one:

"I kind of lost track. The first round I even think TV will delay the picks a little bit, so they have time to talk. Maybe it could have gone faster, I don't even know. I lose track of the time during the draft. It went by fast for me. It seemed like right after we picked, we were already looking at where Kenneth Murray could go, and if he doesn't go there in the first round, there could be a good spot for us to take a shot at it. But I will say overall the whole draft process, at least from our end, was smooth. We had no issues on our end — internet worked, computers worked, video conferencing worked, phone line works. We didn't know going in, but everything went smooth. I still wish we had the faces in a room, it's just kind of strange making a draft pick with nobody here. No coach here, no ownership, even assistant coaches. When you make a pick, usually everyone is so excited about it, but there's no one here to celebrate it with besides my family. Which is fun. That was fun to celebrate with the family, but it's just a lot different. Overall, it seemed like from what I saw on TV, and what we did on this side, it went pretty smooth."

On how he researched Herbert ahead of the draft:

"I can tell you for all these players, not just the first-round picks, we're talking about multiple scouts that are going into the school and talking to coaches and any personnel willing to talk to you. Part of having your scouts in one area for a long time is that they usually have good contacts. As you go into that school year after year, after year, you build up your contact list. You talk about multiple scouts going into the school. Justin played in the Senior Bowl, there's a lot of exposure there — both on the field during practice and with meetings. I know we met with him at the Senior Bowl, met with him at the combine again. Like I said, this is multiple scouts doing this. Then our coaches meet with them, both at the combine and then, this year, through Zoom interviews. You do as much background as you can on all of these players to try to put a picture together of what this player is. Does he fit for us, or not? It's not always an easy puzzle to put together. There are no perfect players, it doesn't matter where you're taken, what year it is. All players have their strengths, they all have their weaknesses. We try and find the players that best fit your culture, No. 1, and then your scheme, No. 2. We thought the two players today really fit both of those very well."

On the mechanics Herbert can improve on:

"I don't want to call it a challenge, but it's an adjustment for almost every college quarterback. Most of them go out of shotgun in high school, shotgun in college mostly. Getting under center is just a little bit different. I should probably ask him. Sometimes, it's not always the footwork, it's the eyes. Your eyes are a little bit different when coming under center rather than when you're in shotgun. The other good part is, in the NFL, we do run a lot of shotgun. That will be no adjustment for him, or for any quarterback that comes in here. There may be a little bit of adjustment. He's smart, he's a great athlete, he's got great feet - that's the least of our worries."

On Herbert playing with less talent around him than other quarterback prospects:

"I wouldn't sell those guys short. I saw Oregon a good amount this year. They won a lot of games, went to the Rose Bowl, won the Rose Bowl. I thought they had some good running backs, they had some receivers that are talented. I mean, are they first round draft picks? Maybe not a first-round pick, but those guys are pretty good players. They recruit extremely well at Oregon. They had one of the best offensive lines in the country this past year, and a really good coaching staff. To me, that didn't really play into it. I know Alabama has three big time receivers, and LSU has their receivers — I get all that. But there are some good players at Oregon, too, that he's played with through his whole career. So that really did not play into for us."

On player development:

"I'm not so concerned about being under center and the shotgun. Overall, if the rookies are not available to come in for offseason work — not just rookies but veterans — if they're not able to be here, then yeah, it's going to make the transition a little more difficult for all these young players coming in. That's the atmosphere that we're in now, that's the climate we're in. We're just going to make it work like everybody else. Every team in this league has the same issue with the players they're drafting this year. We don't know what our practice schedule will be like this offseason. We just don't know. I do think it's important that when we're drafting these players, and signing players after the draft, they better be really internally motivated because if they're working out by themselves without us there, they're going to have to push themselves. Not only with their physical workouts — lifting and running — but with the playbook. I mean there is only so many Zoom meetings we can do with these players through the course of the day, so we need players that really love what they do. The two players that we took today — they love football, they love to play, they love to learn. We're going to need more players like that this year because this is a unique year. We know we're going to play football at some point, none of us really know when right now. So we need these guys to be doing a lot of work on their own. We're going to have to have some trust in them as well."