

GENERAL MANAGER TOM TELESCO DAY 3 AVAILABILITY Saturday, April 25, 2020 | Hoag Performance Center | Costa Mesa, Calif.

On WR Joe Reed:

“Well, you kind of hit on it right there. He can do a lot of different things, we think. He played wide receiver, but they used him a lot just to get the ball in his hands — almost like a running back. Between some receiver, maybe a little bit of running back, certainly as a kickoff returner — we really like him in that position with his size. You know, 225 pounds, but he still runs very well and has a great feel for kickoff returning. To add in, covering punts and covering kicks — he can do a lot of things for us. So we’ll get him in here and see where he fits. The thing that really stood out about him is how versatile he really is in some different areas.”

On how Reed can complement RB Austin Ekeler:

“Well, those are good pieces to have for an offensive coordinator. His kickoff returning ability is really, really good — he’s one of the best ones we saw this year in college. Even though the kickoff is de-emphasized now, you need to have a guy back there that people respect. If you don’t, they’re going to sky-kick it, kick it inside the five. Then, if you don’t have a guy who can get it out of there, you’re going to get pinned back a lot. We like him in that category, we’ll kind of see how he works from a receiver/running back, but those are nice pieces to have for an offensive coordinator where he can move some players around.”

On if the expected changes for 2020 affected draft choices:

“Well, whatever schemes you’re running on offense and defense, you’re always going to draft the players that fit that. You have to play to players’ strengths. There will probably be some tweaks and changes this year on offense because it’s going to be a different quarterback. We’re going to do some things that [QB] Tyrod [Taylor] does very well, and maybe different things that [Colts QB] Philip [Rivers] did. The offense is going to change and evolve every year, depending on who is under center — not only who is under center, but everybody that’s involved. We’ll fit the pieces to that.”

On implementing the pistol formation on offense more in 2020:

“You know you’d have to ask him. My mind, right now, isn’t on under center, pistol and shotgun. I have to tell you. We’ll see once we get on the field.”

On tackle depth:

“If there were someone in the draft we liked, in the spot we were or somewhere near it, it certainly would have been a possibility — but your draft board is what your draft board is. We’re not going to manufacture players, either. I don’t know about named tackles. I don’t know what that really means. We have some people in-house that we like. The offense is going to change a little bit for how we do some things. I think it’s going to fit a little better with some of the guys that we have. We’re going to see how it plays out. The draft is what it is. I wish I had 20 draft picks and they were all in the top three rounds, but that’s not how it works. It just kind of falls the way it falls.”

On getting faster on defense:

“We’ll see. Kansas City’s offense can fly. It’s more than just covering those fast guys. It’s about getting to the quarterback, too. [LB Kenneth] Murray is going to help — playing Kansas City and everybody — because of his range, explosiveness and speed. The way offenses are nowadays, where everything is so spread out and they spread defenses out, you have to be able to run and chase. Murray fits that category.”

On RB Joshua Kelley:

“Our running back room only has two guys in it right now. Josh has a different style than the two backs we have. He’s a player that we liked a lot, both at UCLA and at the Senior Bowl. I think he has really nice vision to see things patiently. When he puts his foot in the ground, he can really explode through the hole. He had a nice career at UCLA. He has a really nice story and background as far as where he came from to where he is now. Like [QB] Justin Herbert did, Josh Kelley really stood out at the Senior Bowl. You watch them in the fall, then you see them in an all-star game against the best seniors in the country. It was nice to see him really step up, too. That’s part of our evaluation process. He’s a very well-rounded running back and we’re looking forward to seeing him get in the mix.”

On if there was any conversation to trade into the third round:

“We had conversations, but I wouldn’t say anything was close.”

On WR K.J. Hill:

“Every year, in the draft, there are always so many receivers that it seems like a couple of guys fall a little further down than you would expect. K.J. had a great career at Ohio State — a four-year player with four years of production. He’s super smart and instinctive and has a great feel to get open, which a lot of inside receivers need to have. [He has] excellent hands, he’s done some punt returns, too. It was nice that he was still there in the seventh round that we could take a shot at that.”

On the 2020 NFL Draft:

“It’s No. 1 on the uniqueness scale, no doubt about that. I’m really happy with the process. I mean, I don’t know how this class is going to be until we get out on the field and see them play. So, I have no idea yet. It’s a completely different procedure and process to how everything went. The way everyone contributed and the teamwork we had — even our seventh-round pick, my Zoom account had frozen and went out, so we had to try to make some adjustments on the fly about five picks before we took K.J. Hill. The amount of teamwork that went into that was incredible. It was really cool. Everyone that has been involved in this draft — it’s been great to see. It’s actually not even just football people. The last month leading up to this, I would say every department in our organization probably had a hand in this draft, just the way it was set up. That was great. As far as the players we took — we love them all today and we expect them all to be players in this league, but until you actually see them on the field, see them in Training Camp, and see them play in games — we’ll know then.”

On being around family for the draft instead of the war room:

“It was pretty cool. I had to get them in the rhythm a little bit — the TV can’t be on and going the whole time, but they kind of figured it out. Like I said, just as an experience, to have my kids and wife here — everyone really had a different job to do. It was just so unique. They had never seen a draft room from a draft room before, and most people haven’t. So they had the chance to see a little bit how it’s run here. My wife was amazed how quiet it was. A lot of it is just us sitting, watching, and thinking — just a lot of thinking to be honest with you. The closer you get to your pick, the more quiet it gets. If you were to ask me, even just a month ago, if I thought we’d ever have a draft where we all did it from our house, I would have said there is no way we ever do that. There’s no way, they’ll just push the draft back. — but lo and behold, we did it like this. In some aspects, it was fun. I mean you roll out of bed, you come downstairs, and you get right back to work again, but a chance to experience this with the whole family — and I saw some of the families on the TV screens — it was pretty cool.”

On the likelihood of using similar techniques to the at-home draft in the future:

“At least I know we can do it like this — and we did it quickly. We put this together in roughly a month with the infrastructure, so we know we can handle it like this. There are some things I’ve done in the last month that I may incorporate next year even if it’s a regular draft just what we did meeting-wise and what we did technology-wise. If you think about it, the way drafts have been run it’s been the same for probably 40-50 years, if you think about it. At least now we know we can go this a couple of different ways.”

On Hill being available in the seventh round:

“Like I said before, the receiver position just because there are so many of them, it just seems like every couple years there’s some guys that fall a little bit further down than you think. I don’t know. Everyone’s draft boards were different. Every media person’s draft board was different. You never really know, but to get a really experienced receiver like that come in and have a chance to make this football team as a receiver/special teamer, I think we’ll have a good opportunity for him.”

On S Alohi Gilman:

“If you look at it, we’ve lost some of our core special teamers from last year, so that was definitely part of it with Gilman, but we like him as a safety too — really, safety in some dime package. He’s super smart, instructive, tough and he hits. Those are some traits that are good to have in the secondary. We think between safety and some special teams, he has a really chance there.”

On T Trey Pipkins III:

“I don’t know if I worry about it. I’m glad we have a lot of players on our football team that are internally-motivated because they’re going to have to do some development on their own right now. I guess this may even out. He’s not going to get as much work hands on this spring as we would have liked, but he also got more snaps last year than we had anticipated, so maybe that will even out in the end. Between Trey, [T] Sam [Tevi] can play out there at left tackle, and we’ll have a lot more movement upfront, so some play-action place and I think we’ll be ok. If that’s where we are, that’s where we are. This offseason could be very, very interesting how we develop our players and how we are going to do it when we actually get our hands on them. We’ll see how it plays out.”

On the 2020 NFL Draft:

“Certainly, when you get to the third day, you’re really not filling needs. You really are just trying to find the best football players you can that really fit you. There’s always — we had started with seven draft picks, ended with six. There are a lot more players we liked that were on the board. You just can’t get everybody you want, but I think, in the end — at least on paper right now — I like how we came out. We added some players that we have some specific roles in mind that we think can do well. This has changed over a lot by last year and we kind of knew that going into 2020 that this team was probably going to change a little bit. We lost some free agents and we got some draft picks coming in. We signed some other free agents and we have to put a new team together this year. I’m looking forward to seeing the rookies actually on the field. Usually, we have a rookie minicamp this coming weekend, which we won’t right now, so we’re going to have to until we actually see them with a Chargers helmet on.”

On being a better team on paper:

“The answer is yes on paper, but paper doesn’t mean anything. You just have to wait until you get them on the field. All we can do right now, in the offseason, is try to make our team better on paper because we aren’t allowed to go practice. We aren’t allowed to go against anybody yet. You do the best you can. You try to fill as many needs as you can. You try to develop the players that you have and then you get on the field in August and you let it go. I love our coaching staff. They teach really well. They motivate really well and they communicate. If we give them the right guys, the right players, guys that can fill the right roles for them, I feel like the sky’s the limit. That’s the goal. To kind of give them the players they need, that fit what they need, and then go. I don’t know when that’s going to be right now. Hopefully, sooner rather than later. Get back out on the field.”

On surrounding QB Justin Herbert with versatility:

“It really wasn’t the focus. He’s going to come in and play his position. Then, we’re going to build the rest of the team how we see fit. We didn’t have a specific focus for this third day because you just never know how the draft board is going to go. Once you get out of the fourth round, there are players coming from all over the draft board because everybody sees players a little bit differently. We went in with kind of a short list of players that were there. These are the guys that we really like and if they weren’t there, then we’d probably trade out. I didn’t really want to trade up anywhere today because we only had six picks to finish with. We were lucky. When we were getting ready to pick, we had a nice long group of players that we felt really good about. It ended up being a running back, two receivers and safety.”