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Defensive Coordinator Paul Guenther

Q: What is it about Vontaze Burfict that made you so vocal during the process of signing him?

Coach Guenther: "Well I spent a lot of time with Vontaze in Cincinnati as both his position coach and coordinator. Any time you can add a guy with his talent and knowledge of the system...When he became available, it was very attractive to us. He knows the system inside and out. He can get us in and out of calls. I think some of the returning players are seeing the knowledge of the system he has out here on the practice field. It's good to have him."

Q: How similar is what you're doing now to what you were doing with the Bengals?

Coach Guenther: "Eighty percent of it is the same. We've added some things in the offseason. When you look at the landscape of the NFL and the offenses, we added some stuff both in the front and the coverage plans, so those things will be new to him. But most of the stuff he'll remember."

Q: Does it help you as a play caller to have someone who knows your system well enough to be able to implement some new and creative things?

Coach Guenther: "Yeah, it's like having a quarterback that you've coached in there so you can get in and out of calls at the line of scrimmage. Last year we didn't do that as much. We did it a few times and I just felt like it was a lot for the guys in the first year of the system to put that added weight on them. I wanted them to kind of go out and play. Now in year two, add in a guy like him and having another year under the system, the guys will pick it up a lot faster."

Q: Can you see already that your defense has some players and pieces?

Coach Guenther: "No doubt. We've gotten a lot younger, obviously. We have some guys in the backend that can cover guys 1-on-1. The offense is going to make their share of plays. We're going to make our share of plays. We come out here and just limit the corrections that we have to make each and every day. The install, for the most part, in the defense is over, so it's just getting the fine tunes of everything done. I'm happy with where we're at right now."

Q: What did you learn about yourself from last season?

Coach Guenther: "By far my hardest year in coaching. I just felt like the kind of players we were looking for, we've added a lot of those guys throughout the draft and free agency. Guys that kind of fit what we're doing. Right now in the NFL everyone [is saying,] 'Oh, we're going to surprise everybody.' And all these great predictions. Right now everybody feels great about their team. I'm just trying to get them better every day."

Q: How has Johnathan Abram been able to pick things up?

Coach Guenther: "He's smart. He's real smart. From a rookie player with all the stuff safeties have to know, he's on top of it each and every day. So it's good to have him. When you're back there, as I stand at the back of the defense, I hear him communicate. He doesn't sound like a rookie player. He sounds like a veteran player out there, so that's encouraging."

Q: How does Lamarqus Joyner fit into your defense?

Coach Guenther: "We watched him a lot in his earlier years with the Rams. I was always impressed with him at the nickel spot. When he was available for us...To go in there, a cover guy, understand the run fits, become a blitzer."



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He's a vocal guy out there. A great guy to have on your team, really all-round. He's a perfect fit for me for the nickel spot and that's what he's been working at."

Q: How do you like the way the linebacker group is with having the younger guys be able to learn from the veterans?

Coach Guenther: "It's good. Brandon [Marshall] is going to be new. Obviously, Vontaze has been in it and Tahir [Whitehead] has been there for a year. Marquel [Lee] and some of the other guys, [Nicholas] Morrow and those guys, they've come along. They understand the little details of everything way better than we were standing here a year ago. To me, I'm now talking about the fifth level things instead of the first level things, which as a coach is what you want."

Q: From what you've been able to see, how are Burfict, Whitehead and Marshall all working together in terms of communication?

Coach Guenther: "It's been great. Those guys understand what I'm looking for. Obviously, having Vontaze here, for years he's been with me, he's saying stuff that they've never heard. Like, 'Hey, watch this.' And now it's starting to build up with everybody. It's been pretty seamless. Obviously, Brandon hasn't been out there as much, but once he gets back and gets rolling, he's going to get a lot of reps in training camp."

Q: What have you seen from Maurice Hurst, P.J. Hall and Arden Key?

Coach Guenther: "Obviously, we're going to count on them this year to take a big leap. I always say between your first and your second year should be your biggest leap. I just think as a rookie player, you don't know what the next hour is about. Like, 'Hey, what's training camp like? Where do I stay? What's the week in the season like?' Now they understand all those things, that's kind of to the side and they can really concentrate on their jobs. Again, it's just like how the linebacker have picked up the system a lot better."

Q: How has Hurst specifically shown growth?

Coach Guenther: "He looks stronger out there. He's moving a lot better. He was a little bit limited earlier in OTA's, but he's back out there playing at a high level."

Q: How do you feel like you guys have improved in regard to the pass rush?

Coach Guenther: "Well we added some guys. We added some young guys. We added some guys in free agency that are really going to help us. There are some guys, that like I said, we have three young guys that we've added in the draft then Benson [Mayowa], [Josh] Mauro, those kind of guys. Obviously the guys that are returning have to pick it up for us that way. That's a big emphasize for us throughout the Spring."

Q: The big emphasis for Arden Key this offseason was to add strength.

Coach Guenther: "He's right where we're at. I know there are some reports where [they say] he's light. We drafted Arden to be a third-down rusher. That's what it was. You don't want to be a 260-pound slug out there. He knows exactly where we want him to be weight-wise, and his strength and conditioning is a progress thing for him right now."

Q: What was your Hard Knocks experience like? People talk about it being a distraction, was it?

Coach Guenther: "I really don't think [so]. They do a really good job of staying out of your way. You can see, kind of, what's going to be on the show. I think the positive thing is you find out a lot about your team and the coaches



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on the staff that, 'Hey, when the camera is on you are you going to be a different guy or a different player or if you're not.' Because really after the third day, you don't notice, you're so used to having them around that you just go about your business. I don't really pay attention to where the cameras are in the building. You just go about and coach the guys how you know how to coach them and that's all you know how to do."

Q: Did you find it was easy for you to go out there and be the same coach every day even though you were struggling as a team?

Coach Guenther: "Well it starts with me on the defensive side, so I have to make sure when I come in this building I was in the right frame of mind. Going through a year like that and understanding, hey, this is what it was like, only helped me as a coach. It's something that you don't always want to go through, having a rough year like we did, but obviously you start to learn how to build these things. How to build your lineup card and what it should look like and how you envisioned it. That was the positive for me. I always tell the players, if you don't learn from failure, you're making a mistake. You have to learn from what we did good and what we did bad and build off of that in the future."

Q: How will the improvements you made in the secondary impact the defense this year?

Coach Guenther: "We'll be tighter in coverage. The rush and coverage part of it always works hand in hand. If we're tighter in the coverage and longer in the coverage or the rushes get there sooner, then we don't have to be as tight. It goes hand in hand."

Q: Can you say with confidence in the Spring that the pass rush will be where it needs to be or does it need more work?

Coach Guenther: "It's hard to tell. We're not in pads right now. The running game, how are we going to be against the run? How are we going to be against pass rushers? I'll have a better feel once training camp gets going."

Q: What are your early impression of Clelin Ferrell?

Coach Guenther: "Clelin is exactly what I'm looking for. That's the kind of guys we had. The Michael Johnson's and the Carlos Dunlap's we had in Cincinnati that are every down ends, that are big man that can both rush and play the run. So he's exactly what we're looking for. Maxx [Crosby], he looks like a Cadillac coming off the edge. He's long, he's loose, he's quick off the ball. I think he's going to make big jumps here in his first year. [Quinton] Bell is a guy who can run. He can chase quarterbacks down from the backside. You can use him as a spinner, rusher type guy. Again, he's just developing as an end right now. Once we get into the pads we'll have a good feel for what he can do."

Q: From a leadership standpoint are you seeing different voices?

Coach Guenther: "I do. Even some of the younger guys that are new into the system. Initially because you don't have those kind of guys, it has to kind of come from the coaches. So you have to understand. You'll start to feel as a coach, when it starts to take over and that's when you become a good team. When those guys become the...they manage the locker room and they manage the tempo in practice and you don't have to say much. When you don't have to say much as a coach, you know the guys are starting to get the message and you know you can hand it over to them."

Q: They gave Abram No. 24 and they don't give that number out to anyone. What do you see from him?

Coach Guenther: "He has big expectations. He has big shoes to fill. That's what I see. Hopefully he can do that."



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Q: How different is it as a defensive coordinator under a head coach who's more offensive minded? Do you have more freedom here?

Coach Guenther: "No, honestly when I was with Marvin [Lewis], Marvin didn't really interfere. He was more of running the team. He'd sit in on a lot of the offensive meetings. He very rarely came in and said, 'I want you to run this. I want you to do this, this way.' I can probably count twice in my whole time there as a coordinator that that happened. It's very similar. It's very similar in both places."

Q: How has Karl Joseph responded to you guys drafting a safety in the first round?

Coach Guenther: "I think he's responded great. He knows this will be a good year for him to go out and play good and make us give him a contract. That's the way the NFL is. That's the way it is for me. It's the way it is for a lot of the other guys. If you don't perform, you're probably looking for somewhere else to go and if you do perform, you're going to get rewarded. To me, it's business as usual."

LB Vontaze Burfict

Q: How comfortable has it felt to slide back into defensive coordinator Paul Guenther's defense?

Burfict: "I mean I'm so familiar with it. I've been doing this since my rookie year. Happy to be back in this defense and understanding it, and just relaying it to the guys and being a leader out there so I'm excited, and excited for what this year is going to bring us."

Q: What about Coach Guenther's approach clicked with you from the very beginning?

Burfict: "He was my linebacker coach in Cincinnati and you know how that relationship goes, you see him every day. We just started talking about golfing around that time because I was just getting into golf and we went out and played a couple holes and ever since then it was like, 'Man, this my guy. I can trust him.' He tells me, obviously, little things about defense and offense that can give you keys and since then he made me a smarter football player."

Q: Is there anything that has changed in this defense that has surprised you?

Burfict: "Yeah, there is a lot of things he's changed. Obviously, more knowledge with the game, more years and more defensive coordinator positions he's had. He's obviously learned more about the game since I was a rookie and since Cincinnati. But yeah, he put different plays in and I just think it helps us as a defense because it's putting guys in the right position that they are great at. Like I said, I'm excited about it and I can't wait."

Q: What has it been like to have another veteran linebacker in Brandon Marshall?

Burfict: "Yeah, we have a lot of vets in our linebacker room. We have Tahir Whitehead, Nick [Nicholas Morrow], Marquel [Lee], so that's one thing I love about our linebacking core. Everybody has knowledge, everybody understands the game, quick and fast, and I'm excited to play with them."

Q: How easy is it to cover RB Jalen Richard?

Burfict: "It's actually really easy. Really easy. *(laughter)* Nah, he's a great running back. He's a great option back out the backfield. Has great vision out the backfield as well."



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Q: What was your experience with Hard Knocks like during your time in Cincinnati? Was it a distraction at all?

Burfict: "No, you just come in every day to work. Obviously, there are cameras around the building but every day is a work day and just come and get better."

Q: What's your relationship been like with Brandon Marshall and Tahir Whitehead?

Burfict: "Yeah, it's awesome, like I said. We are football players, we understand the game. All of us are smart, so we are talking different terminology and we all understand what the guy is talking about. Not saying that playing with rookies is bad but having those veterans next to you and you can just give them a simple clue. They understand what you are saying because you don't have to give them a whole sentence breaking it down. Like today, with Tahir we had a simple play, he helped me out with a call, we relayed it to the defensive lineman and instead of me having to do all the calls it kind of eases stuff off my platter."

Q: Do you enjoy having that blend of old and young in that linebacker group?

Burfict: "Yeah, I enjoy it because obviously they see us knowing the defense, understanding the defense, so they are asking us questions as a football player. You can ask the linebacker coach, but it's different when you are getting it from your teammate and they are running the plays with you. It's exciting because we have guys, like even the young defensive lineman don't understand it and they are asking us what's this coverage. It's exciting that everybody is trying to understand each position and understanding where your help is at."

Q: How do you merge into this new locker room and become a leader?

Burfict: "Like I said, you got to be a leader out there. You got to lead by example, you have to make sure you are doing your job so they can have confidence in you when the game time comes, and putting guys in the right position. Like if I have to make a line stunt for the defensive lineman, putting them in the right position as well because obviously they have their hand in the dirt. Like I said, just being accountable, on time to everything and make sure you're doing every rep in the weight room."

Q: Do you think the talent on this defense has what it takes to be better?

Burfict: "Yeah, we can be great. We just got to fit the pieces to the puzzle. I feel like this team is very competitive and everybody feeds off each other's energy. When Nick made that breakup, I saw the whole defensive sideline try to run out there and congratulate him. Obviously, they had to get ready for the next play, but just the energy here is amazing. I can't wait to start the season off."

Q: What do you like the most about Coach Guenther's defense?

Burfict: "I just think that he understands the game. He knows when to call certain plays, he doesn't put his players in the wrong position, and he understands his player's weaknesses. Every player has a weakness I feel like and he's not going to call a play where he feels like he's going to put a linebacker on a receiver, like me covering Antonio Brown, that's kind of crazy. He doesn't put us in the wrong position."

Q: Did you watch much of the Raiders defense last season?

Burfict: "Yeah, I watched them since Coach G came here."

Q: Did it seem like the defensive scheme wasn't being run to its full potential?

Burfict: "Yeah, I mean this defense is kind of complicated, honestly. You can't come in first year thinking you know it all because honestly it takes 11 pieces, but yeah I saw that when I was watching them last year. We have guys



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that have been with the defense now going into their second year, so you can tell that a lot of guys are picking it up, communicating.”

Q: Coach Guenther compared Clelin Ferrell to Michael Johnson. Do you see any of that?

Burfict: “Oh yeah. He’s a rookie but I swear he’s been here like five years. Doesn’t act like a rookie at all. He comes in ready to handle business, he’s even a leader in the huddle, even just cheering guys up, telling them, ‘Let’s finish the period off.’ And that’s a lot coming from a rookie because when I was a rookie I didn’t want to say much, I just wanted to go out there and do my job, so coming from him and he’s a defensive end and I give him a gap call or whatever type of call I give him, he understands it, so that’s huge.”

Q: General Manager Mike Mayock says he brought a lot of veterans in here on one-year prove it deals. Is there anything you need to prove?

Burfict: “Nah, that’s putting stress on your shoulders. I’ve been playing for eight years now, just come out and do my job, execute and try to win games. That’s about it. Prove-it deal? I mean, like I said, that’s just putting stress on your shoulders. Just come out here and work.”

Q: Do you think this defense needs an edge?

Burfict: “Nah, they don’t need no edge. Like I said, everybody just got to come out and do their job. Putting good tape on film, that’s proven a lot of stuff, and trust me, whoever we play they are going to see it on film. These guys know what they are doing, they are coming out, running to the ball relentless, so that’s what we are focusing on every day in practice. We just want to run to the ball and make sure we see all them black jerseys at the ball.”

DT Maurice Hurst

Q: What’s the biggest difference coming into your second season?

Hurst: “I mean just being more comfortable. Getting to know the defense a little bit more, getting used to the guys that we are playing with and just understanding, as a whole, what we are trying to do and what we are trying to accomplish.”

Q: What have been your impressions so far of the new defensive ends?

Hurst: “They’ve been really great. They’ve been taking coaching. ‘Cle’ [Clelin Ferrell] is a really good guy. Same with Maxx [Crosby] and same with ‘Q’ [Quinton Bell]. They all take coaching really well and have been working extremely hard to become a part of this defense and become a part of this Raiders organization.”

Q: Is there a bond between all the first- and second-year guys on defense that says, ‘hey, we need to step it up this year’?

Hurst: “Yeah, that was definitely the sense we had last year. Of course, we had some older guys and it was great to have the opportunity to learn from them, but now it’s our time to take it over and start to develop our own identity. That’s something that we didn’t do last year, is to develop an identity, and I think that’s what we are going to try and accomplish early on and just set a tone and keep it rolling throughout the season.”

Q: What is something specific that you learned last year and can bring into this year?



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Hurst: "There were a ton of guys that just taught you how to be a pro and how take care of yourself, take care of your body and just do little things rights, and just be a good teammate. The technique stuff is great, but all the stuff off the field is what really helps you develop and grow and stay in the NFL for a long time."

Q: How much ownership does the defensive line take for the low sack totals last year?

Hurst: "We take all of it. I mean every single game that we play in they are going to mention our pass rush, and we control the narrative for that. Obviously, last year wasn't good enough and we get all the criticism for it, so there are a lot of eyes on us to develop and be specialists here. Just change that narrative, change what they are saying about us and change our attitude and how we are approaching things."

Q: Why do you feel that area will be improved this season?

Hurst: "We are just taking our coaching. We got Coach Buck [defensive line coach Brentson Buckner] and he's really been helping us out, helping develop us. We just need to keep listening to him and I think there are some great things that are going to come. Guys are looking really good out there and I think we are getting better every single time we step on the field."

Q: Defensive Coordinator Paul Guenther said last year was his most difficult year as a coordinator. What were your observations about the way he was approaching things early in the season and late?

Hurst: "It was a tough season, obviously. We had a lot of bodies coming in and out of our locker room and it can be extremely tough to put in new defenses and get guys that come in and have to play after sitting on a couch, or whatever. You don't grow chemistry, you don't trust one another, so there wasn't that trust factor that we are starting to develop. We got some great leaders, guys that have played in Super Bowls, guys that have been on winning teams and winning defenses. So, I think you just put that all together, and their standard, and make it our own, it's going to be something special."

Q: What was Coach Guenther's approach like during a year that did not go well?

Hurst: "I mean he put in a system, we just didn't execute."

Q: What does bringing in a player like Vontaze Burfict, someone who knows the system, do for this unit?

Hurst: "He's definitely a tone setter. He's someone that's going to set the defense. He understands all of the calls within Coach Guenther's defense, so it's really helpful to talk with him. He has complete understanding, so there's certain things that he knows that are going to occur during the course of a season so he's able to adjust it, adjust us, tell us we can play a backside gap on this, he'll cover us, or whatever. He's real easy to talk to and just a great teammate overall."

Q: Even at this early date can you look out there and say, we should be a lot better?

Hurst: "Yeah, I think we'll be really good. I think we have some toughness to us. I think we have some talent that we didn't have last year. I think it's a really exciting time to be a Raider and exciting time to continue to develop with these guys. I think camp is going to be really fun and really competitive, so just really excited to see where this team goes and where things will take us this season."

Q: Are you confident that you can make that big leap in year two?

Hurst: "Yeah, I feel like I have to. That's on me to make the big leap, and on my teammates, and I think if one of us does really well it helps the whole as a group. So, just keeping guys fresh, keeping guys rolling through, making



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plays. I think as a whole all of our numbers will go up and all of us will be more productive than we were last season.”

Q: After a season ends do you go back and watch your own tape or do you close that chapter and move forward?

Hurst: “No, you keep trying to develop and that was one of the biggest things working with Coach Buck, just his emphasis on trying to get better and trying to change from what we were doing last year because clearly it wasn’t good enough. So, just improving and I think that’s going to make us better overall, make us all have better seasons this year.”

Q: What do you want the defense’s identity to be up front and how much of it has been shaped so far by bringing in Coach Buckner?

Hurst: “Just be relentless and don’t make any excuses for things, play hard, play tough, be aggressive, play with your technique and just fire your hands. There is a lot of things that he’s been coaching us up, that isn’t new per se, but he’s played the position and he knows it really well and he lasted a long time in the league, so to get to learn from someone like that is a really useful tool.”

LB Tahir Whitehead

Q: Defensive Coordinator Paul Guenther said that last year was his toughest year in football. What were your observations on him throughout the year and how he approached and dealt with the season?

Whitehead: “Ultimate professional. That’s just the way I would describe him. He came in, you could never really tell that it was hard for him. He just kept at it, kept coaching, kept making sure that we were prepared in every way, shape or form and just kept giving it his all. We never wavered, just kept showing up every day even though the results weren’t what we wanted. We still showed up every day and gave it our all.”

Q: What has it been like to add Vontaze Burfict and Brandon Marshall to the linebacker group?

Whitehead: “Obviously, when you add veteran guys like that with experience that have played a lot of great football in the league – B-Marsh that’s been to a Super Bowl, won the Super Bowl – that’s a major, major bonus. And just the wealth of knowledge that they have being around the league for a long time. That helps the younger guys, that helps themselves to be able to go out there and see it from different sides just picking each other’s brain.”

Q: What does having a middle linebacker who has been in Coach Guenther’s system before do for the communication of the defense?

Whitehead: “It helps a lot having a guy that is extremely familiar with the scheme for the most part of his career I believe. Six year he was in the system. Being in the system for that length of time, you know the nuances of the defense and all of the checks, all of the calls and just having Vontaze has definitely been a huge help.”

Q: Coach Guenther was saying that having a middle linebacker that knows the system is kind of like adding a quarterback that already knows the system. How much more flexible do you feel you and the linebackers will be able to be with another year in the system in addition to adding Burfict?

Whitehead: “It creates balance. Like you said, it’s essentially the same as adding a quarterback or, I would say, any guy that’s been in any system – whether it’s offense or defense – if you add a guy that’s been in a system for a long time, that’s definitely a great help. The knowledge they have from the previous knowledge and working in the system, you bring that over. Then that pretty much puts everyone at ease. It puts the guys on the field at ease, it puts the coaches at ease. Everyone is able to communicate on a whole other level.”



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Q: What did you take from last year's experience after playing nearly 100 percent of the snaps on defense?

Whitehead: "I think I learned a great deal of the system. That experience last year, just basically playing 100 percent of the snaps, allowed me to really grasp the system and understand the ins and outs of everything. Now when we're out there, I'm communicating with Vontaze and he's like, 'Okay, dang, you got it.' So, either one of us, we're not taking out the brunt of the work, the whole thing and taking on all of that stress. We're divvying it up and we're just breaking it up to make it easier on everyone. Like, 'Look, you give this call, you handle these checks. I'll handle the other.' Then everything works a lot smoother."

Q: What have you seen from the rookie defensive lineman from last year no that they are in Year 2?

Whitehead: "Confidence. As a rookie – no matter where you are – sometimes just that confidence can be key. As a rookie coming in the league, you have a bunch of veteran guys around you, you're in the big time now, it's a lot of hype for you because you're a rookie and you know you're going to come in and play a lot. I think the second year in the defense, the second year in the league is usually the biggest leap for guys because you go through that rookie wall or whatever they call it, then you don't have that same stress as you did the year before. On top of that, you have a better understanding of the scheme. I can see that from them right now, they're just playing with more confidence. They understand their bodies better, they understand what they need to do to make sure that they're prepared to go out there and practice at a high level, play at a high level and it's a great thing to see."

Q: You guys made some free agent additions and had a defense-heavy draft. Do you look out here in the spring and feel like the talent on this roster has upgraded quite a bit?

Whitehead: "Definitely feel that way. The talent, we have a lot of talent on this team. You look at every position, you look on both sides of the ball, we definitely have the team to go out there and do something major this year. The biggest thing is that we just have gel together as quick as possible – that camaraderie – and make sure to continue to build with each other. You know, all pulling in the same direction and understanding that we're all on the same team. The Raiders aren't on our schedule. So, as long we understand that, we go out there every day with a purpose, we're going to go handle business."

Q: What have your impressions of the rookie defensive players been thus far?

Whitehead: "Just hard workers. Hard workers, they're smart, great guys. They love the game. You can really describe them with any positive word you can think of. You can really go out there and tag it on them, because I really don't have one bad thing to say about them. They're like sponges right now, just soaking everything up. You talk to them, [Johnathan Abram] 'J.A.', I'm always going back and forth with him. He likes to talk a lot. That's my guy."

Q: From one vocal leader to another...

Whitehead: "Oh yeah, I love it. Young guy, go in there and you're showing how confident you are. I love that. We can build off of that. That's what we need. We need more guys that are confident in their skillset. And then you bring that to the team, that's going to take us a long way."

Q: After playing nearly every snap last season, do you sort of recuperate or treat your body, let yourself rest or anything?

Whitehead: "There's really no days off for me. I have three children, so as soon as the season is over I'm in full Dad mode. I might be running around, practicing baseball and all of that in the back. *(laughter)* To answer your question, I don't really have much down time. Generally, it depends on how I feel. If I feel good, if I'm healthy coming out of the season, I'll probably just chill for about two weeks or so, but I'm right back to doing something active because if you get away from it for too long, then it takes a lot longer, it's a lot harder to get back into it. That's one thing I've learned over the years, you can't step away too long. Mentally and physically, you would want to just because it's a long season through spring training, training camp and then the whole season and you want to take a breather, but your body is used to being active, running around, lifting weights. So, I'll do low-impact stuff, ellipticals, bike work, band work and stuff like that just to make sure I'm keeping everything active."



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Q: Was there anything after the season that had been nagging you during the year that you were able to rest or take care of in any way? Or was it just overall?

Whitehead: "Overall, I just pretty much just go through everything and anything that might have nagged me during the season that I felt I could improve upon. I make that a bit of a focus. Outside of that, I'm generally focusing on head to toe, because if you start to put too much focus on one thing, then you might miss something else and then you're fixing your help and something else might become an issue. That's one thing I've learned over the years, you have to take care of everything from top to bottom."

Q: You put a lot of inspirational messages on Twitter. Are they things you have read over the years or are they just things that come naturally to you and was all of that tested last year when times were tough?

Whitehead: "That's pretty much how I live my life. Most of the stuff I tweeted are books that I have read. I have some great mentors in my life that I take knowledge from and then I just dish it out to everyone. I feel like the talking points that I experience with other people can go a long way for other. So, I always just like sharing my thoughts. Whoever can use that, use it. If it doesn't apply, then it doesn't apply to you. I'm a positive person and I like uplifting people, helping people as much as I can."