

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/GENERAL MANAGER JON ROBINSON AND  
HEAD COACH MIKE VRABEL PRESS CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT  
Thursday, April 21, 2022**

***(opening statement)***

JON ROBINSON: Well, it's good to be back in person, first off, and not looking at a Zoom camera. First, I'd like to thank Ms. Amy (Adams Strunk) for these facilities. This time a year ago we were kind of huddled up in a small conference room across the street. It's been awesome to be in here in our new draft room having meetings, talking through things and prospects as we prepare for next week. I'd like to thank a lot of people that have really helped in the team-building process this spring. Coach (Mike) Vrabel obviously, discussions we've had back and forth about prospects and fits for our football team. Todd Toriscelli, our trainers, all of the assistant coaches, Chic (Ejiasi) and Mitch (James Mitchell), the personnel department, Ryan Cowden, Monti Ossenfort, Jon Salge, as we prepare for the draft. And then going back to free agency, Brian Gardner and the pro department, certainly Vin Marino with the contract negotiations. With that, excited about next week and another step and another part of the process as we try to put the 2022 Tennessee Titans team together.

***(on what the final days leading up to the draft are like and if there is still work to do)***

JR: Yeah, just going back through. We watched through a couple guys last night as a group. You start the comparisons, 'This player versus that player.' It may be vertically in the position stack. It may be horizontally one position versus another position. You're trying to predict guys that are going to go ahead of where you're picking, sometimes that's a bit of a crapshoot. So, still some dialogue as we try to fine tune here heading into next week.

***(on the ongoing negotiations with wide receiver A.J. Brown)***

JR: Yeah, we've had some discussions with his reps. He was here a couple of weeks ago, I talked to him. Working through that and I'm not going to get into any details with, you know, contract negotiations. Never have really done that. But you know, we've made it public about how we feel about A.J. (Brown), and how we want him to be a part of this football team.

***(on the way the receiver market has exploded recently)***

JR: Yeah, I don't know what the trends are with that. But it's interesting to look at and where that has shifted. Every year it seems like certain positions, there's ebbs and flows with where those markets go. A couple of years ago the safety market was down, that's when we – I think we got Kenny Vaccaro. He was out there for a while, and we were fortunate enough that he was there in August. So, just kind of year to year how those market trends are.

***(on if A.J. Brown's contract negotiations could make the team's draft strategy challenging)***

JR: Well, I think we're trying to get the best football player that's available for our football team. You're going to need every position at some point. I mean, we saw that last year with 91 different guys that lined up for us. So, you're going to need good football players at a lot of different positions over the course of a season. So, just try to put ourselves in the best position to take the best player that we think helps our football team situation.

***(on if social media conversations involving A.J. Brown and Deebo Samuel cause him to feel a sense of urgency when it comes to contract negotiations surrounding Brown)***

JR: Yeah, I mean, I've talked about where we're at. I've talked to A.J. (Brown)'s reps. A.J. knows how we how we feel about him and how much he means to this football team. And I haven't seen any, you know, Instagram videos or Snapchats or Vimeos or any of that kind of stuff.

***(on if A.J. Brown's agency also representing other football players complicates negotiations)***

JR: I mean, we don't really have any control over who reps who. That's up to the individual player and who they select and who they feel most comfortable with handling their situation. Does it complicate things? You know, I don't know. Our focus right now is with our football team.

***(on if A.J. Brown could be traded)***

JR: I think I've spoke on that several times now, so I do not foresee that happening.

***(on spending time evaluating offensive line prospects)***

JR: Yeah, there was O-linemen certainly at stops that I saw, and there were players at other positions at some of those stops that I went to. That's one of the things that Mike (Vrabel) and I were excited about, was being able to get back out this spring, be around these prospects on their pro days, watch them work on the field, spend some time with them after their pro days visiting with them, getting to know them. Maybe get a little bit more time at the school than you do certainly in that Combine interview where it's 15 or 18 minutes, whatever that is. So, you get a little bit more normalcy. The player is in his environment, he's in a meeting room that he's used to, on his campus. Get a better feel for the real guy as opposed to, you know, maybe what the rat race of the Combine is as those guys are being shuffled from one room to the next room to the next room, and it's a bit of a whirlwind for them.

***(on offensive line prospects Zion Johnson and Kenyon Green)***

JR: Yeah, both of those guys, I mean, big, strong players. Both guys have played a couple of different positions, really Zion (Johnson) has played three positions. Kenyon (Green) has played both guard and tackle. They're strong. They're good movers. Both of those guys were good when we met with those guys, and they're good prospects

***(on if Mike Vrabel has anything to add about Zion Johnson who played collegiately with his son Tyler Vrabel)***

MIKE VRABEL: No, I don't think I have anything to add on Zion (Johnson). I mean, obviously played next to Tyler (Vrabel), and he's an excellent player, an excellent person. Really, really good person.

***(on if Zion Johnson and Tyler Vrabel were roommates at Boston College)***

MV: Yeah, he roomed with Tyler (Vrabel). They probably didn't say much, Tyler doesn't say a whole lot and Zion (Johnson) doesn't say a whole lot.

***(on how this draft stacks up at various positions in terms of depth)***

JR: Yeah, I think as we've gone through the process there's been some position groups that have shown a little more volume maybe than other positions. But, we feel like the positions that can help our football team – again, as I stated earlier, you're never going to know what position you're going to need throughout the course of an NFL season. And there's players that, really at every position, that we feel good about. Now, whether they're there when you're able to pick, that's another thing. If I had that crystal ball, the draft would be a lot easier. But no, I think that where our football team is currently and what's available is a good thing.

***(on if not having a second round pick could make it tougher to move up if the need came)***

JR: Potentially. There's creative ways that you can strategize and try to gain draft capital, whether it's sliding back from where we're at, whether it's involving, you know, future picks in next year or the following year. There's ways to kind of put things together to try to put yourself in position to get the player you want.

***(on the difference between trading in advance of the draft compared to trading the day of)***

JR: Yeah, I think it's probably where we're at in the draft where we're picking, that's a little bit more as you get closer to your pick. It was a different situation back when we had the first pick where you're trying to strategize to get what you can get from that.

***(on if there are differences between what a head coach looks for in a prospect compared to what the scouting personnel may look for)***

MV: I think we want to have guys that we trust. I think that's important. We want to evaluate the trust and the ability, and hopefully find those where they match up with high level of trust and high-level ability. You try to think, where we're at now is trying to get to, 'Is this somebody that you want to see every day, and coach every day, and have in your meetings?' And that's what we try to ask the position coaches, obviously try to find a vision for them and a role and what they're going to do and what they eventually may do for us. I think for me, there is a lot of maybe just traits, character traits, that I'm looking for. Then we'll go and – I'll, you know, go and watch the tape and that I trust everybody's opinion, but I really, really want to bring great people onto this team.

***(on how much it helped this offseason to be able to go on the road and evaluate prospects again)***

MV: Yeah, it's very unfair, the picture that sometimes gets painted from the Combine, and I'm probably at fault (as much as) anybody. 18 minutes, and these kids are just coming in from the airport and they're dropping their bags off, and they're getting rushed over to some suite in the dome. We've had numerous instances where, maybe didn't feel great after that short exposure and then followed up with them either here or on their campus, and then really come out of it with a different opinion. So, that is a critical element. And some of these players, they try to think that we want something other than who they really are, because I think that's the best thing is just for us to try to identify who they really are, what they're going to be like in September and October and November, and not maybe what they think we want them to be in April.

***(on evaluating larger receivers compared to smaller receivers)***

MV: I think you look at opportunities in production. How they catch the ball, how they protect the ball. Their willingness to block some. Some schools don't ask them to go in there and block. Some of them are running routes or running RPO or relief routes and trying to pull out defenders that way. What routes have they asked them to run? Some guys, it's like, 'Well, he doesn't run it.' Well, they probably only have 12 or 14 plays, or they're not running that much of a route tree. How much can he understand and explain about coverage? I think those are all ways that we identify how they play without the ball, how they play with the ball. Are they tough to tackle? Is this a player that has got really good play strength? Can they play inside? Can they return punts? There's a lot of things that we look at.

***(on the blocking versus pass catching skills of the tight end prospects in this draft)***

JR: Yeah, I think it's a pretty good mix. You've got some guys that are dual players, they can play kind of on the line of scrimmage as well as have the athleticism to detach and play away from the line of scrimmage. There's some guys that can make those move blocks, you know, some of the things that we ask to do maybe from the backfield. And then you've got guys who, you know, really, they're more detached players. They play predominantly in the slot, or on a wing position in there and they're pass catchers. But even those guys, the guys that we've watched, there's at least a competitiveness as blockers to at least try to get their nose dirty a little bit in the run game.

***(on if there are prospects who would be considered blocking tight ends)***

MV: Yeah, I think we've identified a few guys that we would maybe consider in that category. And then also some of those guys, their skillset can't be overlooked because they are matchup issues against guys that we try to face, and we try to decide who's going to cover them on third down. So, there's some guys that we've identified, I think, at different levels of the draft and we're still going through that process now.

***(on where the strengths of this draft class are from a positional standpoint)***

JR: Yeah, I mean, I think you can look at every position. I think it's, you know, the offensive line is pretty deep, there's some good edge rushers, there are some good receivers. There's a group of backs that are pretty good. There's, you know, some quarterbacks that look kind of promising. I think there's positions and players at every position that have really good depth across the board. Some we've obviously got rated higher than others, just like 31 other teams. But you know, I think we've been able to identify guys at about every position.

***(on the strength of this quarterback draft class)***

JR: Yeah, I think it's according to what quarterback class you're comparing it to. I think if you compare it to certain ones, it certainly is not as strong. But, there's other classes where I'd say it's at least comparable and maybe even a tinge better. It's been good to spend a little bit of time with some of those guys, get to know those guys. That's a hard position. Quarterback position is a hard position to play in the National Football League. There's a lot that goes into that position. I think all the guys that are in this draft that we've talked to, you know, certainly seem capable and willing to learn and put the time in to make that transition.

***(on how different the conversations with quarterback prospects are)***

JR: Yeah, I mean, I think you're trying to identify leadership. How's that guy going to lead a football team? What's his level of competency? Certainly, probably going to be more well-versed in his specific offense, terminology-wise. And you can't expect them to just be able to spit back like whatever we call a certain play or a certain defense. But can they associate, you know, the concept that we're trying to talk about? But it's really the leadership and the willingness to learn, the coachability, and how are they going to step into a situation and with guys much older than them that they might line up with, and be able to lead those guys and push those guys to score points?

***(on what position offensive lineman Dillon Radunz is seen as and how that impacts the needs along the line)***

JR: I think with the offensive line, we're trying to get the best five guys up there that can block their guy. You know, I think Dillon (Radunz) has shown he can play tackle. I think he's worked at guard. He's played guard. I think there's some versatility with him as a football player. But at the end of the day, with the offensive line, (it's) trying to get the right five guys up there that can block their guy on a consistent basis.

***(on offensive linemen prospects being able to play multiple positions)***

JR: I think that the versatility is something that we preach, especially with the offensive line. Guys that can play a couple of different spots. If he's at this position and your next guy, maybe he's best as Dillon (Radunz)'s backup, let's just say for example. And he's better than the next guy that's going to go in at the other position that you might need if somebody goes down. Again, you're trying to get your best five guys out there.

***(on aligning a player's value with the selection while balancing time management to ensure you don't miss out on a prospect while drafting)***

JR: Yeah, I think we talk about it all the time, it's need versus best player, and when those things line up it's a really cool thing. But at the end of the day, you're trying to identify who helps the team the most. You know, there's short term and there's long term. Sometimes it takes players a little longer to maybe blossom into being productive players for us. I think we've got some guys on our team that are examples of that. And it's being able to balance the immediacy – again, we want them all to come in and contribute right away. That would be, you know, in a perfect world. But, you're looking at trying to balance what is the long term? What's the long game with that player as well?

***(on not having a second round pick and what that combined with drafting a quarterback in the first round would look like)***

JR: Yeah, I mean, I think those are hypotheticals, and those are scenarios that we talk about. It's like, 'If this, then what's the overall plan and how is that going to impact the football team?' We work through those scenarios. At the end of the day, we try to do what's best for the football team. You're looking certainly at the short term and the window, but you're also looking at the long game as well when you're adding players to your team.

***(on evaluating prospects who haven't played as much football as other prospects)***

MV: Well, I think when you look at, positionally in this case, offensive line, whether it's a 6'4" safety, or a 6'4" corner, or a 6'7" 400-pound offensive lineman, those are – we just haven't seen a whole lot of those players that have been in this league. So, you know, there's questions that you have to ask. Where are you going to play them? What skills are they going to need to be required at as offensive line? We certainly have a scheme that we're comfortable with, that we have really tried to embed and make our own. And so for us, there's going to be an element of movement and speed off the football in different angles, whether that's on the frontside or the backside, you know, being able to climb up and get second-level defenders, or be able to get some horizontal stretch at the line of scrimmage. So, you know, those are things that we look at talking about offensive linemen in the run game.

***(on making the team better around quarterback Ryan Tannehill and the pieces that have been added)***

JR: Yeah. I mean, we're excited to work with Robert (Woods) and with Austin (Hooper) and seeing what those guys can bring. They've been productive players in this league. We'll continue to work and build. We don't play until September, so it's, you know, it's a long process with putting the team together so that it's ready for opening week. But certainly next week is a big component of that with the draft, being able to infuse younger players into your football team, guys that you can kind of build on, you know, add to the foundation. But again, like I said earlier, we're trying to get as many good football players really at every position that we can as possible.

***(on if his previous drafts have impacted this year's draft evaluation process)***

JR: No. I mean, I think there's different circumstances with every draft class. I think that we've seen returns on some of those players. You would obviously like to – you'd like for all of them to come in and be impact players. The reality for 32 teams in the National Football League is that's not high that that happens. So, you're just trying to hit on as many of those players as possible. That they come in, they buy into the team concept, that we can develop that trust like Vrabel (Mike Vrabel) talked about, improve their skillsets. It's a different game. The pro game is a different game from the college game. And trying to identify the right types of guys who can help our football team.

***(on the structure of contracts and Ryan Tannehill's cap number being larger this year than other players on the team)***

JR: Well, I think that when you look at cap, you have to be somewhat strategic with how you attack it. You know, it went up this year, we took that dip a year ago. You're trying to maximize the dollars that you're spending. Whether it helps or hurt us? I mean, certainly you'd like everybody to have as low of a cap number as possible. But when you're trying to fit everything in, sometimes you have to make decisions that you think are best for the team. Sometimes it works out, sometimes it doesn't. But we're glad Ryan (Tannehill) is here, excited to work with him, and I feel pretty confident with Vin (Marino) and his ability to work the pencil on the cap numbers.

***(on if there are any defensive pieces the team is looking to add and an update on cornerback Caleb Farley)***

JR: To answer your first question. I mean, got guys that can impact defenses, guys that can stop offenses from scoring points, whether that's up front on the line of scrimmage, whether that's covering guys, guys

who make tackles. We've been able to find defensive help really at all levels of the draft, whether it was (Amani) Hooker on a Saturday pick, David Long on a Saturday pick, Jeffery Simmons in the first round. I mean, we've been able to find guys that can come in here and play stylistically the way that Mike (Vrabel) and his staff want to. And Caleb (Farley)'s working hard. He's gained some size. He's continuing to learn and work at how to be a pro and make that transition to try to help our football team. He knows how important it is to us that he puts in the time, and he's dedicated, and he's certainly on the right track, it looks like.

MV: He (Caleb Farley) had a good first week. I'll tell you that, you know, just to touch on that. Had a really good first week, light years ahead of where he ended. So, not only just rehab, but just from a mental perspective and just being in those meetings, and having him answer questions. And I'm not going to say who he beat, but he won the quiz competition today, so not going to tell the other guys that he beat, but he did a nice job.

***(on how important it is that players who don't attend voluntary workouts know what is expected of them)***

MV: It's the same every year. I'm going to say that every head coach in the National Football League would like to have every single player there, just because that's what we like to do. We like coaching players and enjoy doing that. Also very respectful of what they've done, where they're doing it. And hopefully as we work our way into these different phases, that we'll get as many guys that want to come back that want to be here.

***(on if Ryan Tannehill is missing anything by not attending voluntary workouts)***

MV: I had communications with Ryan (Tannehill). Again, as the head coach, I want every single player here. I would love to see that happen. Had communications with Ryan and I'm comfortable where those are at, and expect him back here pretty shortly.

***(on how much of an advisory role he plays with his son Tyler Vrabel who is a draft prospect)***

MV: Oh, I'm just excited for Tyler (Vrabel) and his next opportunity. That's really what I'm trying to do. It's taken me a lot of years to be more dad than coach, and I'm trying to do a much better job at that, and I feel like I have. So, I'm excited for him to see where his next opportunity will be, and try to support him any way I can.

***(on if the Titans are considering Tyler Vrabel as a prospect)***

MV: No, Jon (Robinson) and I haven't even said it, but I think that there's 31 teams that are evaluating Tyler. I don't think that's good for anybody.

***(on approaching the conversation with a player currently on the roster when you draft a player at the same position)***

JR: Yeah, I mean, I think you have that conversation with the player. We've done that before. We've taken a player at a position that we had and was a veteran player. At the end of the day, I had a conversation with the player that was on the team, he understood, like, that's what it is. Again, we tell the players, we're trying to create as much competition as possible at every position and trying to put the team in the best position to go win football games. It's just transparency and conversation upfront-ness, you know, with the player as we have done in the past at other positions.

***(on if a player could be drafted to eventually start one position but begin playing at another)***

JR: Yeah, I mean, I think we've done that before. I mean, Jack Conklin was a left tackle and we drafted him. We moved him over to right tackle. I think that there's guys in this draft who play one side, but we feel like that they're capable of playing another side or maybe playing both sides.

***(on 2019 being a good draft in terms of player contributions and if he feels that he could have another good draft due to this being the first year since 2019 with COVID restrictions)***

JR: If you're telling me that, absolutely it's going to. I mean, you don't know. Like, you don't know who the players are (that are) going to be there. You try to strategize and get yourself in position to get the guys that you want, all those guys in that class have played really good football for us. I mean, if you can tell me right now that we're going to have another one like that year, sign me up for it.

***(on if there is a frustration level pertaining to the return the team has gotten from first round selections in recent years excluding defensive tackle Jeffery Simmons)***

JR: No, I think that there's different situations for every player, like when you're working through that and you're making those decisions. Mike (Vrabel) and I have those conversations about, 'What's the impact of that player being here or not being here? What's the comp pick value that you're going to get back if you lose the player?' It was forever before we had a comp pick. You have to look at the return that you're going to get draft capital-wise with the compensatory pick formula versus, 'Can I get another player to do a similar job, get a pick, and save some money in the process,' if all of that makes sense. It's a pretty in-depth thought process and dialog that Mike (Vrabel) and I have when we make those decisions.

***(on if he did something different during the 2019 draft that allowed the class to be so successful)***

JR: Took the right guys. Like, we took the right guys. The process is pretty similar with how – or I would say it's very similar with how we did it. We took the right guys.