



CLEVELAND BROWNS TRANSCRIPT

*General Manager John Dorsey
4-18-19*

General Manager John Dorsey:

Opening statement:

“These are exciting times in the organization. Any time that you can acquire talented football players, it helps make a little bit more progress moving forward. I am sure that you all have a lot of questions to ask me with regards to the draft, but first, I would be remiss if I did not say that I would like to thank a lot of people in the football operations side of it – I am talking from the coaching staff to the personnel staff to the research staff. Guys have put in many hours, weeks, months, days in trying to get this thing right. That is what you do because at the end of the day, we are going to make a ‘what is the best’ decision for the Cleveland Browns moving forward.”

On RB Duke Johnson Jr.:

“I continually keep telling you all that Duke is a very talented football player. We see a lot of stuff for Duke moving forward into the future with regards to him. He is a member of this organization moving forward.”

On discussions with Johnson and his representatives:

“Good. He understands the role that he is going to play within this offense. That is what is important because Duke, as everybody knows, is a very talented playmaker, and I look forward to seeing him on the field on Sundays.”

On if Johnson’s trade request changes the internal strategy regarding him:

“No. Again, when you sit down with (Head Coach) Freddie (Kitchens) and the coaching staff, they see him as a vital part of this offense moving forward. He is a good playmaker.”

On if Johnson has to be convinced that he has a role on the team:

“When you say ‘convinced,’ what does that mean?”

On Johnson not being pleased with his touches in 2018 touches as it relates to convincing him he has a role on the team in 2019:

“There are 53 guys on this football team. It is about winning. That is the sole objective of this thing moving forward is winning football. Is he a talented football player? Yeah, he is really good, and he is going to help this offense move forward.”

On if Johnson will be present for the team’s mandatory minicamp sessions:

“We have not talked to him or his representatives about that.”

On if he expects Johnson to be present during the team’s first voluntary minicamp:

“I always expect him here. It is voluntary so you can’t [require it]. That is a part of the CBA.”

On if Johnson has been in the facility since Phase I of the offseason program started:

“In the building? No.”

On if he has spoken with Johnson:

“I have talked to his representatives. I think he and Freddie have texted back and forth with regards to that.

“Y’all want to talk about the draft (*laughter*)?”



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On if the Browns have a list of prospects for which they would be willing to trade into the first round if available at a certain point:

“Those are the scenario games that we will begin to play on Monday and Tuesday of next week with regards to possibilities. I think what you have to do is you have to wait and see how that moment unfolds. You always attempt to better yourself by getting good football players. We will play those scenarios.”

On if he will speak with teams that have picks toward the end of the first round to determine what the price may be to trade up:

“I think you always do that. You always do your due diligence just to see what is the possibility of going up or what is the possibility of going back. I think you have to play that year in and year out to be consistent with regards to that.”

On if there is a comfort level in being able to ‘sit back’ during the early selections of the 2019 NFL Draft:

“We have always felt that the process is the same. Regardless of what position you are in, we are going to do our due diligence. We are going to turn over every stone, as we say, and we are going to go through the processes of building that draft board the same year in and year out. It will never change.”

On the research processes and resources used when considering trade value and Chief Strategy Officer Paul DePodesta’s role in it:

“When you make a decision, it helps to have as much information as you possibly can. We are going to have conversations with regards to that. I think it is important to talk about scenarios and how they may unfold. Once you get into the moment of that draft, things move very quickly so you better be ready to make those decisions very quickly, and hopefully, you have worked out all of the different scenarios that could possibly come up.”

On DePodesta’s role in evaluating past trades:

“He gives suggestions, and I thank him for that. Like I said, when you make decisions, you can’t have enough information to make those decisions.”

On looking at the possibility of selecting a QB in this year’s draft:

“I think you look at all positions in the draft, and then when you look at the quarterback position, if you think that player can contribute, that can compete within his position and help the organization moving forward, you know what? We will have a discussion and we will talk about it if we think it is a possibility, and then we will go acquire that player.”

On the challenge evaluating QBs available later in drafts:

“Hopefully, you have done enough research and it is an educated guess. At the end of the day, sometimes you are going to hit on some guys and sometimes you are not going to hit on some guys. Probably the best hit that I have been a part of late down there would have been like a (former Seahawks QB) Matt Hasselbeck or a (Pro Football Hall of Fame QB) Kurt Warner or somebody like them. Those are the hits and misses. We have also had our misses.”

On the Browns receiving four primetime games in 2019:

“I think the players get excited to play on primetime – as they say, ‘primetime football’ – but I think it also gives the country a chance to see when we play at home at FirstEnergy, you see how passionate the fan base truly is and how exciting football is here in Cleveland.”

On potential scenarios discussed by the personnel department prior to the draft:



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“We do hypotheticals. We ask, ‘OK, what happens if this player is here? What do you think about this?’ You will move the draft board around and eliminate some guys and say, ‘How about if these three guys are here? If we had to move up, what do you think it would cost?’ Little games like that.”

On the timeline to run through those hypothetical scenarios:

“Probably three days.”

On QB Garrett Gilbert:

“I think he is one of between 40-50 AAF (Alliance of American Football) players that have signed in the National Football League. He has talent. He has showed development and growth under (former NCAA football and Orlando Apollos) Coach (Steve) Spurrier. He has enough arm talent. When you combine that with the tutelage of the head coach, the offensive coordinator and the quarterback coach, there is a chance of: let’s see some steps here moving forward.”

On the strongest areas of the 2019 NFL Draft class:

“In this draft, everybody knows it is going to be the defensive line. That is what everybody has been talking about. It is true. There is some depth there. If you look at the wide receiver position, I think there is depth on all fronts at the wide receiver position. I think there is depth at the running back position. I think there is depth at the quarterback position, as well.”

On this year’s S class:

“This year’s safeties have more depth to it than in years past.”

On if the defensive line class is deep enough that a starting-quality player could be available at No. 49 overall:

“You would hope so. That is one of those scenarios that you have to just wait and see where you are going to pick, what unfolds and then you have to weigh the different options.”

On if there are a multitude of players ranked highly enough on his board that would be available at the No. 49 overall:

“Not necessarily. The way you unfold it is normally there should be about 165 players on that board. Then you just kind of work through the positioning of those players and then you have to do what is best for the organization and determine which one is the best player.”

On his level of interest in trading up into the first round of the draft:

“If I deem it will help the Cleveland Browns, surely I will do that if it helps the organization moving forward, but the compensation on the back end cannot be outrageous. It has to work on both sides.”

On if there will be players available that will motivate him to move up in the draft:

“I think you just have to wait and let that happen on draft day and see how it unfolds.”

On the Browns LB depth:

“The current guys that we have on our roster right now have played a lot of football. I think there are some guys within this draft class that are worthy of drafting at certain spots. I think that is how you go about this thing. There are other avenues of acquiring football players, as well.”

On the impact of acquiring a player with a fifth-year contract option:

“There is an advantage to that. Let’s make no mistake, any time that you can get a fifth-year option on a good player, that always helps out.”

On the Browns’ main goal for the 2019 NFL Draft:



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“We are trying to get as many competitive football players to help this roster moving forward and to help contribute for the 2019 season. You can’t have enough good football players. At the end of the day, I would like all eight of [our draft selections] to be starters, but reality says that is not going to happen. You just want to try to get as many good, competitive football players as you can.”

On if the Browns are willing to give up a significant amount to move up in the draft into the first round:

“If a certain player is there that I deem that the value fits the player, yes.”

On if he has been part of a staff that drafted a K and if the Browns’ current position increases the chances the team will draft a K:

“I believe that in Green Bay we drafted a kicker. It did not work out too well. I have been involved in that. There has also been a punter, too. That did not work out too well, either.”

On if having certain roster positions in good condition creates more opportunity to select a K:

“Again, if he helps this organization moving forward and if he is at the right value versus what his abilities are, why wouldn’t you take a shot at it?”

On Ss Morgan Burnett and Eric Murray:

“I think both are very talented football players. With regards to Morgan, I think over the years he has shown his ability to play the game of football. I think he is a nice fit into what (defensive coordinator) Steve Wilks is looking at. With Eric Murray, Eric Murray can play both safety positions. He actually may play a little bit of nickel corner, as well. He is a phenomenal special teams player, too.”

On if Burnett still plays at a level of a starting SS:

“I do.”

On drafting for position of need or best available player:

“You and I really do not know each other, but if you know my track record, I have always said best player available.”

On the possibility of trading up in the draft to select a productive player who may not be able to contribute immediately, like Mississippi State DL Jeffrey Simmons:

“He is a phenomenal football player. Unfortunately, he had an ACL injury recently in January. If he was there at 49, you may think about it, but you have to see what is best for the organization moving forward.”

On evaluating players who have recently sustained an injury:

“I think what you do is you look at his ability to play the game of football. Then I think you sit and talk to your medical staff and see how long it will actually take with regards to his recovery of that injury. I think then you begin to digest the information that you have and is there enough factual information to make a prudent decision.”

On indications OL Austin Corbett can succeed as starting RG:

“I think he was making growth in the 2018 season. Every day when you see him working at his craft, I think that he is going to make tremendous strides here in the 2019 season. Nothing is given in this thing, but he is going to sit and compete. I am sure that he is one of those guys that is going to stand up to the challenge.”

On potentially using all eight picks or trading to acquire future selections, given the status of the Browns roster:



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“I think that is one of those situations where let’s see when we get to the moment of the draft and see how it begins to unfold and watch that draft board begin to unfold as we speak. If we feel that we would like to acquire some extra picks going down the road, maybe we do something like that.”

On adding ‘juice’ to the WR group to complement WRs Odell Beckham Jr. and Jarvis Landry:

“I think (WR Antonio) Callaway has some juice. Again, if you are in that position, regardless of which round you are in, if you think they can really help this organization not only in the immediate but in the long term, why would you not go acquire a player like that if you deem him the best player available?”

On DE Olivier Vernon:

“In today’s football, you can’t have enough really good pass rushers. When you begin to acquire talented pass rushers, regardless if they are outside or inside, that opens up avenues for other pass rushers on your team, as well because basically, what it is you have one-on-one matchups. You can’t have enough one-on-one matchups in this league today. I think it is going to help everybody across the front four.”

On Vernon’s past ankle injuries:

“I talked with (Vice President, Player Health and Development) Joe (Sheehan) and he is fine.”

On if there is more clarity regarding Beckham’s participation in the offseason program:

“Where I stand is that I think any time that you have, as an organization, you have a first-year coaching staff and you are installing new offenses and new defenses, it is good to be here; but let’s remember, the CBA created this to where it is a voluntary situation. I think he is an experienced enough player that he will understand what he has to do to put himself in the best position and put this team in the best position. That is how I look at this.”

On how ‘positive vibes’ in the public about the team impact the locker room:

“It is hype. That is what it is. Football is played in the fall the last I have seen. Now, you have to go to training camp and you have to earn the respect that everybody is talking about. How do you do that? You have 53 guys with the single mindset and the collectivism of driving this thing forward. That is where it is. Games are won and lost in the fall. That is how we are going to approach this thing. I have always lived by the mantra ‘1-0.’ It is one game at a time, and you have to live that.”

On Ohio State DL Dre’mont Jones, who is from Northeast Ohio:

“He was here [for the local pro day]. Great kid. The defensive line coaches put him through about 15-20 minutes of drills. You saw the explosive movement that you had heard about. When you combine his ability to play the game of football and the person, you could not be more happy to have a player like that on your team. I thought he did an outstanding job.”

On CB being the only position that the Browns have not addressed this offseason:

“That is wrong – deep snapper (*laughter*).”

On if the Browns are satisfied with their CBs:

“This is the National Football League. The game has evolved and changed over the last five to 10 years. You can’t have enough cornerbacks on your team to move this thing forward because of the way that the NFL has gone in terms of the throwing component of it. We will explore all opportunities at the cornerback position. If we think it is going to help this organization moving forward, we will try to acquire a cornerback.”

On the Browns’ depth at TE:

“I really like it. I like all of them. There are four of them right now together, and they are very talented individuals. They all will serve different roles in this thing, but I think as you watch them work together,



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they are starting to get familiar with each other. What I want to do is wait until training camp comes and then really assess what that thing is all about because why make decisions now in shorts? Let's make decisions when pads get on."

On TE David Njoku:

"He is a very young man with a lot of talent. He has a very workman-like attitude, and he loves the game of football. He still has a high ceiling here."

On if there are position groups where the Browns are currently 'thin':

"I think we are thin at all positions. I am going to be able to just fortify that thing as much as I can."

On if there are position groups that are 'thinner' than others:

"More thin than others? As I look at this thing, we are beginning to build some more competitive depth at all the positions on this team. I think we will continue to do that as we move forward. We will continue to do that even after the draft takes place."

On RB Kareem Hunt joining the team during offseason workouts:

"I think Kareem has done one heck of a job. He has been working his fanny off in the building. I could not be happier with how hard he is working in the building. I could not be happier with how hard he is working out of the building. That is all you can ask of him. He is committed to doing the proper steps here in getting this thing moving forward."

On DE Chad Thomas entering his second season:

"I think Chad is a very talented football player. Usually, guys in the first year into their second year make exponential strides and growth. I see him getting a lot of playing time this year. I could see him getting some rotational playing time and really developing into a really good football player."

On if there is a key to preparing a team for primetime games:

"Stay consistent. Stay consistent with how you approach each game. Stay consistent in your routine moving forward. Make sure there is attention to detail in terms to how you address each one of these games week in and week out. Do not look too far ahead. Concentrate on the task at hand. That is that first game. Let's concentrate on that task."

On WR Damon Sheehy-Guiseppi and his ability as a return specialist:

"It first starts with the physical traits that he displayed to (Vice President, Player Personnel) Alonzo Highsmith. Then we brought him up here to the recommendation of Alonzo. Then we got a chance to see him for ourselves and you could see all of the explosive movement stuff that Alonzo was talking about. Then when you watch him field kicks and punts, you are going, 'OK, he can do this kind of stuff.' Now, he has not played in a couple of years, but it will not be because of lack of determination because this is a very determined young man. Yeah, it would be a great story if it happens, but he has to come and show that he deserves to be here. I could not be happier for the kid moving forward to get the shot to play in the National Football League."

On the Browns had a goal to add a return specialist:

"You would like to find some type of return specialist and move this thing forward. You are always looking for those guys to create that competition."

On Simmons' off-field situations:

"Jeffrey came in for a visit. I had a chance to sit down with him, talk about the past and talk about the steps he has taken at Mississippi State over the course of his career at the school. What we are going to do if there is a possibility that he is there, we are going to sit and talk about it as an organization and make the best



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decision moving forward and make sure that everybody is comfortable with that decisions moving forward, if it happens.”

On if evaluating Simmons is an isolated decision or if it has to be made in the context that Hunt is currently on the roster:

“I understand that [question]. It is a case-by-case basis, and I think you sit there and let’s understand everything involved here moving forward. We will make that decision – we will see if that happens. We will see what that decision is all about.”

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