

August 15, 2025

Defensive Coordinator Joe Whitt Jr.

On the defense throughout training camp:

“We've had some really good practices and we have to get that to translate to the game film, but I've been pleased with the way we're rushing, playing the run, covering really well on the back end. And so, the collective group have been growing together, getting to know each other with the new additions. So, it's been good, now it has to translate to on game day.”

On if the current secondary allows him to be more creative:

“That's just how we've always, or the schemes that I've been a part of, have been able to get up and press and cover on the outside, tight coverage. So, that's more what I'm used to. I'm not accustomed to really zoning type coverages, and so it's not necessarily giving me more flexibility to add variety. I guess that's what your question is, is it gives us the ability to, to really run the defense that we want to run without having to plug holes in different places.”

On the performance from the linebackers against New England:

“It wasn't what it needed to be in the game. The effort was there, but the details, the fits just wasn't what it was supposed to be. Because I was really excited to see our twos go against their ones and in certain spots, certain people showed up. The young linebackers, they have the opportunity to show up this week.”

On S Jeremy Reaves:

“Yeah. I mean, he's earned right now to be that third safety type of player where you'll see him in there more. He's such a special teams ace that it's hard to just play him full time on defense because he's so important to special teams. But he just keeps making plays, making plays. So, we're going to find plays for him on defense, and he's earned that. He's always around the ball, his physicality is unmatched. And so, I've been very pleased with what he's done this camp.”

On entering his second year as defensive coordinator and on his comfortability in the position:

“A lot more comfortable, just understanding how to deal with managing the staff and allowing the staff to do their job. Not trying to be overbearing from that standpoint. And the focus on just making sure that we're detailed, we're structured with where we need to be, and allowing the coaches to coach. And then, like I said before, I want to make sure I do a better job of what I've always done in the past is taking players and maximizing their skill set. So, let's make sure we put players in position to do what they do best and negate what they don't do. And so, that's where my focus has been. So, there's more of a calmness with me in the building just because I'm not trying to necessarily do everything. I'm allowing the coaches who are outstanding to do their job and just make sure that we're structured, we're on time, we're detailed out, the players understand what we're doing and then let's go play fast.”

On Personnel Analyst Wes Welker's role:

“So, we did the same thing in Dallas where the first time we did it, we did with [Former NFL Coach] Ben McAdoo. The second time was with [Dallas Cowboys Head Coach] Brian Schottenheimer, where they did pre-scouting from an offensive standpoint. Now Wes is going to do that with me. And it was really cause Schotty was really good, especially on anticipating, ‘Okay, this is what you're going to get next. This is from an offensive lens.’ Now my background started off on offense, so I still see things from an offensive lens but having Wes with his knowledge of the pass game and being in the different offensive systems, it is going to give me the ability as a play caller to have high anticipation of what's coming next. He also gives the secondary and Coach Simmons [Defensive Pass Game Coordinator Jason Simmons] and those guys on the back end, just a wealth of knowledge of how routes are being ran, where the break points are, what's the quarterback's reads and the looks and the hots from that standpoint. So, he's been a really good addition and I'm looking forward to working with him the rest of the year.

On areas of improvement he wants to see:

“The scrimmage, if we could play like we did in the scrimmage, especially the one defense, that's what it should look like. The scrimmage was, it was pretty damn good. The New England practice, I thought we started off and we got after them pretty good. They got in the red area, we got after them pretty good also. They got in the red area, and they got after us. The quarterback scrambled for a touchdown in practice and then they scrambled, now the second time when [New England Patriots QB Josh] Dobbs scrambled, we made them work for that one. But the other one, they just stepped up so we have to understand the rush lanes, and once we get to the low red, we were in some single gap defenses and I know our ones weren't out there, but I'm talking about the game now but they were able to hit some runs that they shouldn't have been able to hit. In the practice they weren't able to hit them. I mean, so the practice, when our ones were out there they did a nice job. And then in the scrimmage, the scrimmage was what I envisioned this defense to be, it was really good.”

On this week being a prep week for the upcoming game:

“Yes, we're not getting to a full game plan, but we will do what we call a snapshot game plan where we'll give them a little bit of what the normal game week will be, but it won't be a full detailed deep dive like we normally do. We're still in sort of a training camp mode so we're working both sides of it.”

On how CB Trey Amos competing against veterans in the upcoming game will help is game:

“I think it'll help a lot. I value [Cincinnati Bengals WR Ja'Marr Chase] so much, man. I think this kid is the premier receiver in the league. I mean, he's second to none. He can run the routes; he's run after catch. The ability to be able to go up there and, and defend a guy like that and at some point, he's going to beat you and then how do you respond? And then [Cincinnati Bengals WR] Tee Higgins, he's not a two, let's not get that. He is a one also, so they have two ones and then they have a great quarterback that can place the ball wherever he needs to place it. I'm excited to see, because we've covered really well out here every day. Especially the top five corners. I'm excited to see against who I think is the best receiver in the league and Ja'Marr Chase.”