

**Coach Bill O'Brien**  
**Spring Practice Press Conference**  
**March 26, 2012**

**Q. You mentioned trying to balance out the roster and some possible position changes. Could you elaborate on some of the changes you've made or some of the changes you're going to look at this spring?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Sure. I won't get into all the changes, but again, I'll give you another example. Yesterday I think I gave you the Billy Belton example. We moved Bill Belton from wide receiver to running back. We just felt like that was, in our staff's opinion, a most appropriate position for him, body type-wise, skill set-wise.

Another change that we've made is we've moved Curtis Drake from receiver to the field corner spot, so we're going to try him out on defense and see how that goes with him.

Other than that, you know, you'll see changes -- the spring is about, in many ways, just like mini-camps in the National Football League, the spring is about experimentation, maybe practicing a guy at one spot for about five practices and then moving him to another spot and seeing how he does in different areas and trying to get your best players on the field.

As we go through spring, I'll keep you updated on that as best I can, but really, there will be a lot of those situations.

**Q. How have you evaluated the quarterback situation so far, mostly via film, and where do you see it shaping up, and is there an update on the kid from Maryland and the possibility of him coming here?**

COACH O'BRIEN: I'll start with the Penn State quarterback situation. I really like these guys. We're basically working with three guys there. We have Matt McGloin, Rob Bolden and Paul Jones. We'll mix and match their reps. Each guy will get a chance to rep with the first team.

I haven't really watched a lot of Penn State's offense from the past couple years. That's something that I really wanted to do, was start with a clean slate with these guys and just evaluate them and the winter conditioning and now into spring practice. And to this point I've been very pleased with these guys. They're competitive guys, they're smart guys. They really want to be coached. They want to be good. And we'll start evaluating them on the football field this afternoon.

As far as the other question you asked me, that's like a prospect question, so I'm not commenting on that right now. It's NCAA rules.

**Q. Just to clarify, is Matt your starter then, or is it open competition at quarterback?**

COACH O'BRIEN: I'll be real clear on that. It's an open competition. There's no starter, and there won't be a starter named until possibly the night before the Ohio game. There is no starter right now at that position.

**Q. How have you handled quarterback controversies in the past? Obviously it's been a big deal here the last couple seasons. Can you draw from any experiences that you've had?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Well, there were no quarterback controversies in New England (laughter), and previous to that, there might have been one -- controversy, I can't stand that word...just competition, battle for the quarterback job. And there have been at places that I've been. And the way we did that was to be as fair as we possibly could be with these guys and give each one of them equal amount of reps with the first team and the second team, second team offensive line, first team offensive line, and also keep stats. Make it as scientific as possible, keep scrimmage stats, keep seven-on-seven

stats and talk to them about completion percentage and all those things, decision making, accuracy that goes into being the starting quarterback.

We'll keep a library on these guys, and when we go to make a decision on who starts the football game, it'll be an educated decision and it'll be a fair decision.

**Q. What is Paul Jones' academic standing right now, and how concerned are you moving forward that he'll be able to keep his grades up?**

COACH O'BRIEN: I've really been happy with Paul Jones this semester. He's doing well in school. He's really working hard right now. Obviously the final grades aren't out right now, but just the updates that I've been getting from our academic staff, it seems to me that Paul has turned a corner academically, and so hopefully he finishes strong and he'll be ready to go for next year. Obviously, we'll rep him in spring in anticipation of him being able to play.

So that's where I see Paul Jones right now.

**Q. Two questions about Curtis Drake. He ended last season kind of in a rocky way. Is he okay now with you discipline-wise? And number two, what did you see in his abilities that compelled you to move him to the defensive back slot?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Well, first of all, discipline issues with Curtis as far as since I've been here, he started with a clean slate with me just like all 126 guys on the team start with a clean slate with me, and Curtis and I have had many conversations, and I'll keep those between Curtis and I.

What I saw with Curtis on the football field was good size, good feet, good hips, instinctiveness, and I think that he's a guy that can contribute over there. He's got to keep up his end of the bargain by doing well in school and keeping his nose clean, and then we'll give him a shot to play over there this spring.

**Q. Is moving Curtis (Drake) over there, is that a reflection of your concern about the depth in the secondary, one? And can you give us an update also on Pete Massaro?**

COACH O'BRIEN: It's definitely something that's an issue, just numbers-wise. When you watch us practice or you hear about us practicing, you'll see where we do a number of what we call two and three spot, sometimes four spot drills, where we get a million guys repping. We want guys to get a lot of reps. So because of the numbers in the secondary, that was one reason to make a couple moves there, because we don't have enough players over there, and then we wanted to make a move that made sense.

So, it was definitely just a concern about the number of players that we had there and able to run a couple different team periods at once and things like that. So we did that.

And also we felt like Curtis could obviously fit in there as a player.

Pete Massaro, he's had a good winter. Pete is a hard-working guy. He's a typical Penn State guy to me. He's what we're all about. He'll be out there in the spring and he's going to be hard to block.

**Q. Other than maybe quarterbacks, is there an area on this team where you say, "hey, we really need to get better quick at this," and is there an area where you're comfortable saying, "okay, I feel pretty good about this position?"**

COACH O'BRIEN: No, no area -- we've got to get better at coaching. We've got to get better at playing. We've got to get better at understanding schemes. We have to look to improve every single day out on the field, and if we can take that mentality throughout the whole spring then we will have had a good spring.

Again, the spring is about a lot of different -- the goal of the spring really is to find out who your top players are, two and possibly three deep on both sides of the ball. But it's also to get familiar with

each other as a coaching staff. There's some guys that have coached together but not for a while, and understand the tempo that we want as a staff and that I want as the head coach.

And so we've got to work together and with the players and really try and improve every single day. No one here has all the answers. I learned that very specifically in New England. Every single day that we worked for Bill (Belichick) in New England, we took it as a day to get better, and that's the same mentality that we're going to do here, coaches and players alike.

**Q. Can you get a sense personally where you are right now as far as just being settled into your day-to-day routine, sort of getting up to speed with just the schedule and all that sort of thing? Where do you feel you are right now in that?**

COACH O'BRIEN: I feel really good. I'm settled in, other than the fact that I'm still in room -- well, I can't give my room number out, but I'm on the fifth floor over at the Penn Stater. I've been living out of a suitcase for a while.

It is interesting, I was thinking about this yesterday, on February whatever it was, 2nd, (5<sup>th</sup>) you're calling plays in the Super Bowl, and now here you are on the last week in March and you're starting spring practice at Penn State. That's life as a football coach, and what an unbelievable opportunity that we have here.

So, as far as being settled in, as a coach, you're able to make the transition very quickly because that's what coaching is all about. So from the day I got here, it was get up early, go to work, stay late and get the ship going in the right direction. I'm very settled in. I've met a ton of great people here at Penn State. It's a very special place. You can tell that right away, and you can also understand just by this turnout here today how important football is here at Penn State and just a big part of the University here. We're settled and we're just ready to go start coaching this afternoon.

**Q. As you're about to start the actual practicing, who are you looking towards to step up in leadership roles this spring?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, there's a lot of guys. I'm not going to mention anybody specifically. There are definitely older guys on this team that have played a lot of football, and so we're hoping that those guys take some leadership roles, and leadership comes in a lot of different forms. Some guys don't say a word and they just lead by example. Some guys do both. And I don't know much about these guys on the football field, so that'll be something that will be part of our evaluation as we take the field this afternoon, finding out who those leaders are.

**Q. How excited are you? I imagine there's got to be a lot of excitement for you to get these guys in pads out on the field today for the first time or just to get this thing going. Can you talk about your excitement level and talk about the excitement from a staff standpoint?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, really excited. Definitely, excitement is a great word to describe it. We've had a really good winter, and it's obvious to us here that we have really good kids here and guys that want to be good and want to be coached and get better every day, and so we're just really excited about getting out there and starting to play football, watch how these guys react in different situations on the football field, watch how the quarterbacks throw the ball in person, watch how the receivers catch the ball in person.

We haven't watched any of that because you're not allowed to use a ball during your winter workouts, which, that's an unbelievable rule to me; you're playing football but you're not allowed to use a ball. But I understand that, that's an NCAA rule and we abide by the rules.

So this will be the first time we see guys do things like that. So we're very excited about it, and we feel we have a chance to have a good football team, but we've got a long way to go. If hard work is any measure of how good we're going to be, then we're on the right road.

**Q. You're looking at positions with a lot of turnover, and you look at the offensive line. What have you seen on film so far from that particular group?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Well, the guys that will be playing there haven't played a lot of football, some of those guys, except for (Matt) Stankiewitch, our center. For a lot of those guys for the most part it'll be their first time playing in a full-time role. So we'll really make judgment off of spring practice.

And again, I haven't watched any offensive tape from the previous year. I'm not going to do that. I want to evaluate these guys on the system that we put in, how they play for us, and take it from there. I haven't watched any offensive tape from last year.

**Q. Could you comment on some apparent off-the-field issues with Devon Smith? Apparently he was found with drugs in his apartment recently.**

COACH O'BRIEN: That was just reported to me this morning, so I'm still gathering information on that, and we'll have something at a later date to report on that. But I don't really have a comment on that at this point.

**Q. What's been your biggest challenge so far? What's been the thing that's been the hardest for you?**

COACH O'BRIEN: You know, just a lot of different things come across your desk, and so I wouldn't say it's hard, it's just a matter of budgeting your time and making sure that you go into your day and you have your daily routine. You know, what are you going to do from 6:00 to 7:00 a.m., from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00, so basically what we do is we work on academics as a staff, we work on recruiting in the morning and then we work on football in the afternoon.

But again, the challenge for somebody who's never been a head coach is all these things come across your desk that when you were a coordinator all you were concerned about was the offensive side of the ball and schemes and the evaluating of your own offensive talent. It's just more tasks that you have to perform every day, and that's what I've been doing every single day.

**Q. What are the types of things that you were able to do with the quarterbacks since you took over, not able to see them on the field but what are some things that impressed you at the blackboard or whatever?**

COACH O'BRIEN: You can't do much. You really can't do much. But what you can do is you're allowed to spend a certain amount of time with them per week, so most of that is classroom; classroom work as far as football goes.

But again, these guys have to go to class, and that's their number one priority here. You don't really want to kill their time with a bunch of football meetings. So we haven't done a lot. But when we have done some things, it's been apparent to me that these guys are studying, that they want to learn. They're able to communicate, and you can tell that it's going to be a fun spring just watching these guys develop through 15 practices.

**Q. You're known for being innovative the way you use your tight ends in the offense. How important is Garry Gilliam coming back into the offensive system coming off the ACL and MCL injury?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, it's very important. That's a very important part of what we're going to do offensively. Obviously, the last two years in New England taught me a lot about the use of a tight end, multiple tight ends. What people don't understand in New England, a lot of times we used three tight ends. In 2010, we had Aaron (Hernandez), Rob (Gronkowski) and Alge Crumpler. The more you

have, the more difficult it is on a defense. So Garry, I've been very impressed with Garry; Jesse James, who really should still be in high school; and Kevin Haplea is another guy there, Brian Irvin. These guys have had good winters. They put a lot of time in, and they're going to be a big part of what we do. We're going to have two tight ends in there and at the very least one tight end in there the majority of the time.

Again, I learned a lot about that position in New England, and hopefully that'll carry over. I'll be able to teach these guys what I learned in New England over to what we're doing here at Penn State.

**Q. Can you talk about your role in calling plays and what your philosophy would be on game day as far as input on defense and special teams?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, we're working through all that right now. That's not something that needs to be solved like today. All I know is I will call the plays, Charlie Fisher will coach the quarterbacks. So one thing that we do know right now is during the season when we come to the sideline for sideline adjustments between series, Charlie will handle that, whether he's in the press box or on the field. We haven't decided where everybody is yet. And then I'll watch the whole game. So I'll be involved in everything as far as the management of the game goes. That to me is something that has to be the strength of the head coach. So those are things that we're going to practice throughout the spring as far as teaching our players situational football.

But as far as a coaching staff goes, we'll work that during the spring and then we'll really try to ramp it up during training camp. Right now our job is to really evaluate this football team and find out who our best players are and who are going to play the most football for us in the fall.

**Q. You do see yourself calling plays?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, I'll call the offensive plays.

**Q. You've made some significant changes to the strength and conditioning program. Is it too early to see the benefits of that, or have you already started to see some of the changes in body type and that sort of thing?**

COACH O'BRIEN: No, it's not too early. You can see where Fitz (Craig Fitzgerald) and his assistants and his program have had a direct effect on guys already, like Adam Gress. Right now you can see that the offensive tackle for us has had a heck of a winter and has already changed his body. You go from looking one way to looking more like a V shape, and that's what you're looking for in your linemen.

And there's many, many other examples of that. You can see it already in their conditioning levels and their flexibility. We've got a long way to go, but there's definitely been an effect on this team over the last three months with his program.

**Q. Another off-the-field question regarding a kid from my area, Shawn Oakman. You dismissed him from the team last month. Can you explain why you did and is there any chance he could file for reinstatement?**

COACH O'BRIEN: That will be between Shawn and myself, the Oakman family and myself, and no, he won't be back on the Penn State football team or at Penn State.

**Q. Two-part question, a guy like Michael Mauti, the linebacker that's had the ACL surgery, is he going to be active in spring, and are there any other guys you might hold or for injury reasons, and also, can you evaluate tailback behind Silas Redd and what you see at that position after him?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Right. Mike Mauti won't participate in spring, especially in the contact drills. He might be in some individual drills and things like that. But Mike has had a heck of a winter just in the things that he has been able to do. He definitely, obviously is one of the core players on this football team, both from his leadership and from his work ethic, his family. He's a Penn State guy, so it's been great to get to know Mike. But he won't do a ton of football things this spring.

What was the second question?

**Q. Tailback depth behind Silas, how important that is.**

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, very important. In this conference we're going to be balanced. We're going to run the football, and there's a lot of good, tough defenses in this conference. And so, knock on wood, injuries occur, and you don't want guys to be carrying the ball 40 times a game. So Derek Day is a guy that we're going to look at as a backup to Silas. Curtis Dukes, you won't see him in the spring. He's going to concentrate on academics, try to get his grades up and then get back to us in the summertime hopefully, so you won't see a lot of him. So from that standpoint, it'll be primarily Silas and Derek Day, and then we have an incoming freshman, Akeel Lynch, who will be starting in the summer bridge program, so we're looking forward to good things from him.

But Silas is -- it would be tough to beat Silas out. He'll go in there as the number one tailback and then Derek will split some reps with him.

**Q. Could you elaborate on your decision not to look at a lot of film from last year? And you have a lot of coaches coming from different places. Is that sort of standard operating procedure in your past travels?**

COACH O'BRIEN: I'd be glad to elaborate on it. One of the things I wanted to do when I got here was again start with a clean slate with these guys. I didn't want to make any judgments on what they did on the football field, especially offensively, with not really knowing what they were doing scheme-wise offensively, you know, and not really knowing how they were coaching it and all those different things. I just wanted to start evaluating them in the winter conditioning and then now in spring practice. I wanted to start my evaluation then.

The other thing about that is I had to decide how to budget my time. I had to decide what's the most important thing or things for me to get accomplished over the last three months, and so it was making sure I was up to speed on all their academics, their academic issues or situations with each kid on the team, recruiting, and then implementing our systems and evaluating our players in the winter conditioning. So I felt like if I could just take one thing and not do it, that would be evaluating the offense from last year, and now going into spring I'll continue to evaluate them right now.

**Q. Will you do that after the spring? Will you look at any past tape or not?**

COACH O'BRIEN: No. I'll look at the spring tape. So now we'll -- at the end of the 15 practices, we'll cut up all the spring plays and we'll make cut-ups of our own offense now at Penn State. Right now we're watching the New England Patriots. First thing I've got to do when I throw that tape on is I've got to get their looks off -- we're watching this because we're trying to learn or offense, so don't worry about watching Tommy Brady and Wes Welker; let's learn the offense. And then once spring practice is over we'll cut our spring practice up and study that going into training camp next year.

**Q. And how will you handle captains? Will you wait until the fall or try to establish that in the spring?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Right now we'll have game captains each week. More than likely what I'm leaning towards doing is having game captains each week and naming permanent captains before the

last game, which is probably what I'll do, but I'll let you know on a decision on that, but that's what I'm leaning towards doing right now.

**Q. About the tight ends again, is the position that say Dakota Royer is going to play, is that a different position than what Gilliam and those bigger guys are going to play?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Sure, yeah. At the tight end position you have basically what we call a Y, which a Y is a bigger guy, a good in-line blocker, runs intermediate routes, short to intermediate routes. His number one job is to block, and then his second job is to run short intermediate routes and be open. He's got to have good hands, he's got to be smart. He'll be involved in protections. He'll be involved in a lot of different things in the offense.

Then we have the position that we call the F position, and the F position is more of what we call a move guy, a little bit better pass receiver than he is a blocker, has good hands, is smart. You know, one of the things about the tight end position in our offense is that second to quarterback, it's really the hardest position to learn because we do so many different things with them.

And they'll be interchangeable. One time Gilliam will be the F and Haplea will be the Y, and vice versa, Gilliam will be the Y and Haplea will be the F. Or Dakota or Jesse James will be the F and Gilliam will be the Y. So you can do so many different things, but it's all up to how those guys learn and how they're able to develop learning their own position.

**Q. Beginning with Larry and Ron, can you talk about the transition from old to new?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Well, I don't know too much about the old, other than what coach --

**Q. With them mostly and with the other support staff.**

COACH O'BRIEN: Larry (Johnson) and Ron (Vanderlinden) have been great. Again, they were highly recommended to me to keep, and I'm glad I did. They've bought into what we're doing, and they're working very hard. You can see why they were highly recommended. They're great communicators, great teachers, and they've bought into what we're doing here, so I'm looking forward to continuing to work with them and getting to know them.

As far as the other support people in the Lasch, we've made a lot of changes in there, and we're really happy with the changes that we've made. They're changes that came along with the new staff, and that's what happens in football. Sometimes you have to make some changes and bring some people in that you're comfortable with or you've made a specific change to get that certain person in there, and so I'm very happy with where we are right now in the Lasch.

One thing that you'll see with me is that I like the phrase less is more, so the less people is better for me. So that's what you'll see as you get to know me.

**Q. Your philosophy about not looking at past film, is that for defense, too?**

COACH O'BRIEN: No, I've watched some of the defense. I have watched some defense. It's just primarily on offense, I didn't watch a lot of the -- I didn't watch any offense, but I did watch some defensive games from last year, and again, we've got a lot of guys back and we feel strong about where our defense is going to be going into spring practice and then at the end of spring practice.

**Q. Do you expect to have Mike Mauti back for the fall?**

COACH O'BRIEN: I do expect to have Mike Mauti back for the fall, yes, I do.

**Q. What were your players able to do on their own in the off-season, these last couple months, to get familiar with the schemes, with the playbook, and are you going to have to start at square one this week as far as schemes and things like that?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, you're definitely starting at square one, because again, you're not really able to spend a lot of time with them. That's been probably the -- there's been a few big adjustments for me from the NFL to college football. Number one is the roster size. In the NFL you have 61 players. You have 53 on the active roster and you have eight practice squad players, so you're almost -- you've more than doubled that in college. So the roster size and making sure that a bunch of guys are getting reps. That's what we're evaluating, too, as we're going through practice starting today.

In the NFL after a certain date the guys come back in and you're meeting with them right away and they're lifting in the morning and you're meeting with them from after lunch until 5:00 in the afternoon. That's been a big adjustment. Basically, because we can't do that in college football. We've cut all of our film up from New England, and Ted (Roof) cut all of his stuff up from Auburn and the guys, whenever they have free time they go in there and watch these things on their own, and that's how they try to get caught up to speed. The play called is up on the screen, and they can familiarize themselves with how the play is called and things like that.

But other than that, we're starting at square one this afternoon.

**Q. Can you just talk generally about how you feel recruiting is going now that you've started a full year that you've been in here instead of coming in right at the end of the process?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, I feel good about recruiting. Again, recruiting is different than it was five years ago. It's Facebook, it's Twitter, there's a lot of different things going on. But I feel good about where we are right now, but again, you never really know until they sign on the dotted line. We'll just continue to really work hard at it.

The only thing, we've talked about a couple different things. I want a big, fast, physical football team here, so I don't want us to ever be wrong on measurables. That doesn't mean that we're just going to have a bunch of giants; that means that there's exceptions to every rule, but we can't have too many of those. So we want a big, fast, physical football team down the road here.

And then the other thing that we want to do is to make sure that -- I'm clear with our staff all the time is we want nine guys working as one team and not nine different corporations. We want nine guys thinking about the same things and what our needs are and the type of player and person that we're looking to bring in here, and we're all on the same page, and it's about being unselfish and making sure that we're recruiting for this team and for this University.

So that's what we're striving to do, and right now we're off to a good start doing that.

**Q. In terms of showing them the New England Patriots' offense, if you could break that down a little bit more, what you want them to get out of that, and are you talking literally about translating that Patriots offense to Beaver Stadium?**

COACH O'BRIEN: We're going to run -- the basis of the Patriots offense will be run here. Let's be real clear on a couple things here. It is the core, the basics of it. You have a quarterback in New England that was there for 12 years (Tom Brady). That's a little bit different than a 20-, 21-year-old guy that's just learning the offense here at Penn State. So we'll put in the core, we'll put in the basics of it, and then we'll build on it in training camp, and that's what I mean by the New England Patriots' offense.

That's the offense that I'm most familiar with. That's been an offensive philosophy that's been really successful and that I truly believe in. It puts a lot on the quarterback, and we'll see how those guys do with it this spring, and it'll be fun to watch them improve every day and watch how they learn it and put it to the field.



**Q. Just wondering, with regards to the Blue-White game, are you going to be on the field, and what can fans expect when they come to that? Are you guys going to treat that as as real of a game as possible?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, every time we go out on the field -- there's some people in the back laughing because they know, I've heard about the Blue-White game, it's a huge deal here. I understand that, I really do. And I know that there's going to be a lot of people here, and I think that's great, I really do. But for us as a football team, it's another opportunity to get better. So for us, it'll be treated like a game scrimmage. We haven't really talked about the specifics of it yet, but I'll be calling plays in that game, Ted will be calling the defense, and that will be -- that's our final chance before heading into the summer to evaluate our football team and to also, as a coaching staff, treat it like a game, with guys in the press box, officials on the field, coaches on the field, translating the play into the players, letting the players play special teams, and treating that like a game.

The more you can practice simulating a game, then when you get to the opportunity game itself, the operation of the game can be that much easier for you. So to us, I think it's great that that's a big day here, and I'm excited for the fans coming out. I can't wait to meet a lot of people. But that's very much of a business day for us.

**Q. You talked about you and Ted sort of putting in your offensive and defensive schemes, the Pats' and Auburn's. Obviously your offensive staff is all guys you've brought in. The defensive staff, though, has two holdovers who have been here a long time, worked under a different system. Can you give us a sense of how different it is for Larry and Ron as far as what they're coaching in their units compared to what they would have been doing last year?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Yeah, you'd have to probably ask them that question specifically when you get a chance to ask them. But I know that there's a lot of similarities. We'll play a four-down scheme, but we'll spin the dial quite a bit and we'll line up in three-down and four-down and bear, and Ted does just about everything, and that's why I was happy to be able to bring him to Penn State.

But that's a staff that's really met a lot on defense. They've met just about every day since I've been here, since the Super Bowl, and there's a lot of camaraderie on that staff, guys respect each other, guys that have coached a lot of football, and those guys seemed to hit the ground running.

We'll probably be lucky to get a 1st down. That's what I keep telling Ted this spring. We'll be lucky to gain an inch this spring. But we'll see how it goes starting today.

**Q. Where do you think your wide receivers are at right now? Do you think Justin Brown is ready to step into that No. 1 role that Derek Moye played the last two seasons?**

COACH O'BRIEN: We're going to have to see. That would be a better question to ask me at the end of spring practice. I haven't even seen these guys catch a ball yet. The receivers have two jobs; their two jobs are to get open and catch the ball. When we ask them to block, they need to at least get in the way (laughter). But they've got to get open and they've got to catch the football, so we'll evaluate that as we go through the spring here, and that would probably be a better deal to ask me maybe at the end of the spring.

**Q. Derrick Thomas is a guy that there have been conflicting reports about his status. Can you talk about that briefly?**

COACH O'BRIEN: Derrick Thomas will be in spring practice.