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NFLPA COVID-19 Media Call Transcript

- George Atallah: [00:01](#) De you're there, JC you're there. Let's go through what we always do at the start of these things and go through some data. From the period, December 27th through January 2nd, 40,709 tests were administered to 6,702 players and team personnel. And 16,088 tests were administered to 2,356 players. 24,621 tests were administered to 4,346 personnel. Of that number, 34 new confirmed positive tests among players and 36 new confirmed positive tests among other personnel. So again, another week where we are seeing what we're seeing in our communities and across the country where numbers are upticking. Overall positivity rate, players and staff is 0.17%. It's up from 0.14% from last week.
- George Atallah: [01:07](#) And the incidence rate overall is 1.04% whereas the last week we were 0.85%. Comprehensive numbers, we started testing on August 1st. So from the period of August 1st through January 2nd, 256 players and 432 other personnel were confirmed positive cases. Since August 1st, we have administered approximately 925,000 COVID tests. So that's where we are in terms of facts and figures at this point in the year in the NFL season. And I know De and JC have a few things they want to hit on. So I think we're going to start [inaudible 00:02:05] JC today.
- DeMaurice Smith: [02:08](#) Well, good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for joining us. It's been an interesting year to say the least. We're certainly thrilled that we made it through all 256 regular season games. A tremendous amount of credit goes out to the league, our union leadership, and most importantly, our players and their families for grinding through this. But of course we're not done. We have even a greater challenge, I think, ahead. The numbers of rising cases in the jurisdictions is presenting more of a challenge of us getting through the season. And that's just going to mean that we're going to need an increased amount of vigilance as we go forward. That's really all I had to start off. Happy to answer any questions. JC, I don't know if there's anything you want to kick off with.

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JC Tretter:

[03:00](#)

I think you said it right. I mean, we've done really well to get here to this point. We'll need continued vigilance, continually following the protocols, making the right decisions. But [inaudible 00:03:12] by all involved a lot of credit to our players, as well as our player leadership, getting us to this point.

George Atallah:

[03:24](#)

Let's use the same method we've been using in previous weeks, which I think has worked pretty well. We'll use the raise hand feature on the Zoom link. I think, obviously, everybody wants to know what's happening in your neck of the woods, JC, given the news this morning about five confirmed positive tests. Do you want to go into a little bit, I know it's going to get asked, so might as well just preempt it. Tell us a little bit about not just what's going on there, but [inaudible 00:03:59] why the protocols have to be followed.

JC Tretter:

[04:04](#)

I think right now we obviously are digging more into what is going on. We're contact tracing, we're following all the protocols we've done all year. And the first thing to start with is I feel for my teammates and coaches first off as human beings. And their safety and their health and their family's health in the first spot is making sure that they are okay and fighting this virus well and making it through. So that's the first concern is for them as people and their family and making sure they're healthy. We obviously have more work to do tracing and figuring out where the virus is coming from and how to move forward. And that will come. We don't have all those answers yet. It's still fairly early in the day by how long it takes contact trace. So we'll continue to work through those issues and get those answers as soon as possible.

George Atallah:

[05:04](#)

Okay. Terez, you're up first my man.

Terez:

[05:10](#)

Appreciate it guys. Thanks for doing this. Hey, listen, you guys, I've been on all these and you guys have talked about the necessity for players to follow the protocols because it's gotten you this far. And I get that. I guess my question is if the Browns COVID outbreak gets worst, just what are some of the contingencies for that? What are some of the contingencies if the worst case scenario comes to light?

DeMaurice Smith:

[05:35](#)

Good question. We've tried to be incredibly flexible all year and you've seen some games move, some games



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rescheduled. The reality of where we are now in the playoffs and given the tighter window, a lot of those contingencies that we would have had in the regular season are things we probably don't have the same level of contingencies to play during the Super Bowl, I'm sorry, during the playoffs leading up to the Super Bowl, which is why we're stressing that it's going to require an even increased vigilance. That said, we hit on it last week. I think someone asked a question about managing competitive balance in a paradigm of COVID.

DeMaurice Smith: [06:29](#)

We will make and continue to make decisions motivated by what's in the best medical, health and safety interests of our players and staff and everybody in the NFL community. But once we make those determinations about what's in that best interest the issues of kind of competitive balance, everything else kind of fade away. So the goal here is to try to get those games off safely and to move forward in a way that's in the best health and safety interest of everybody involved.

George Atallah: [07:06](#)

Thanks. Lindsay Jones.

Lindsay Jones: [07:13](#)

I actually had a pretty similar question about contingency plans. But JC, from your guys' perspective, how are you guys handling kind of this week? I know you didn't get to practice much last week, your week before was kind of thrown off because of COVID related issues. So how do you handle this now going into the playoffs and were you guys kind of always aware that this was on the table? Did you have considerations of trying to bubble up voluntarily? Whether that was making sure all the players were going to hotels. What was that kind of process like of handling these protocols heading into such a critical time of the season?

JC Tretter: [07:56](#)

To start with, I would say how we're handling it in the immediate future. Obviously as the proto-healths dictate, we'll be closed today and most likely tomorrow keeping our distance from each other as we contact trace and get those answers. When it comes to any sort of voluntary bubble, we've talked a lot about that on these calls. The voluntary bubble still has the same dependency on personal accountability that what our protocols currently are, have. So you're still relying on everybody to make the right decisions away from the facility. A voluntary bubble just means really that I'll



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make sure I'm at the hotel to sleep at night, but when you leave the facility, [inaudible 00:08:41] guys not to interact with people outside. So the bubble, I don't think ever was an option that would have worked especially a voluntary bubble.

JC Tretter: [08:51](#)

And again, I think if you track the test today, if we play out the bubble scenario where we bubbled up after our game on Sunday, those five guys that tested positive today, they would have turned positive inside of the bubble. And one of the reasons why we closed down the facilities is to make sure that we all are not together. So I would argue if we bubbled up, everything we know now and we brought everybody together under the same roof, now we have five people turning positive inside the bubble. And I think that makes us more susceptible to negative outcomes than separating ourselves, living away from each other and keeping as much distance as possible. So I think the voluntary bubble wouldn't help us with how things went down.

George Atallah: [09:42](#)

Okay. Nate, if you're out there.

Nate: [09:49](#)

Thanks guys. JC, a couple things. Asking the NFL about the game every time we get more and more positives with the Browns and they keep saying there's no things changed, no status change to the game. And I hear what you guys are saying with the contact tracing still going on. But what would it... I know we've talked to you guys even last week about the competitive balance and the decisions can't have anything to do with that. What would it take for it to be changed, for you guys to go those contingencies that De talked about earlier? And just wondering JC, for a guy like Stefanski, as much as he stressed everything and emphasized everything publicly with the protocols, how has it hit you that he's come down positive? Is it shocking? Is it troubling?

JC Tretter: [10:42](#)

I'll take the second question first. I think what this proves is guys, even when doing all the right things, this virus is so contagious that it doesn't guarantee you full protection. And that's something we've talked about from the get go is when this virus gets inside and you come into contact with it, it is so contagious that it's just tough. And I feel for the guys that tested positive today and have tested positive over the last 11 days, I think. You get coach Stefanski who has had an amazing first



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season as head coach, brings us to the playoffs and won't be able to be out there, to be with us.

JC Tretter: [11:29](#)

And a guy like [inaudible 00:11:30] who's played so long in Cleveland and has his first shot to play in the playoffs and misses out. That is tough. And I feel for them, first for their health like I said, but that that hurts. And I know that hurts them and we as players feel for them. And when it comes to the competitive advantage, I think we still have a few days to go as we figure this out, but I think it stays with how we've handled it all year. We talked about it last week on the call. When it comes to competitive advantage, that's-

JC Tretter: [12:00](#)

... week on the call. When it comes to competitive advantage, that's not how we're going to make decisions. We have to continue to make decisions through a health and safety lens, and we have to continue to contact trace, continue to figure out where this is coming from. And as we learn more as the week goes on, I think we'll have a better answer as now we're kind of in a holding pattern as we have our first five people today. It's a lot of contact racing to do.

George Atallah: [12:26](#)

Thanks for the question, Nate. Jonathan Jones.

Jonathan Jones: [12:33](#)

Hey. Yeah, this question is for De. JC, you just talked about how dangerous and contagious this virus obviously is. The protocols won't always protect you, but as more players just tested positive this past week than any other seven day period before and that was during the intensive protocols. So from a PA perspective, do you feel that the protocols are working and do you anticipate any protocols being further adjusted through this post-season?

DeMaurice Smith: [13:09](#)

Unlike anything else that we've seen in the country, I don't think the right measure, given a highly contagious novel coronavirus, nothing can be measured against perfection. We have modified and changed our protocols throughout the season. We didn't go into this with a one size fits all model. We knew we were going to have to be malleable, somewhat flexible about what to do with respect to the protocols. And we've continued to do things based on the science and based on the facts of what we're presented with.



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DeMaurice Smith:

[13:54](#)

I'm happy that we are in a position to be rooted in science and rooted in data. And that we have both a strength as a union to force the changes that we believe need to be changed in order to comply with the situation. But the reality is, this is a novel and emerging virus. We all heard a few weeks ago about an infectious strain that was identified in the UK and some reports that it's in the United States. Again, I'm not saying that to raise alarm. I'm just simply raising that as a fact of how often this paradigm changes and how quickly and smartly we have to respond to that. So I think the protocols have worked extremely well all year, but I'm most proud of our ability to change, modify, adapt, and evolve as we go forward.

George Atallah:

[15:00](#)

Rafael Hings

Raphael Hings:

[15:07](#)

Hey, this question is for either one. When you look at what's been going on right now, and you just talked about how you all have adapted. If we're going through this next year, as far as the COVID-19 situation, has this prepped you all for next year and have you all came up, I guess, with a plan now that you've seen what has happened and what could happen this year, have you came up with a plan for next year, if it continues to happen?

DeMaurice Smith:

[15:40](#)

JC, you want to take the first shot?

JC Tretter:

[15:43](#)

Yeah, I think like De just said, we continue to learn and continue to adapt. We continue to evolve our protocols. So I think right now our focus is on finishing this season, getting through these last six weeks and through the Super Bowl with everybody healthy and finishing all the games. Next year, I think we'll continue to work on that. And I'm sure we'll learn a ton more if this is still going on by that time next year about what we can do, what we can learn, what we can do better and what did work. I think there's still a lot of work to be done this year before we start worrying about next year, but we have learned a lot. And I think we've seen that with how we've adapted and how we've evolved.

DeMaurice Smith:

[16:24](#)

Yeah. The only thing I would add there is, George led off with the fact that there were nearly 40,000 tests with respect to 6,700 personnel this week alone. Remember the protocols, not only deal with testing, mask wearing, social distancing, contact tracing, electronic devices to



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monitor, many of the club facilities have been retrofitted with exhaust devices in order to increase air flow, change the way that players go to practice, where they change, where they shower, whether they shower at the facility. What I expect there to be next season is a continuation in that evolution process.

George Atallah: [17:14](#)

Okay. Jabari Young.

Jabari Young: [17:16](#)

Hey guys, going to JC, just direct question. This is the playoffs. You guys are planning for something bigger. It's not a regular season game. So like I said, should this game be rescheduled and if not, why not?

JC Tretter: [17:29](#)

Yeah. Again, I think we stick to how we've focused all year. The first priority is the health and safety of the players and making sure that the environment is safe to come back, come together. And that's what we talked about last week. When we make these decisions, the first thing is figuring out whether the virus is contained and that's when we've seen issues where games were postponed and rescheduled was when the virus was not contained within the building. We've seen two examples, I think maybe three examples with a one day postponement, but we've seen two main examples of that where the virus wasn't contained yet and it doesn't make sense to bring one team, let alone two teams together, when the virus is transmitting.

JC Tretter: [18:12](#)

The high risk close contacts issue, we don't know how many, if any, high risk close contacts we'll have from this. Last positive we had on Friday, we had no high risk close contacts, I believe. So we'll have to see that, but we've operated under that understanding all year where we're not going to reschedule for high risk close contacts, for competitive imbalance. I think we continue to make all of our decisions through a health and safety lens. I think that's the way you have to do it.

George Atallah: [18:45](#)

Thanks for that. Terez, back to you.

Terez: [18:52](#)

Appreciate it. Hey, I just wanted to get a little clarification. Because I think I understand some of the contingencies that would have been available during a regular season. Are we just talking about moving games that would have been available that aren't available now? And then I've got a follow-up to that.



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- DeMaurice Smith: [19:08](#) Yeah. Well, the contingencies that I was referring to during the regular season, were many of the ones you already saw, you saw some games pushed to different days. If recollection serves right, we had a situation with one team where it was unclear about whether or not we had contained an outbreak. And we pushed off that date of that game until we were sure that we had contained it.
- DeMaurice Smith: [19:49](#) My only comment about those contingencies is that, given the schedule that we have right now, we may not have the same flexibility that we had in the regular season. But to me, the most important takeaway here is that we are sticking with the same protocol, the same overall way of approaching this as we would with any game. The goal is to test every day, if somebody tests positive, to identify high risk close contacts. We do that so that we try to contain an outbreak. If we feel that we've adequately contained an outbreak and that playing the game doesn't further jeopardize people on the field from both sides, we move forward with the game.
- DeMaurice Smith: [20:45](#) So I think that's the focus right now. I certainly understand the angst that comes with the fact that these are now playoff games, but you're talking to an NFL PA president who has literally been mired in the process of getting the season started. He's found his team... Not found, but his team fought hard to be in this position of playing in the playoffs and believe me, I'm happy for every team that's in the playoffs, but I'd be a fool to think that I was any happier than the Cleveland Browns or the Browns in Cleveland about their prospects. So the focus is let's identify the people who are positive, let's identify the high risk close contacts, let's make sure that we don't engage in a game that further jeopardizes the spread. And that's got to be the focus.
- Terez: [21:50](#) My only quick followup to that, to put a bow on this De, let's say the virus isn't contained, God forbid, are there any scenarios like pushing the playoffs back week, or even moving back the Super Bowl that we should all just consider is off the table right now, even if they're unlikely?



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- DeMaurice Smith: [22:08](#) The only thing I can say there is there hasn't been any conversations about putting off the playoffs or putting off the Super Bowl, that I've had with the league since the playoffs have started. You know me, I'm always wary about somebody saying we're going to take X, Y, and Z off the table. I don't really know what that means in a global pandemic. It seems to me that, we've gotten to where we are because we've kept a lot of options on the table.
- DeMaurice Smith: [22:41](#) I know you guys get tired of us saying it and sometimes it sounds like a cliché, but when we say it's day to day, week to week, we actually mean it's day to day, week to week. And as you've seen during the regular season, a lot of those decisions were made day to day. So, we know what we currently know in Cleveland right now. Testing is ongoing. I know that the work that Sean and Tom Mayer are doing on connection, on contact tracing is continuing and that's going to be critically important.
- George Atallah: [23:27](#) Thanks very much. Scott Petrek
- Scott Petrek: [23:35](#) Hey, JC, I got a couple of more Browns questions for you. With Joel, you guys are so close. How tough is this for you to see him not be able to play in that playoff game after going through what he's gone through with the Browns?
- JC Tretter: [23:48](#) Yeah. I talked to Joel quite a bit today. I feel for him obviously with what he's gone through, what he's endured over his career and finally finding that success for the first time, and then it-
- JC Tretter: [24:00](#) Finally finding that success for the first time and then it being taken away at the last second, where he won't be able to be out there on Sunday. It's hard. And I feel for him, I feel for all the guys that won't be able to play for the first playoff game. And it is extremely difficult, extremely tough. It's tough because he, first of all, loves playing football, loves the Cleveland Browns, and this is just a terrible scenario for him and for everybody involved. But I obviously feel for Joel, I've been close to Joel since getting here, in Cleveland.



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- Rafael: [24:39](#) And from a playing perspective, how tough will it be not to have your head coach and play caller there for the playoffs?
- JC Tretter: [24:47](#) Yeah, again, the same thing I feel for Coach Stefanski as well. He has done an incredible job as a first time, first year head coach, stepping in and leading us into the playoffs. So another huge loss for us. And I feel for him as a person and as a leader, not being able to be out here with us and go into battle. I mean, it's just very sad, very sad. And it's really unfortunate.
- Rafael: [25:15](#) Thanks JC.
- George Atallah: [25:16](#) Thanks for the questions, Scott. What JC didn't tell you was, he's probably going to call his own plays this weekend. So get ready folks. Maske, you're up.
- Mark Maske: [25:31](#) [crosstalk 00:25:31] the new strain of the coronavirus from the UK earlier. I believe that's been identified in a number of different US States now. Is any evidence been seen yet of that showing up in any of the positive tests that have occurred around the league?
- DeMaurice Smith: [25:48](#) I do not believe that is the case. I'm pretty sure our medical director, Thom Mayer is also on the call. If I've got that wrong, Thom can jump in. But to date, we haven't seen anything that's identical to the strain that was identified in the UK.
- George Atallah: [26:11](#) Doc. Are you on the line? I think he is. If you want to jump in about the news stream. All right. Think I see him on here, but okay. We'll get to them when we get to them. Mark. Anything else?
- Mark Maske: [26:28](#) Nope, that's it.
- George Atallah: [26:29](#) Thank you, Raphael back to you.
- Rafael: [26:34](#) Hey, this is for D. We saw it a situation that happened with the Denver Broncos, where it caught on with the quarterbacks and, and of course they had to go to a practice quarterback at wide receiver who, had to play



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quarterback, God forbid. But if that does happen in this scenario, I mean, during this playoffs, is there going to be the same as usual as for that game? Is we just go ahead and play? And I mean, you all should have followed the protocols.

DeMaurice Smith: [27:09](#)

Yeah. I think JCs had it, , a couple of times we'll make decisions that are in the best health and safety interest of the players, but that was a tough scenario for the Denver Broncos. Not, not having any of their quarterbacks in their team. I think it would be, you know, somewhat unfair if you change the rules later on down the road, just because it's playoff game. What we've tried to do is, , make medical and database decisions. I think it's just a very slippery slope to, to start making decisions any other way. And that's why even before the season started, we constructed this framework of how we would view whether games would go forward under what circumstances could we be in a world where game would have to be moved or rescheduled or canceled. And all of those are decisions made with an eye towards the health and safety of the people involved not trying to maximize or, or, or ameliorate issues of competitive imbalance, right?

Rafael: [28:22](#)

And then just a quick follow up this goes for JC knowing as with a playoff game like this, , you miss your coaches and other players. Although you are already, let's say I'm pumped up for this game; how does this make a player want to win this game for the coaches and the other players now that they have to deal with this as the first playoff game in a while the coach came in and made his first year, the other players has been there. How does this rally the troops for a game like this?

JC Tretter: [28:57](#)

Yeah, I think whenever we talk about, , extra motivation, I, I'm wanting to think that that most guys, no matter what the game is, we're competitors that want to win. And, and there's no increased level of that. So I think first off, any game, we go in wanting to win as bad as possible. The playoffs are no different. I think we go into this with the same mentality where we're going to go out and battle, no matter who's out there, we've, we've dealt with issues with COVID all year.

JC Tretter: [29:28](#)

We deal with injuries every year with guys not being there and, and being ruled out at different times of the season. And you, you make the best of it. It's the next



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man up mentality. And that, and that's what you go with that I think, , we, we win this game and hopefully players and coaches can come back the next week. That that would be, be great for them to still get that, that playoff experience. But again, at any time we talk about revenge games or, , added motivation I've throughout career, never thought that was something. Cause I know most guys walk into that, that locker room ready to play with, with no ability to be any extra motivated than they already.

- George Atallah: [30:09](#) Thanks for that more Cleveland questions, Tony.
- George Atallah: [30:18](#) Hold on, Tony. Hold on. I got you.
- Tony: [30:22](#) Good.
- George Atallah: [30:22](#) Yeah, we got you now try again.
- Tony: [30:24](#) Sorry I joined late JC. I just want to ask you how confident are you that that virus is not in that building for, for what's gone on you, , your teammates, , your coach, they're basically self isolating outside of that building. So is, is that contact tracing in that infallible?
- JC Tretter: [30:44](#) Well, I think that's what we're figuring out. And obviously with the number of positive cases today that the process will be a little longer. So we've got our staff and the NFL staff, as well as our third-party contact rates with IQ via doing all that work now and figuring out where this virus is coming from. How is it being transmitted as well as deeming high-risk close contacts.
- JC Tretter: [31:05](#) And another, another thing to talk about with the high-risk close contacts, , the what we found when you, when you talk about close contacts, the CDC as the definition is that as the years gone on, we found that some people were still slipping through the cracks with that definition. So that's why we've come up with a high risk close contact, where instead of just looking at, , within six feet for 15 cumulative minutes, we really look at the type of interaction that, that went on and no type of interaction is the same, but we make better judgements by figuring out what exactly went on. How risky was that interaction? As we figure out how the virus was being transmitted and who likely could be at an increased risk for contracting the virus as we do that.



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JC Tretter:

[31:49](#)

So that process is still going on. So that's something we'll have to know in the next couple of days, or maybe even tonight by the time the process is finished.

Tony:

[31:57](#)

Okay. Thank you.

George Atallah:

[32:00](#)

Thanks, Tony. Jonathan Jones, back to you.

Johnathan Jones:

[32:05](#)

Thanks. Yeah, this is for D or JC. I know you guys obviously are not a coaches or union or personnel union, but obviously decisions on head coaches and GM's impact union members. And, , we've done a lot of calls with league officials, the first powered Alliance on diversity issues. So what is the union's position on minority hiring as this cycle is beginning this time of the year again?

DeMaurice Smith:

[32:28](#)

Well, , I've never shied away from that question. I'll do my best, not to break Twitter this afternoon, but , one thing the union is going to, and again, at the request of the national football league, they asked us a few weeks ago, a few months ago to give them ideas on increasing diversity in the national football league. And we'll be presenting something to Them right around the super bowl.

DeMaurice Smith:

[32:59](#)

I, I think that, that there are a whole lot of things that have been tried by the National Football League over the last several decades. Which frankly have not worked. I think that anything that increases transparency increases the pipeline of qualified candidates, removes barriers to entry into elevated jobs, whether they be offensive, defensive coordinators or ultimately into head coaching jobs.

DeMaurice Smith:

[33:43](#)

I think there are a range of things that the league should be considering, and, and those are going to be among some of the several recommendations that we make to the league. Just to be honest, when you look at other industries in the country, and many of those industries are business partners of the National Football League, you see policies, procedures, and individuals who are in place in those industries, in those fortune 50 companies that have significantly increased diversity and an excellence in their senior management.



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- DeMaurice Smith: [34:34](#) And a lot of the recommendations that we intend to make to the National Football League are things that we've seen in other industries. So I think that at times you have groups of people who have done a pretty good job of, of apologizing for the leagues activities in these areas. I, I do think that it's time to have a far more concrete plan with real attainable achievables and, and frankly, to have someone at the league's office whose job it is to make sure that you do have that level of transparency and that level of accountability. And that's something we haven't seen in the National Football League up till now.
- George Atallah: [35:35](#) Thanks for that question. Let's round out with Lindsay Jones. Cause we only got time for one more,
- Lindsay Jones: [35:45](#) Since Jonathan has stayed non COVID related question, it made me want to ask for De especially in potentially a JC as well. Do you guys expect the 17 game option to be triggered for next year? What are your discussions with the league been about that? And what sort of timeline do you, are you that and what sort of timeline are you aware of, when that might go down?
- DeMaurice Smith: [36:08](#) I'll take this when, I mean, look, the collective bargaining agreement was structured in a way where they purchased the right to go to 17 games. They have the right to go there. With respect to expectations, I don't really have any. I know that the way the league makes decisions about extra games, when to play them, are inextricably tied to their goals, and frankly, our goals about maximizing revenue. You all know that the network landscape has changed dramatically.
- DeMaurice Smith: [36:50](#) Television contracts, most of them are up next year. I'm sure the league, and this was no mystery, is looking at the advent of streaming and when, and to what extent to change the way or the balance in which network television is balanced against streaming. My guess, and that's the only one that I have right now, is that all of those things are being factored in to when and if they exercise their option for the 17th game.



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George Atallah:

[37:28](#)

Thanks Lindsay. In the interest of fairness, let's go to Mary Kay. Raphael, I know you're in the queue, but Mary Kay hasn't asked a question yet. So, we're going to take another Cleveland question is my guess here.

Mary Kay:

[37:43](#)

Yeah. Thank you. The question is for JC. JC, I'm just wondering with Joel testing positive, and Bill Callahan and Scott Peters, how concerned are you now that you will kind of either test positive or be a close contact. If you're close contact that you can play. But how worried are you about your own situation?

JC Tretter:

[38:08](#)

Yeah. I mean, I'm always concerned about getting sick, and it's something that I've tried to make every right decision this year, both at the facility and away from the facility to avoid that. I obviously wasn't a close contact to Bill or Scott, now that contact tracing is still going on for Joel. So concerned, definitely I do not want to get sick. That's how we built all the thing was, all these protocols was trying to do our best to keep everybody healthy throughout the entire season. So, that is definitely a priority of mine, of not getting sick. And now we all just figure out what happens with [inaudible 00:38:45] and what happens with [inaudible 00:02:45]. Whether it comes down to being a high-risk close contact or not. And then, I'll continue to test every day, and we'll just take it day by day as we get the results back.

George Atallah:

[39:00](#)

All right. Raphael, you want to bring us home with the last question?

Raphael:

[39:06](#)

Yes. Thank you. And this is for D. And I guess, JC could answer as well. We've been talking about scenarios and what happens and how we're going to protect this. With everything else has been going on with all of the other sports organizations, the NBA, MLB, they made a decision to have the bubble and all. But the NFL, you all went through the whole entire season and really didn't miss a bit. You had to make some changes, but you finished. Didn't miss a bit. Everything is going to schedule. How proud of you, as far as the way the NFL has handled this pandemic and you're still having the Super Bowl or the playoffs as scheduled?

DeMaurice Smith:

[39:54](#)

Great question. I'm proud of our NFLPA leadership, and proud of our membership. When we were looking at this post-CVA ratification, really the May, June, July



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moments, JC and I have had conversations about this season. And you've heard me say the line before. I probably use it too much, but we always kind of tell our stories backwards. We're certainly thrilled about where we are, finishing the regular season. We want the focus to remain on guys who are playing a great game at a really high level to get through the Super Bowl.

DeMaurice Smith: [40:42](#)

But as you look backwards in those early months, there was just a lot we didn't know about COVID-19. And we made a decision that we were going to structure our protocols around what we knew that we were going to modify and change those things if new information came up. We had a fight over daily testing. We had a fight over whether we were going to have pre-season games. We had fights over ramp ups to the start of training camp. We had tough conversations about players during bye weeks. And we had tough conversations, and JC handled most of those, thankfully. Tough conversations with our own membership about, how do we deal with a new set of rules that we have to comply with if we want to have a chance to play the Super Bowl?

DeMaurice Smith: [41:42](#)

So, I'm really proud of what we were able to put together, but mostly proud about the fact that I think most, everybody got their head around the fact that this was going to be really, really hard and the only way to even have a chance to play this game week to week was just to accept the fact that we were not going to question our scientists. We weren't going to question the data. We were going to put all the political stuff that you've seen play out in the rest of the country to the side. And we were going to do everything within our power to keep our players safe and to try to engage in this business. And I'm most proud of that.

George Atallah: [42:33](#)

And make no mistake about it. I mean, I'll close with this for everybody who's been on these calls for the last four or five, six weeks. I mean, the reason we're doing this is not to take any sort of victory lap. I mean, we still have 40 plus days to go till the Super Bowl comes in. And hopefully we can get there safely and on time. Obviously we're going to be closely following what happens this week. But the message for why we do these calls every week is to try to be transparent and direct about how decisions are made, why they're



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made, and what we're doing to keep everybody as safe as possible, and obviously trying to do a season on time.

- George Atallah: [43:18](#) So, this is not about victory lap. This is not about taking credit despite the fact that we can look at what we've done collectively and be proud of how we've gotten to this point. So, Terese, do you want to ask this question? I saw a hand pop up. You want to ask this question now? Or you want to hit us up offline? Because we got to get these guys out by three.
- Terese: [43:42](#) I can get you offline. No problem.
- George Atallah: [43:44](#) You sure?
- Terese: [43:46](#) Yeah. It's good.
- George Atallah: [43:47](#) All right. Thanks everybody again for joining. We hope that this week will go smoothly. JC, good luck obviously in Cleveland and-
- JC Tretter: [44:01](#) Welcome.