

Inside Look at the Houston Texans as they Start OTAs

Written by Nicholas Norman
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The Houston Texans started OTAs (Organized Team Activities) this week and had nearly full attendance at the voluntary practices.

Safety Ed Reed was not present because he is still in Colorado rehabbing from arthroscopic hip surgery to repair a torn labrum.

Brian Cushing was in attendance but did not participate in team drills. Cushing tore the ACL in his left knee on Oct. 8 in the game against the New York Jets. "My return is right around the corner, so that's a good feeling," Cushing said on Monday after the Texans' first practice of OTAs. "I can definitely tell you I'll be ready for the first game of the season, and I'm pretty sure I'll be ready for the first practice come training camp."

Matt Schaub and Andre Johnson are off to a healthy start this year as both missed OTAs last year because of injuries. "It's great to have everyone healthy," Johnson said after practice on Monday. "I couldn't tell you the last time I did OTAs, so I'm happy just to be back out here with my teammates and everything is feeling good." Johnson missed OTAs last offseason after having arthroscopic knee surgery. Schaub missed last year's OTAs while recovering from a season-ending 2011 Lisfranc injury.

Having Schaub and Johnson on the field is a definite plus for rookie wide receiver DeAndre Hopkins, the Texans' first-round pick out of Clemson. "We put him with the first group," Kubiak said. "That's tough duty, but what happens is he's not only getting coached by us; he's getting coached by Matt in the huddle, he's getting coached by Andre in the huddle, so that's the best thing for a young player like that: Put him in an environment where he's getting help from players as well as coaches. So it's been a step in the right direction."

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Andre Johnson had good remarks for the first round pick. "He did good. You could kind of tell that he's thinking a lot when he's playing, but that's part of being a rookie. He's picking up everything pretty well. He went and made some plays today and that's a good thing. I think day-by-day, he'll continue to get better and better."

With safety Ed Reed out, The Texans 2nd pick D.J. Swearinger is getting a chance for more reps. Swearinger is competing with Shiloh Keo and Eddie Pleasant. Coach Kubiak said Swearinger looked the part of a high draft pick against the rookies; so far so good in OTAs.

The Texans will have 10 practices in OTAs (May 20-21, 23 and 28-30 and June 3-6), followed by a mandatory mini-camp from June 11-13.