

WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER – LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

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DE Montez Sweat

On practicing as a team and what Head Coach Ron Rivera has emphasized thus far:

“It feels good. He talks every day about attitude, preparation and effort and just the team coming together as a family. It just felt great being back with my teammates, my brothers, old teammates and meeting the newcomers also.”

On his offseason:

“I just watched a lot of film over the offseason and kind of worked on what I felt I needed to work on – pass rushing, run stopping and just getting a little bit bigger for this 4-3 defense that we’re about to introduce. I feel pretty confident going into this season just learning from my mistakes from last year.”

On if getting sacks is his number one priority:

“The win is the most important thing as a team. Every defensive lineman loves to get sacks. That’s definitely a highlight of my play, so yeah. I definitely still want to go get sacks.”

On if the coaching staff wants him focusing on sacks:

“The main thing up front that they appreciate is just to attack.”

On what he learned last season that can help him this year:

“I learned a lot of things. How tackles are going to block me, how to study going into the game. Going in with speed is not really going to work most of the time, you have to get moves. You have to find your technique.”

On his role on the defensive line:

“Everybody has a role to play. I think if everybody does their job, the sky’s the limit for this group.”

On transitioning back to the 4-3 defense:

“I’m excited. [Defensive coordinator] Jack [Del Rio]’s really letting us get out there this year. But, yeah, I’m excited.”

On his conditioning this offseason:

“Just adding a couple more protein shakes after the workout. Just kind of watching your daily eating, making sure you’re getting the right carbs in and stuff like that. I feel like I’m a couple pounds bigger than I was last year. The important thing is keeping it throughout the year.”

On his rookie season:

“It definitely didn’t live up to my expectations or my standards. But, it was a learning year for me. I learned a lot and I just want to show what I learned coming up this next year.”

On his expectations for his second season:

“Basically get better numbers than I had last year, for one. Just hone in on my techniques and what I’m supposed to do as a 4-3 defensive end.”

On the new defensive coaching staff and Del Rio:

“Of course he has a lot of experience in the game as a former player and a guy who’s gone to the Super Bowl. You just want to trust those guys in teaching you those techniques and let it play out on the field.”

On which players are standing out in practice:

“Everybody looks good. I don’t think any rookie came back looking the same that they did last year. Just all the guys we added from [CB] Kendall [Fuller] to [DE] Chase [Young], I like what I see.”

On improving in the second half of last season:

“Throughout any season, through every other game you look at the tape from last week and you think about how you can get better week in and week out. So, I tried to do that last year throughout the whole season and I just hope to do that again this season. Just get better week in and week out. You can never really stay the same.”

On if one aspect of his game improved in the second half of last season:

“I feel like I developed more of a rush plan going into the games than I had earlier in the year, where I was just kind of coming in to win. I think more out through the season I was coming in with a rush plan and just seeing what that guy likes to do and what that guy doesn’t like to do. Also kind of some of those guys we played in the first half of the season we played again. So, I kind of knew some of their tendencies and stuff like that.”

On rotating pass rushers this season:

“I want to play every down if I can, but I want the best guy to do the best job on the field at all times. So if I need a blow, [DE Ryan] Kerrigan needs a blow, Chase needs a blow, [LB] Ryan [Anderson] needs a blow, I’m happy to give them a blow.”

On the differences between QB Dwayne Haskins from last season to now:

“The physical aspect is cool. He’s dropped some weight and stuff like that. But the growth I’ve seen from him is mental focus. He’s focusing more. He’s in the building a lot earlier, more than he used to be. I just see his mental growth more than anything.”

On the team’s reaction to the new helmets:

“Everybody looks the same. We’re all a team. I think the biggest thing that we take from it is soon we’re going to put shoulder pads on and soon we’re going to be banging heads. That’s the thing I kind of took from it.”

On COVID-19 protocols and using face shields in the future:

“It’s definitely different, getting up every day and getting the corona test and taking your temperature every day. But, when you want to play this game and you want to play this sport you go through those protocols you have to do to get on the field. As far as the shield, I didn’t have a shield on today. I wouldn’t shy away from it. Whatever we can do to stay the safest out there is what I’m going to do.”

On if he considered opting out of the season:

“It’s always an option that I think every player should think about for their family and for their well-being. But I think when it all comes down to it when you love the sport that you play and you love what you do, you’re going to do anything to get out there.”

On setting expectations to be a top-10 defense this season:

“That’s the goal. We want to be the best we can be. I think the biggest thing is we just want to take a step up from last year. Overnight we’re not going to be the No. 1 defense in the country. Each and every week we can take those steps to be better and better.”

On what he learned most about himself his rookie year:

“I think more studying my opponent. I think moving later on into the season I just started studying my opponent more, studying the team more, their tendencies, snap count, players that like to run the most out of this formation, just things of that sort.”

On if races in practices are competitive:

“We compete in everything we do, in the drill from the get-off to how many sacks we’re going to get. The competitive advantage keeps us all on the edge and I think it’s a good, contagious thing to have in the D-Line room because everybody’s going to keep getting better and better.”

On his increased weight:

“I probably started the year about 260, 258. Somewhere around there. I ended the year probably a little bit under 250. Right now I’m probably about 260, 265. I just, like I said, important to maintain the weight throughout the year.”

On what will change in his position this year:

“Generally we’re going to have my hand in the dirt more so than I was last year. Other than that, we’re just playing football. It’s still football.”