

WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

August 25, 2020

Head Coach Ron Rivera

On how DE Chase Young has progressed:

“Well, we’ve seen the pass rush ability obviously. That’s probably the biggest thing you always look for when you pick a defensive end that high is, you’re looking for a guy that generates pressure on the edges, which we’ve seen him do. Now, it’s putting the rest of his game in place in terms of understanding how to play the run, understanding how they shut down the edges, keep everything in front of him and inside of him. He’s done a great job showing he’s capable of that. It’s just unfortunate he missed a couple days because of the [hip flexor]. But you know, he’s had a good couple of days. We’ve been trying to gradually reintroduce him to practice and he seems to be handling that very well.”

On what the team has improved on and what they need to improve:

“I think the biggest thing is they’re learning how to practice at our tempo. They’re getting a good understanding about it. Those last three practices in pads I thought they handled very well. I thought their tempo really kind of showed it improved because there was some incidental contact that went on just because the guys are playing fast. What happens is when you play fast things happen, and they happen at a good pace. We saw that the last three days. Today was a little bit of a different day because we were in shells. I thought we were a little bit tired. We showed it, a little bit of mental fatigue. We made some mental mistakes out there. A couple times we were short people in the huddle. We should’ve had 11, we only had 10. I think that goes back to we were a little bit tired, a little mentally tired. We’ve got to get tough through those things and we’ve got to build that callousness to not be fatigued later in the game.”

On how he determines the speed of players’ return after injury:

“The biggest thing obviously is their health more so than anything else in where they are. Again, as we work with LB Reuben [Foster] and QB Alex [Smith] and RB Bryce [Love], it’s really about just seeing them take the next step. Sometimes a guy will plateau and be stuck there for a while. It’s hard to want to expose them to more. We just have to be smart about it when we move to make these decisions to the next phase of their reintroduction to 11-on-11 football.”

On C Keith Ismael practicing with the ones:

“Because one of the things we talked about when I first got here was position flex. He’s a center who does have the ability to play guard. If he makes our 53 [man roster], that means he’s got to be able to not just play center, but play guard. If he’s a game-day active he’s got to play more than one position. We’ve also got to see how he fits playing with the ones. It’s something we’ve done and I’ve done with [offensive line coach John] Matsko, I’ve done it with [tight ends coach Pete] Hoener on the offensive side, we’ve done it for a long time. That’s also how you develop young players, get them ready to play. They learn to play with the other guys around them so that if they have to play, they’re ready to go.”

On if stadiums with fans will have an advantage:

“Well, unless they’re going to have 80,000 people in the stands, I don’t know how much of an advantage it will create. My understanding is they’ll have some ambient noise that will be played. I can’t imagine people having that many fans and it will make a difference. It doesn’t matter how you look at it. We’re there to play football. If someone has 10,000, 15,000, 20,000 fans, OK good. But I don’t know how much of an impact they’ll have in

terms of noise and all that kind of stuff. You've got to play. That's just the way it is. My understanding is everything's based on the local government, what the state, county and city says. We'll do everything based on those rules."

On QB Dwyane Haskins Jr.'s demeanor:

"I just think more so than anything else is his desire to learn and win. He wants to win. He's a tough critic on himself, you see that. He's not only demonstrative, but he does know when there's a good play. That's one thing, I'll tell you that. He gets excited, he really does. It's fun to watch young guys grow. He's in a tough spot because he's a guy who came in in a situation last year that wasn't ideal and it wasn't of his making. He's had to kind of grow through that time. But he survived it and now he's in position to get himself ready to play this year. I think the thing that we all have to continue to do with him is continue to help him grow and develop. It's the same thing with [QB] Kyle [Allen]. I mean, these guys are young guys. Let's be honest about who they are. They're young football players. They have a good skillset, good arms but they have a lot to learn, just like our football team. I think if you want to say one position is really 'As they go, we go,' it could be our quarterback position this year more so than any other this year. As they go, we truly will go."

On if Haskins Jr. has shown more leadership:

"He's working on it. He's done some really good things and he's done a nice job. He really has. One of the things that we talk about is how to lead. Sometimes you have to step up front and you have to lead in front. Sometimes you step back and lead from behind. He and I have had conversations about it and he's responded very well. Same thing with Kyle. These are guys—again like I said, they're very young football players that have a lot to learn. We are a young football team that's got a lot to learn as well."

On S Kamren Curl:

"He's done a nice job. Honestly, we talk about it he's a lot taller than we thought. He's got good range, he's got good quickness and he plays with a good eye and discipline. He's learning. He's a rookie. Earlier in camp he made a couple errors. We were playing one of our coverages and he missed a landmark and because he missed his landmark, he opened things up. He created a big space and low and behold that's where the receiver got hit for a big play. He's learned from that. He's come out learned from that because you haven't seen him made the same mistake. He's hitting his landmark. He's doing what he's supposed to do. That's very good to see. The next thing is, as I said, he's playing with good vision. He's understanding the concepts of what we're trying to do. He's grown and you appreciate that. You appreciate that from young guys, especially rookies that—first of all, they won't repeat mistakes. They're willing to be coached and listen. That's been a huge plus. I said this before, I do like his skillset because he's played some nickel and some corner, which means he has cover skills. So, he's a guy who could potentially help us."

On CB Greg Stroman getting his hands on the ball:

"That's exactly what you've seen. You've seen some good things. He's competing out there as our few other guys. You've got [CB] Ryan Lewis who's gotten reps. A very smart, heads-y football player. He gives great effort. We've started to see a little bit more from [CB] Jimmy Moreland. There's something about Jimmy. He's got a knack about being around a football. It's been fun. Like I said earlier, a guy who I've been really impressed with so far has been the way [CB] Ronald Darby has handled himself and helped to work that group of guys. Him and [CB] Kendall [Fuller] have really stepped up. I think those two guys help a lot. We miss [CB] Fabian [Moreau] out there. Fabian's been doing a good job as well. I think, you know guys like him and [CB] Aaron Colvin, guys who have played a lot of football, those guys add some things to that room. It's a very competitive group. I'm pretty excited to see how it continues to shake out."

On the collision between WR Terry McLaurin and S Troy Apke:

“[It was a] bang-bang play. Just got to know how to practice when we’re in shells. We want to keep our heads out of the drill when we’re in shells. We want to make sure we’re working our techniques. It’s something that we’ve said to the defense. On plays like that, the ball gives the right of way to the offensive guy. We’ve got to just reiterate that. I’ll talk to Troy about that a little bit later. But, it’s hard to fault guys that are playing hard. It’s just a fact of knowing how to play when you’re in shells and being aware of who you’re playing against. We’d loved if Troy had been aware that was Terry coming up the seam. Again, give right of way to the offensive guy so we don’t have collisions like that, especially when we’re in helmets and shells. We had a couple of them today that were a little disconcerting and I pointed them out to the players: ‘Guys, we’ve just got to be aware that we’re in helmet and shells as opposed to pads.’”

On Hoener’s coaching style:

“Old school. Old school. You think about who he’s coached in the last 20 years, it starts with Vernon Davis, Delanie Walker, Gary Barnidge, Greg Olsen, Jeremy Shockey. He’s coached some of the really good players in this league. If you call all those guys and you ask Pete Hoener’s impact—Ben Hartsock’s another one—you ask those guys about his impact on them, I promise you they’ll all tell you that they really believe that he’s had a good impact on their careers. His coaching style is old school. He’s going to keep it honest. He’s going to keep it real. Like Coach Matsko, they’re old school guys. They’re boisterous, they’re animated, they’re direct, they’re honest. I think if you do that with players, they appreciate it so they know exactly where they stand. That’s important, especially in today’s football because a lot of guys are coming from programs where they’re used to being the top dog and then all of a sudden the reality’s being thrown at you, it’s a little different. Listening to [defensive coordinator] Jack [Del Rio], he got on the defense because of the goal-line situation and I told him: ‘I didn’t realize we were the show unit today.’ So, veteran coaches, old school guys. They know how to get the best out of guys and get them focused.”

On speaking with Haskins Jr. and RB J.D. McKissic after a pick-six in practice:

“Again, they were trying to figure out exactly what happened, the route and that stuff. I told Dwayne, ‘From my perspective you were late and that was a poorly-thrown ball. You made the right decision; you’ve just got to speed it up and you’ve got to throw it outside so the guy can make a play as the running back.’ That’s all I told him, and he appreciated it. Again, this is a guy that’s learning and growing. I appreciated the fact that they stayed after to try to figure out what happened and why it was wrong. I told them from my perspective. Now, they might take the tape on it and I’ll be wrong so then I’ll have to apologize, but I don’t think I was wrong on that.”

On seeing the team in challenging situations:

“They responded. We had a nice conversation after our first practice in pads four days ago. I let them know how I felt. They came out and I thought they practiced well the next day and the next day. So, I thought we had really two good practices. I thought the unit responded well. We’ve got some prideful guys, and hopefully I got to their pride a little bit, challenged them a little bit. I thought they bode up and came out and worked hard. They worked with good tempo and good pace, so that was pleasing. We’re asking for certain things from the offensive line. We’re mixing a lot of guys in to watch some of the younger guys respond and do some good things like [G] Wes Martin going from playing the guard position to playing the center position. I thought he had a good day today. We keep Ismael at the left guard position. I thought he had a good day. T Timon Parris is being challenged. [T Cornelius] Lucas is being challenged. We’ve got some guys that are being moved around and given opportunities. We’re trying to see how they respond. Defensively, we’re mixing all kinds of guys in everywhere from the linebacker to the defensive line position to the DBs. There’s a lot of guys responding. This is what you want. You want this kind of camp in my opinion. We’ll see how they are. We come back—they have a day off tomorrow—we come back Thursday, we’ll be at our stadium, there will be a little bit of energy, it’ll be an up-tempo practice, it’ll be shell practice with some scrimmage elements. Again, we’ve just got to be aware and know how to practice when we’re in shells.”

On the decision to release TE Cody Latimer:

“I’m not going to get into the specifics of it, but when Cody’s situation came up there were some things about it that we had to check into. The truth of the matter is he was put on the Commissioner’s Exempt List, too. So, we didn’t have to make a decision right away because we didn’t have to free up a spot as well. But, because of the situation and circumstances he’s in, he’s going to be tied up for a while so he will not get an opportunity to come to camp. With his legal things, he’s tied up with that so he won’t be able to come to camp and do anything. It was an opportunity for us to go ahead and move forward because of those circumstances.”

On tiring of playing against each other:

“I don’t think we’re there yet because of the way we went through ramp-up period. I said this the other day, I kind of like what happened this year as far as gradually working these guys into position where they were able to just cut it loose. We didn’t go from 0 to 60 in terms of you’re just kind of showing up at camp, you go through your physical, you’ve got a couple days and then bam you’re in pads. We had to work our way up to it. It was a matter of what amounted to 12 workouts before we went into the next phase, and then we did that for what felt like another week and then we were in pads. So, I kind of liked how that happened. I don’t think we’re there yet. I think probably sometime early next week players might start feeling like they need to be getting after somebody else. By that time, we’ll start getting ready for our upcoming opener. So, we’ll see how that does go next week when we get into Monday and Tuesday of next week.”