

WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

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QB Dwayne Haskins Jr.

On where his football IQ originated from:

“I’ve been playing football since I was 10 years old. I’m 23 now, so I’ve been playing for 13 years. From a young age, my father just took me to summer camps, training camps, three-day weekend camps where kids were playing all summer, watching Scooby Doo. I was in a three-day, staying overnight at a dorm on a college campus. For me, just the biggest thing is the love for the game at a young age, watching every NFL game I possibly could growing up and just wanting to learn more about the position and the intricacies of playing quarterback. I wanted to know about coverages at 10, 13 years old. I wanted to know about blitz pickups and coverages and things of that nature at a young age so I’d be prepared for whatever I get into when I get older.”

On Ohio State Head Coach Ryan Day’s helped his development:

“Ryan Day was a great coach. I just think the biggest thing with coaches in the collegiate and NFL level is they get you to understand conceptually what we’re doing as far as how we’re attacking the defense. When you call the play, when you hear the play call you know that we’re learning this for Cover 4, hit the post versus quarters. Or if you get man coverage, you have this hot answer versus one-fire where there’s no hole player. Or when, in some coverage and you know it’s Cover 2, you can learn to see opposite of the mic drop. So, just different things that you get to know just as soon as a play’s called: ‘This is my list of what I’m looking for on this play and I know my answers versus all of them.’ So, just getting an understanding of that.”

On how he responds to challenges:

“It’s kind of just being a man and just being raised in my family and my father. When your family, your friends, your teammates and your coaches need you the most—Coach [Urban] Meyer always preached to give it your very best in any situation whether it’s paying bills or playing football. When [Head Coach Ron] Rivera called me and challenged me and said some things that I needed to hear, that’s just something I needed the extra motivation for in this offseason to push myself to be that for him and for myself and for my teammates. Him having talked to Coach Meyer, Coach Meyer challenged me numerous times in school. I’ve risen to the occasion every time. It’s something that I take pride in in being accountable and knowing that when someone asks me to do something I’m going to do it the best I can and I’ll give it my all.”

On how playing chess helps him in football:

“I love chess. I’ve been playing chess for a long time now. I learned how to play professionally in college. Not playing professionally, but learning how to play professional—knowing how to castle, knowing how to do certain maneuvers in order to win in eight or 10 moves. Just finding ways to think ahead of the person you’re playing is just like playing quarterback. You don’t want to be in a position where you’re caught reacting. You kind of just want to be able to anticipate what’s going on and just knowing if I get this, like I said earlier I know I have this, this, this to retaliate to or go to without having much thought or effort about it. Just having it already trained in my head. So, chess is an alternative for me to be able to ignite my process and think about ways and things to do things faster. So that’s why I play chess.”

On how much more comfortable he feels this year:

“I knew I wasn’t going to play last year. It’s funny because I was talking to [offensive line coach] John [Matsko] about this after practice, just saying going into the first week of me starting last year versus Buffalo

compared to now, just the control of the offense, the energy that I feel I bring to practice is way better than it was last year. Just my demeanor overall, just me having more confidence in myself to go do what I need to do to be the leader of this football team and this offense and having a coach that believes in me is something that's propelled me to have even more confidence out there on this field. Just trying to find ways to make plays and win games and I feel like we're doing a great job figuring out ways to make those things happen. Hopefully it comes out on the field Sunday."

On his relationship with Head Coach Ron Rivera:

"I just feel like as a player when a coach wants the best out of you and you know when your coach wants to push you, and I get that feeling out of all my coaches here. Just having the ability to talk to Ron after a play whether it's a good play or a bad play on the field and knowing that Coach Rivera is going to tell me the good, the bad and the ugly and entrusting in his ability to make me better as a player with [quarterbacks coach Ken] Zampese and [offensive coordinator Scott] Turner. Just having those three guys, somebody who all three are standup guys and know the game that also want to teach me something that I appreciate very much. I want to make sure that I'm there every day giving my best and being susceptible to coaching. I know that they're just trying to do that to get me better and just being responsive to it all."

On if he plays chess with anyone on the team:

"No. It's more so just this offseason, a training thing with quarterbacks."

On how he would define success this year:

"Success—I feel like everybody wants to make that numerical. I don't think that's numerical for me. I think success for me is finding the good plays and the bad plays—whether that's making a touchdown, throwing a check down or throwing it out of bounds, not taking a sack. I think success for me is having a better touchdown to interception ratio than I did last year. Success for me is helping this team win more games than last year. Success for me is helping this team have a better overall demeanor on the field. Success for me is finding ways to lead and be a presence. That's something that I'm just looking forward to doing and being quite successful at it because I know that I can do it and my guys can do it. I'm looking forward to leading these men."

On if he thinks about last year's game against the Eagles:

"It doesn't matter at all. That game last year was just me getting my feet, I would say, damp. Not even wet. Just me figuring out how to play from the get-go—which I played like from the beginning of the season. Just not forcing the ball out on the field, knowing when on a certain four to take the 4-yard completion even if it's not passing chains. For me to be able to make plays with my feet, calling plays in and out of the huddle, just the whole game was just my first game when I felt confident out there. I'm trying to build on those last two games of the season where like it wasn't easy, but felt a lot more comfortable, way smoother. That's something I felt like I've been trying to improve on in training camp and I'm looking forward to play competitive sports this week and getting after that defense."

On the uncertainty of the offense and the mystery for teams:

"I think a lot of teams are, actually, just because there's no preseason, there's no spring camp or anything like that. We have guys that haven't even played for the Washington Football Team yet that are on our roster. There's no NFL film on them. Even trying to break down Philly, all the corners are gone. There are few players that you can just look into and those that are playing safety now. So, it's hard to analyze per say a scouting report. You just know the tendencies, so trying to figure out a way to not get caught up into what we did last year when we played them or Carolina did when they played them a couple years ago. So, just playing the right plays, playing the right schemes and just trusting what the install is and trusting your original reads to get you into the right spot."

On his conversations with Rivera:

“The conversations with Coach Rivera have just been an opportunity for me to learn, an opportunity for me to hear from someone who’s played in the NFL, been around great players, coached Cam Newton and knows what it looks like. Whenever I talk to Coach Rivera outside the field, it’s always just extra help. On the field, it’s always just trying to figure out ways to be great, trying to figure out ways to get the guys going, trying to figure out ways to attack the defense, trying to figure out how to learn from our mistakes. He does a great job of keeping me accountable. I appreciate him for it.”

On where he meets with Rivera:

“You know Coach, you can catch him anywhere—at a dinner, at a restaurant, on the field, off the field, walking down the hallway. He’s always the same. That’s one thing I can say about Coach Rivera. He’s always somebody that whenever you see him, he’s going to give you the same respect and give you an opportunity whether it’s for five seconds or 15 minutes. He’ll sit down with you and give you his undivided attention. So, I definitely appreciate that from Coach.”

On what the coaching staff is emphasizing:

“Just the things that we can control like attitude, preparation and effort. In our team meetings, we always start out with those three things and knowing that if you can control your attitude and how you respond, that’s going to ultimately give you a fighting chance in anything in life. And preparation, when you prepare and you do the things you’re supposed to do for your opponent, for yourself and for your body. Just knowing you give yourself an opportunity to succeed because you prepared yourself and you have the right attitude and effort. On that, you have done those two things previously and the only thing it takes is for you to do that and just give it your all. That’s something that we’re just pushing that area in every day, just knowing that we can control our attitude, we can control our preparation and we can control our effort. Ultimately, that will give us the best chance to win, so that’s what we want.”

On guarding against trying too hard in the offense:

“I don’t have any per say goals going into a game. Even when I was in school, I didn’t think I was going to throw for 50 touchdowns. It just happened. So, just knowing that if I go into the game, the plays will come to me when they’re supposed to be made and I throw the check downs, I throw the screens and throw the completions out of the air. When it’s time to throw the ball on the field and WR Terry [McLaurin] or whoever is there on the field, make the throw and make a pretty damn good throw. That’s what I look forward to doing all year long.”

On facing the Eagles defense without as much game tape:

“We played [CB Darius] Slay last year in Detroit, so we kind of have some of an idea of how he wants to play Terry. And then having a lot of the same defensive lineman like [DT] Fletcher Cox, [DE] Brandon Graham, [DE] Josh Sweat, the guy from Pittsburgh last year—I know they’re going to be disruptive up front. You know that they’ve got a good pass rusher. That’s something you know when you’re playing Philly and really trying to find those mismatches, whether it’s in the corner or the linebacker or the safety and getting Terry the opportunity to get open and find ways with Coach Turner to scheme up those opportunities for us. I think he’s going to do a great job with this offense.”

On what he has learned from offensive coordinator Scott Turner’s offense:

“I think when learning an NFL offense, it isn’t about memorization because then you get caught up in just memorizing the play or memorizing the concept. But, you have to be able to work the play and understand conceptually: ‘This is my first, second, third read on Cover 2; this is my first, second, third read on Cover 3; this is my first, second, third read on Cover 4; this is my first, second, third read versus Cover 2, Cover 3, one-fire, two-fire, to invert Philly, zero.’ Just a whole bunch of different things that can happen on one play. Where’s my

zero answer? And it happens with .05 seconds. Just knowing that when you're prepared for everything when it comes to a play so when Scott calls a play and I hear this is the look, I get the matchup I want. I can alert him. If this is Cover 2, I'm working this. If it's Cover 3, I'm working this. If it's Cover 4, I'm working this down here. Versus pressure, I have a hot answer here. Versus zero, I've got my back. There's just certain things that you have to be locked in on. Say you didn't think for instance you'd play Cover 3, you get Cover 3 and it's a pick-6. There's just certain things that you have to understand and be fully dialed in on going into a game and going into a play because every play, every situation matters. I feel like Scott's done a great job with me personally understanding: 'When I call this play Dwayne, I want you to alert this if it's not there on your check down. On this play, I want you to throw it here. For this look, if you don't get this look then play the normal progression how you would if it's training camp.' There are just certain things that—you have to have your offensive coordinator be your right-hand man essentially because if he's calling the play, I've got to execute the play. If we're not on the same page, we don't look good as an offense. So, I'm trying to understand what Scott wants. I think he's even had me figured out as far as what he wanted to call for me before he even got here. So, I appreciate him having a great game plan for me."

On when he got a sense for the offense:

"I always had a good feel for how to play a play just because I've been playing all my life. But I think it really started clicking for me maybe week two or week three of training camp just because I was able to see the defense and know before I even got the ball that it's going here, and knowing that if it's not there I can react secondary to my other read or my other progression or my other check down without it being 'Where's the running back?' without getting sacked. Or, if I play my rep out of something else and now I'm stuck on here, while this year if I'm throwing a pick I'm moving on. Certain things like that that you just get a better idea for when you play."

On QB Alex Smith making the roster:

"Alex is just a great guy. I just look at Alex and I just see somebody—not that I want to be like—but that I understand that Alex is what it's supposed to be like for a pro as far as how he handles his body, how he comes into a meeting room, how he's prepared with questions, how he's all ready for practice and what he's going to be working on in practice. He has a game plan already for what he needs for himself and that's something that any player can look at and be like: 'That's how a professional athlete works.' Just having him in my meeting room and being able to bounce questions off him, being able to ask him: 'When you played the Saints years ago in the playoff championship or whatever it was, it was third-and-three, what situation were you thinking of? The situation is fourth quarter, there's two minutes left in the game, what were you looking for? What were you looking at? How were you playing it?' Just having those ideas. Something happened the other day when we were doing the two-minute drill and he was saying: 'If the guy's on the line of scrimmage, you can get on the line of scrimmage and just as a quarterback, get him over and take him off. Move back to the shotgun.' I had never thought of that before. But for him to be able to just have all these—he played football for so long, he knows certain things that have helped him and he's been in a situation whereas me, I'm still playing and still learning. Now I have an idea of 'Alex handled it this way' if I get myself into a situation and just having those situations like that I feel like it's helped me a lot. It's helped other quarterbacks. I've seen it helped [Chiefs QB] Patrick Mahomes tremendously. He's a great commodity to have in the room."