

WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

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Offensive Coordinator Scott Turner

On showing off the running back group on Sunday:

“I think any time you reach this part of the year you’re excited to go play. We practiced against our guys for a while. We feel like we’ve prepared. We’ve still got a couple more days to really get ready. But, I think guys are just excited to go play. We have a group of men that love football, and they want to go out there and play.”

On what TE Marcus Baugh offers to the offense:

“He’s a guy that can threaten in the pass game, but he’s also a good blocker. So, we’ll use him in combination with our other tight ends. All three of those guys are going to play and they all have different strengths that we’ll try to show off.”

On how QB Dwayne Haskins Jr. has progressed:

“You know, just from the beginning even going back to Zoom meetings, talking about having the meetings, it was frustrating because we couldn’t get on the field. When we finally got to the field, he was calling things for the first time and he was doing a nice job with it. You could tell that he worked at it. But, just giving him the repetitions, different looks and concepts that we run, calling different plays and the language that we use over and over again. He’s just gotten more and more confident. The decision making, it’s sped up and it’s improved. I feel like he’s in a good place right now. He’s playing fast. Obviously, the next test is going and playing in an actual game. But, we’re excited for that and it’s time.”

On if skill players are becoming more versatile across the league:

“Yeah, I think a little bit. I think so. I think that there is a place for those guys that present some versatility. Anything that we can do to keep the defense off balance is good. I think we’ve got a few guys like that both in the running back room and at the receiver position. We’ll try to use them as much as we can.”

On facing the Eagles defense:

“It’s going to be interesting to see because you can read the reports and they say what they’re going to do. Apparently, they’ve moved some guys around. We’re preparing for a couple different scenarios because you’re not really sure until you get out there. Obviously, dealing with the big guys they’ve got up front—that’s the biggest challenge. We’ve got to block them. So, we’ve stressed that once we started our preparation on them. They’re a good team. They present a lot of different challenges. [Eagles defensive coordinator Jim] Schwartz does a great job of giving you different looks and not letting you zone in on what he’s doing. We talked to our guys about playing fast, bringing the fight to them and making them cover us, making them defend us. We’ll sort it out with what we see as far as our personnel and we’ll know early as soon as the game starts. But, we’ve prepared for a couple different things. We’ve got a lot of respect for them. We played them in Carolina in 2018. It was a crazy game. But, some of those guys are still there and they’ve got some new guys. Scheme-wise they’re pretty similar. I think we’re ready to go and we’ve got a good plan.”

On reading reports on the Eagles without preseason game tape:

“We do some of that, but mostly it’s just keeping up to date with the roster. Yeah, there are some articles that give you some projections. Really is just we’ve seen these guys play. We have a decent feel for their personnel,

like obviously they signed CB [Darius] Slay, he's going to play corner. But, like they talked about moving different guys around. Then you look at who's on their roster and you kind of put the puzzle pieces together."

On if there are negatives to having more running backs on roster:

"I don't know. I don't think so. I think we've got some good guys, so I think it's good for all of them to have an opportunity. There's been some teams that have done it. To me it's about overall production. Last year in Carolina we had a guy that is one of the most conditioned athletes I've ever been around in my life, so he didn't really need to leave the field and he performed at an extremely high level. That's a unique situation. We've got guys that present different skillsets and just different types of players. But, they all can kind of do a bunch of different things. You keep them fresh not only for a game but for the course of the whole season and keep those guys coming at the defense. I don't think that there are a lot of drawbacks as long as you feel good about the guys that are in the rotation, which we do."

On TE Logan Thomas's development as a former quarterback:

"He's a big, physical guy. He can run. There are some parts of the tight end position that are new to him, but he's been playing that for a few years now. It's actually funny, I've had some conversations with him about stuff that normally tight ends don't know and I forget sometimes and he'll say something to me and I'll say, 'Oh yeah, I had forgotten that.' On that part of that, he kind of fills the bigger picture, which is a plus. But, you know he's playing fast. He's gaining some confidence in the position. I think we have some guys like that that have had smaller roles that are now going to be thrust into bigger roles. Whenever that happens I think there's some excitement behind it just personally for them. They're hungry. Guys are hungry and he's one of them to go out there and show what he can do."

On how Thomas is blocking:

"He's a physical guy. I don't know if you looked at the clip of him on the down-the-field block last year. It was a highlight that went viral. It's not like anything that's a lack for effort, just technique. He's working to get better at it with—I've said this before—to me, the best tight ends coach in the league in Pete Hoener. He does a great job with those guys every day working on that. All three of them—but especially Logan—have really improved in that aspect."

On releasing RB Adrian Peterson and starting a new offense:

"It really wasn't about me. To me—and I've got a lot of respect for Adrian, I was with him for three years in Minnesota. He's a first-ballot Hall of Famer, all the things that Coach [Rivera] says. To me, it came down to the other running backs that we have. We have good players, but good young players. We didn't want to lose any of those guys. It's not that we wanted to lose Adrian—I mean, we wanted to [keep] him—but, tough decisions have to be made in this business. We look at what we have in that group and how those guys can play off each other, and that's really what drove the decision. I had a good talk with Adrian after it went down. It was tough. That's one of the toughest things in this business is that day. I think guys talk about that a lot. But, it's even tougher when it's a guy like that that you have a history with."

On if RB J.D. McKissic's abilities surprised him:

"Yeah, absolutely. All four of them—obviously, you talk about J.D. and RB Antonio [Gibson]—but RB Peyton [Barber], Peyton Barber's done an outstanding job throughout camp and he's got a big role in our offense. And then RB Bryce [Love]—Bryce as well. Bryce has done a great job. Obviously, you know the story about him coming off the injury, but you can tell every day [he's] getting better and better. He's going to be part of what we do also. All those guys—that's the thing. Don't read too much into it who's the starter. But, J.D. earned that right to be named the starter. He came in and I didn't know him at all. I just watched what he did on tape. But, he's a professional in every sense of the word. He's one of the smartest guys we have on our team. He's getting other guys lined up and he's got a funny sense of humor too. He's done a good job. I'm glad we got him."

On yesterday's practice without Head Coach Ron Rivera:

“Yeah, I think [defensive coordinator Jack] Del Rio did a great job of stepping in. Being a head coach previously, I think that helps him for those experiences. When Coach isn't here, he has the plans in place. What he asked us to do is just do what we always do. Fortunately for me, we've got a great offensive staff and I'm able to let those guys coach their position and just really oversee the whole offense. Coach does a great job every day of pushing the tempo, making sure guys practice hard. So, you do have to just make sure you're conscious of that, but we do that as well. Mainly it's just do your job, not try to overdo it but make sure you understand we've got to make sure this tempo is good with Coach not here. We've got a great group of players, too, that understand what's expected of them.”

On developing a game plan without preseason games:

“Yeah, I think you just gauge that from practice and just trust your gut. We've thrown a lot at those guys early and just to see what they can handle. We've practiced a little differently than what we have in the past because of the lack of preseason, trying to simulate more periods where it's not scripted where we're calling it. We did quite a bit of that. It's obviously not the same as the game, but a preseason game isn't really the same as a regular season game either. So, we simulate that and you just trust what you see on tape and just let these guys know what's expected of them. I feel good about what we've been able to see and evaluate and what we can expect going into the game Sunday.”

On QB Alex Smith's progress in the last week:

“When you watch all of his stuff as far as the rehab, you saw that he got his movement skills back. Then just like strength. As he's progressed, the more comfortable he's gotten playing quarterback. You see the strength of being able to push off that leg. And then just the confidence and the comfort of playing with it. Obviously, everyone knows the story of how tough of an injury that is to come back from. A lot of that is just developing that confidence again that you can play and not have it in the back of your mind. The more reps he's gotten I think the less he's thinking about it. I don't think he's thinking about it anymore at all to be honest.”

On where two-back sets put stress on defenses:

“I'm not sure exactly, but it's not so much two backs. It's just a matter of rotating them and them playing at different times. As far as the scouting report, I think the defense just has to understand what the strengths are of each different back or maybe the tendencies. But, we don't necessarily have any of those. Not right now at least. Hopefully we can be versatile.”

On evaluating individuals in the first game:

“When you're in the middle of the game, really what you're trying to do is do whatever you can to score points and get first downs. So, we'll stick to our plan initially and if we get different looks or something unexpected, we'll be ready to make some adjustments. Obviously, each position will be focused on their guys and how they're doing. In between series we'll be able to talk and potentially make adjustments. You've got to see all of it. It's always the balance between the scheme and the personnel. We'll evaluate it all and be ready to make those adjustments if there are issues, whether it's a personnel or a scheme issue as the game goes on. So, I think there's always going to be that balance between those two aspects of the game.”