

# WASHINGTON

## FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

November 6, 2020

### Assistant Offensive Line Coach Travelle Wharton

#### **On mixing players in and out on the offensive line:**

“Starting off in training camp, we do that in practice just because we don’t know how the season’s going to go. [Offensive line] Coach [John] Matsko does a great job of mixing guys around throughout training camp. We tell guys from the beginning they need to know every position. They do a great job of picking it up, going out there and practicing and working their crafts.”

#### **On T Saahdiq Charles:**

“It’s been unfortunate for Saahdiq with the injuries. For him, he’s a strong, young player. He comes in early, works extremely hard. The sky’s the limit. He put in the work, now he’s just got to get healthy and get on the field. I love his attitude and what he brings to the table because he’s a very versatile player.”

#### **On Head Coach Ron Rivera’s coaching style in Carolina and Washington:**

“It’s the same operation. I was in Carolina when he first got there. He hasn’t changed. He’s still the same. He’s going to be demanding. He’s going to expect a lot from his players and everybody in the building. He’s not going to waver, no matter what’s going on. You’re going to get it straight-forward. That’s the great part about Coach. He hasn’t changed in any way. He is who he is, and you’ve seen success because of who he is.”

#### **On setting an example as a black offensive line coach:**

“The biggest thing for myself is to do my job every day, come in, get better, understand what’s going on, being ready every part of the game plan and knowing what to do. The main thing is focusing on being available for the guys. I’m here to help the guys grow and be better football players. Along with that, my craft is going to continue to grow too. For me, it’s just stepping out and doing my job every day to the best of my ability. That’ll be its own representation.”

#### **On if him being an offensive line coach surprises people:**

“Not really. Being a former offensive lineman, they usually think I’m a D-line coach or offensive line coach. Nobody really, on the outside, ever thinks of that as an issue of me being an African American offensive line coach.”

#### **On his duties as an assistant coach:**

“You go through the details, you get ready for the game plans for the following week, film breakdown, looking at tendencies, having anything that Coach may need—running some film, cut ups. I played in this offense, I played for Coach Matsko, so I kind of know what he expects from those guys. I’m helping those guys along the way using the language that he would want, our terminology when we make calls and stuff that like. Helping those guys, meeting with the young guys and being accessible. That’s been the biggest thing for me is being accessible and being ready, knowing in-depth what we’re going to do game-plan wise and seeing what else we need. The list continues. It grows. There’s no: ‘I need to do this. I need to do this.’ It’s kind of on your own and building up from it. I spend a lot of time with the younger guys and working with them before and after practice. Whenever we have a chance to work with them, I’m always there.”

**On blocking for QB Kyle Allen:**

“Kyle, with this offense, he’s been in it for the last couple years. For our guys, it’s really getting used to his cadence. Nothing has really changed. For us, we’re going to block and do what we need to do. Whoever’s back there, we just need to protect him so he can do his job. That’s been a key part for us up front. We know that he’s going to deliver the ball, hand the ball, whatever he needs to do. The first thing we need to do is do our job individually and as a group to make sure he’s upright and doing his.”

**On the challenges of working with younger players:**

“It’s really been breaking down the play book because you didn’t have OTAs and those practice times where you can explain it. You can watch video on it, but you’ve still got to go out there and work your technique—hand placement, hat placement, your footwork, do certain drills and match those drills up with certain plays that are called and how defensive people attack you. A lot of that stuff guys missed over this pandemic, not being able to have OTAs. I thought the young guys did very well when we were able to come back during training camp to pick that stuff up. It was very impressive how they were able to pick it up and learn it. We have some very smart guys to be able to pick it up on the fly like that. It was very impressive. It’s always about reps and gaining experience through reps. Those guys are getting better and better.”

**On T Morgan Moses:**

“I didn’t know Morgan before I got here, but I respected his game after watching him. Just knowing him as a person and seeing how he battles—he doesn’t want to miss a snap. He’s competitive. How he goes out to practice, how he handles his business, how he handles the young guys—he’s a veteran. He commands respect in the room. I get excited for those guys to have the love for the game, and you can see it with him. He’s passionate. You can see his eyes on Sunday. You can see his eyes on Monday. All during the week, he’s ready to go. He’s preparing. He’s a smart player and he’s preparing. He’s really a veteran and you can tell his play has come from all the experience of games that he’s played. It’s affectionous in our room to see the way he works.”

**On transitioning from a player to a coach:**

“It’s the film study. As a player, you kind of focused on what you have to do and what the defense is trying to do versus certain plays. As a coach, you’ve got to find the plays and the deal that’s going to help you win to be successful. The study, the background. For myself, I’ve always wanted to be a coach. The opportunity came for me to be a coach, and I’m relishing in the moment of being a coach and working hard. That same mentality of going out and working and being prepared has helped during the course of this journey. Also not being afraid to ask questions and learn while we’re doing certain things and understanding what the defense is trying to do and why they’re trying to do it. For myself, it’s just been a great learning experience to continue to grow. I’ve been around some great coaches. This staff has been awesome. Any questions that I’ve had, and I’ve learned a lot working around Coach Matsko who’s been around for a very long time. He pulls me aside and shows me little nuances to look for during the course of a game or why a play would work or wouldn’t work and what the defense is doing. As a player, you’re kind of just stuck in what you’re supposed to do and running this play. As a coach on the other side, you’re trying to create the best opportunities for your guys to be successful.”

**On T Geron Christian Sr.:**

“I think he’s continuing to grow. I’m excited about his growth. The biggest thing is what his eyes see. Believe what you see because things happen so fast once you’re out there on game day. And, being prepared during the week, that way you’re not caught off guard on Sunday. If we prepare and watch enough film—we make sure these guys have enough film, ask them questions throughout the week, give them the concept throughout the play and what can hurt the play and understand that just having those conversations then going out and getting those reps, and in practice. That’s very important that we go out there and have quality reps in practice. Watching those guys and how they practice, it makes the game and transition from during the week to Sunday easier. It’s not easy, but it makes it a little bit better.

**On getting T Cornelius Lucas comfortable in his first start:**

“The biggest thing is to keep going over the offense. He’s a very smart player. Making sure he’s sure of what’s going on with concepts and the experience of getting those reps. Coming into training camp and getting those reps, from training camp to now he’s gotten so many reps of playing all over and doing everything we’ve asked him to do and getting his body right and mind right. But, for him, it’s being in that playbook and being prepared. He’s been preparing. He takes great notes. He was ready for the opportunity whenever it happened. Unfortunately, it happened to Geron, but for him to step in and do a great job is a testament to him of working hard and being patient.”

**On the changes at the left guard position:**

“The guys practice hard. It’s nothing new. Everybody plays different positions during the course of the week. You give a guy an opportunity to see what they can do. Guys will show you that they’re ready when the opportunity presents itself or if they’re not ready. [G] Wes Schweitzer got some minutes when [G] Brandon [Scherff] was out. He’s also played enough during our packages and during the substitutions. Those decisions happen. He’s playing well, and we’ve just got to keep moving on and getting better.”