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QB Alex Smith

On how versatility on offense changes the game plan week-by-week:

“Every week, the game plans are obviously tailored to the defense that we’re facing, the personnel, things like that. It can’t change week from week, and that’s kind of the chess match that the coaches obviously play as far as designing the game plan and us going out and executing it. I think the biggest thing is a little bit just getting the reps, seeing the visual back there. That’s obviously invaluable. There are limited reps during the week, even just for the starter. It’s nice to obviously take advantage of those to try to forecast what we’re expecting and obviously to get those looks.”

On having running backs that have played wide receiver:

“I think those guys are versatile. I think that makes them obviously valuable and allows us to do multiple things with them, certainly when we have them both on the field at the same time. That kind of changes week-to-week as well. Certainly, they’re both weapons for us and guys that we look to. They’re certainly valuable in that sense.”

On developing a game plan with offensive coordinator Scott Turner:

“Scott is so great, there’s always been kind of an open-door policy, especially as quarterbacks. He comes in and, certainly, we have the ability to voice our opinion. Whether or not things make it or not, that’s just week-to-week. It depends on how early we get ideas to him, things like that. That’s just how that goes everywhere. I think the big thing is, going back to it, putting the plan together of how we’re going to attack these guys, the matchups, all the intricacies of that and having a plan for all the scenarios as an offense, certainly as a quarterback, and for us to go out there and execute no matter what. As a quarterback, you’ve got to be ready for a lot. It’s nice to have the full week of work as far as putting that together.”

On preparing as a starting quarterback again:

“To get the reps, like I said, the biggest thing a lot of times is two things—first, just the visual of seeing the defensive looks out there, that’s big. I think getting comfortable with what you’re seeing, getting comfortable with the numbers, who goes where, all those things, the looks that a specific defense might do. They’re unique. Then the throws, the reps full speed with the guys, anticipating throws, things like that. Those are obviously the two big takeaways certainly from being a starter and getting the reps throughout the week.”

On why he feels he can be the starter:

“Obviously, I get paid to play quarterback. I’m going to do whatever’s asked of me. I feel like I’m ready to roll. I’m confident in that, and obviously that’s the coach’s decision to make and the coaches’ decisions to make. We’re players. We go out and play. This is a team sport. Obviously, things change. Certainly, injuries and the way that they’ve gone, things like that. I got the opportunity this week, and I’m going to make the most of it. That’s my plan. I’m not worried about anything else. I’m not worried about opinions here or there. I’m doing what I can to go out there and try to win a football game.”

On why he threw more on Sunday:

“It’s probably multiple things in the way that, obviously lopsided games, we’re going to get a little—you can’t get one-dimensional. I also think a little bit that was obviously a stout front we played. Even when I was in early and we were attempting to run the ball, they were pretty good up front. Scheme has a lot to do with that as well. Certainly, what we’re doing on offense as well as playmakers. The guys out there, we’re all a unit. It takes all of us to go out there and have any success. All those things I think play into that.”

On pre-snap communication on the field and with Turner through the headset:

“I think when it comes to situational football, that’s probably when most of the talking is going on, on the sidelines and on the headset with Scott. Obviously, you’re preparing for all of those situations. You’re preparing for them all week, but obviously on game day they come up all the time. You don’t know when they’re going to come up, and you’ve got to be ready for them. Certainly, reminders and talking through that stuff does help. As far as in the huddle and how much I talk, that changes play-to-play, again going into situational football as well as all week. I think there are things when we go through them all week, walk through, practice reps—you’re constantly banking points of emphasis, even in the meeting rooms, things like that. Certainly, some places have more points of emphasis, others don’t. I think sometimes there are plays where you come in with more reminders for guys. Other plays are, obviously, core plays for us that we call and can go. All of the above there.”

On what stood out watching the Giants game tape:

“It was great to be able to watch myself again, extended reps, full-speed, a little better conditions than my first outing. It was nice. I think a lot of things, again, having moved beyond the full-contact issue I just went out there and played and focused on playing football and executing. I wasn’t thinking about anything else, so that was nice in that sense to really kind of progress beyond that. For me, to get to be put in different scenarios, having to move around in the pocket, having to escape a little bit, those were all things I’ve worked hard on. It was nice to see some of that translate onto the field. It was great. There was a lot of good tape to watch from all of us as a unit. Certainly though, at the end you’re left with a pretty bitter taste in your mouth the way it ended. You learn from it and move on. That’s the name of the game in the NFL. You quickly flush it. Starting Monday, you’re basically onto Detroit and getting ready. I think that’s important in this league, good or bad, being able to flush the week prior and move forward.”

On if he imagined he would be a starter again:

“I guess I didn’t quite get that far. For me, it was obviously the challenge of going and getting out on the field. I think it has progressed into that. Here, it has become more realistic and closer. It obviously has been a long time, even just driving into work with that feeling knowing that the ball’s in your hands and preparing all week like that. It has been a while since I’ve had that feeling, almost two years to the week. It’s different. It’s a different deal. I’ve said this a bunch, but certainly one of the reasons why I chased that back, that feeling of being on the line, towing the line, putting yourself out there. With this game and how important every week is, it’s an amazing feeling. I love the challenge.”

On his mindset as a starter:

“It’s more intense. Certainly, you’ve got to make the most of the limited time you have. You have to be efficient in every single day. There are different objectives, and today making the most of Wednesday and what I need to get done.”

On the differences playing this year than when he last played:

“Absolutely it is a very different place, certainly. But at the same time, there’s still a lot the same. That feeling I was just talking about is very much the same, getting ready to go out there and trying to find a way to win. The feeling all week of preparing for that challenge, certainly us going on the road this week. Yes and no. But,

obviously a lot has happened since two years ago. Not just for myself, but certainly for all of us and the conditions that we're in right now."

On returning to press conferences:

"This Zoom format is, I'm not going to lie, much easier than the face-to-face deal. That's part of it. But, this is definitely an easier format and a little more organized. It's definitely easier than being able to meet you guys [laughs]."

On his approach to preparation:

"I think you're always trying to get better, certainly in how I prepare to play. I've learned a lot from guys I played with throughout the years. Everybody kind of has a different style. You keep things that work for you and help you and obviously things that don't, you don't. I think it took me a long time to figure out my routine. You still always try to perfect it and get better at it. There are a lot of times we talk about things as far as preparing, but for me it's a little bit more about going about my business. This will be the first time preparing all week as a starter for the guys in the week. It's not always as much about talking about it as it is doing it."