

WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

December 10, 2020

Offensive Coordinator Scott Turner

On the key to getting production from the left tackle position:

“That is, obviously, a very important position in this league. It’s a highly skilled position. You’ve got to really block the best players in the league consistently every week. We’ve had three different guys play over there. I think all of them have done well. I think they’ve all battled obviously with [T] Geron [Christian Sr.] starting, [T] Cornelius Lucas] ‘Big Luke’ came in. Obviously [T] Morgan [Moses] filled in for some time, for one game there was some change and then Luke came back. You’ve got to be an athlete. You’ve got to be big, powerful. There’s a lot of things that go in there. The one thing is you’ve got to compete. You’ve got to have a short memory because you’re never going to be perfect. But you’ve got to fight and battle, and that’s what the guys who have played over there have done for us.”

On evaluating left tackle through uncertainty:

“Yeah, you’re always worried to a certain extent. But what we’ve got is what we’ve got. You take the players that you have, you work with them, you coach them, you try to develop them as much as you can and then try to do the things that they do well and make it work. I try not to worry about or think about what we don’t have. I focus on the players that we have and, at some point, someone’s going to play left tackle and that was Geron to start the season. As it’s gone on, we’ve had to make adjustments. To me, it’s just evaluating players that you have on the roster and making the puzzle fit.”

On how the offense will change if RB Antonio Gibson cannot play:

“It won’t change much. [RB] Peyton [Barber]’s been a big part of this team. Obviously, you’ve seen the role that he’s played in. He can do more than that. We’ll need him more. We’ll need [RB] J.D. [McKissic]. J.D. has given us a lot, but we’ll need him to give us some more. We’ll work a combination of those guys. We’ll have another guy ready at the end of the week. We’ll see as the week goes on who’s that going to be just in case, or maybe we’ll have something for them. We just need guys to step up. It’s no different from any other position when you have injuries. We have good backs. I laugh when I talk about J.D., but Peyton’s a guy that I believe in. He knows that. The players and the other coaches in this locker room, they believe in him. He’s stepped up and he did some good things for us against a very good defense on Monday night. I expect more of the same going forward.”

On WR Cam Sims’s consistency:

“Cam’s been consistent. There’s a lot more to the game than just catches or even targets. Cam, he’s been playing our Z receiver. [WR] Terry [McLaurin]—I think Terry’s in the top-5 or top-10 as far as the most targeted guys in the league. He’s got a good catch percentage. Obviously, not as much production last week but I think he’s still, what, eighth in the league in receiving? He’s getting a big share. When we need the other guys to step up, he’s got to be there for us. That’s what Cam’s done. Cam’s made the most of his opportunities. He’s continuing to get better week in and week out. When his number’s called, he answers the bell. You just never know how the game’s going to play out. The passing game differs so much from the run game. You’re going to go where the ball’s supposed to go. The quarterbacks have done a great job. [QB] Alex [Smith] has done a great job as far as spreading the ball around. It’s not like he just drops back and says: ‘Hey, I’m throwing it to this guy.’ So, sometimes the ball goes different places and gets spread out. That’s when you know you’re playing

good on offense, when you're not really sure. You have your primary receivers and all of that, but you get spaced out within your personnel."

On if throwing the ball on third down before half was to inspire confidence:

"There was still a decent amount of time left. It was like 2:10, so if you run the ball you're going to get down there—you have the two-minute warning anyway and then we had one timeout. You got down to 2:10, after the field goal I think it was like 2:10 when we kicked off. We were trying to get the first down. If you get a first down there, you're taking the clock down to almost nothing before you kick the field goal that takes the lead. Or potentially at that point, you get the first down that might help you score a touchdown. We wanted to throw. We threw it on second down and they rallied to the screen pretty quickly, but at least they had to use their second timeout at that point. We're going to be aggressive. We're going to be aggressive offensively. I talked about that with [Head] Coach [Ron] Rivera. We're going to also be smart and safe with it. I think that was an instance where you're trying to get the first down. They pressured us, came after us. Alex got the ball out of his hand, and obviously it was incomplete, but really in the long run they would've called the timeout. It would've gotten to the two-minute warning and it wouldn't have made much of a difference. We got to the two-minute warning after they threw the interception, so it would've made a five-second difference based on the math in that situation."

On practice squad RB Javon Leake:

"He's a guy that hasn't been here for a while, but has some speed. He can do some different things. He's versatile out of the backfield, a little bit of a dynamic guy. We'll see. We'll see if he gets pulled up. We're still kind of evaluating the situation. He definitely has the skillset that fits in what we do."

On players getting their opportunities against Pittsburgh:

"I think this is a team game. Offensively, obviously the defense what they did in that game allowed us to stay in it to where we were able to move the ball, especially in the second half when we were able to come back. Like I said, I believe in the guys on our team. These guys work extremely hard for these opportunities. I think we'd be short changing our guys if we didn't give them a chance to make plays when you get in those situations. Obviously, it's unfortunate with Antonio getting hurt. I think after that game against Dallas he was kind of building on something. Then Terry, he got a lot of attention in that game. There were a couple plays where we almost got him on some stuff, and then we just didn't quite get it done. Then some guys stepped up because that's what you do when you're becoming a good team. We're starting to do some things well. It's because of—hey, if one guy is having a slower night or they're doing something to take something away, other guys step up. Between—you talk about Logan and Cam and J.D., I think they had 200, 300 yards receiving between the three of them. So, that's a lot of production for three guys. Maybe even a little more than that. It's good to see. It's great to see when guys that don't maybe normally do that have good nights. You're happy for those guys, and obviously you're happy for your team because it helped us win the game."

On if Thomas's production has surprised him:

"I don't know if surprised would be the right thing to say. When you looked at him and the small body of work he had coming into the season, you saw it all there. You saw the size, you saw the speed, you saw the physicality. The first part of it, he didn't have a big opportunity to show a lot of it. Then the second part of it was, yeah, there wasn't quite that consistency because he was new to the position. The more he's played, the better he's gotten. I thought he was capable of doing this, maybe not to this extent. But it's good. The one thing as far as what we're expanding is not necessarily that so far, but the quarterbacks pressing a little more. He might appear to be covered, but they're going to give him a chance on a 50-50 ball because they have faith that he's going to come down with it. There are maybe some routes that we didn't ask him to do earlier that we think he can do because of his speed or the separation he's shown on some other things. I do think he's been able to

grow. We asked him to do some stuff early in the year that maybe we didn't quite make the play on. Maybe it was Logan's fault or maybe it wasn't. He's definitely growing and expanding his role."

On G Brandon Scherff:

"Brandon's toughness, his consistency and then just the resiliency that he shows dealing with that injury early in the year, being able to come back. He got hurt a little bit in this past game and then was able to come back. He's just been a steady rock. Him and Morgan playing on that right side together—obviously, Morgan moved over to left tackle for the Dallas game. Those guys working together, playing together, and then obviously [C] Chase [Roullier] at center. Those are the leaders up front for us. They've done a great job, Brandon in particular. He brings it every day. He's the same guy, the toughness the blue-collar mentality. It helps, energizes and drives our team."

On what the offense can do with Scherff on the field:

"He's a guy that we trust is going to get his block done. If we can ask a little bit more of him than someone else and give a little help to the other side, that's definitely something that we do. That's definitely a factor we know, I know, when he's out there."

On Thomas's effort on tape:

"There's a couple clips you can look at, actually I think they're on YouTube, of him flying down the field to get blocks down the field. He hit a guy hard on one of them running down the field. You can just see that that's the type of guy he is. That's the intensity that he plays with. That was something that was exciting. That's just an example that pops up in my head, but yeah, just the level of toughness and the effort that he plays with. You worry about a guy converting from quarterback to tight end because of the blocking. That part of it, there's some technique stuff that had to be cleaned up with the blocking. But the toughness and effort, we knew that was going to be there. That was one of the reasons we felt we could get him and develop him into what he's becoming as a player."

On calling trick plays:

"We definitely game plan some stuff in. we have stuff that we work on over the course of the week. We kind of have reserve stuff ready, and then there will be some specific plays that we'll practice that we feel more comfortable with in a certain week. You try to time it out to: 'Hey, this is the situation that I want to call this one in.' It's not like on a whim by any means. There are plays and they're schematically based on based on certain looks that you'll see on film. So, it's not just: 'Hey, let's call it and see if it works or not.' You try to time it out with a time and place. Like I said, obviously the ones against Dallas worked and everything was great. We tried the one that was somewhat a trick play on fourth-and-1 and they stopped it. That's the kind of stuff you live with those. They made a hell of a play. I thought we could execute a little better. But, you call those types of plays and if they don't work, onto the next on just like any call you play."