



WASHINGTON REDSKINS

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER AT REDSKINS PARK — LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA.

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Head Coach Ron Rivera

Opening Statement:

“It was about 30 days ago that this team got me unemployed, so just so you know we’re good now. It is an honor to serve as a coach in the NFL. It really truly is. There are only 32 of us at any given time, and these jobs are scarce. This one, the Washington Redskins, this one’s special. This is one of the almost original teams. Started in 1932, there’s a lot of history behind this football team. In order for us to get back to where we want to be, we got to study that history, embrace that history and prepared to repeat that history. Because if we’re not, we’re doomed to repeat the most recent history and we’re not going to do that guys. We really aren’t. Everything we do is going to be about winning, okay? We’re going to do things the right way, and that’s the only way we’re going to do them. Because if it doesn’t help us, we’re not doing it. That’s just as simple as it gets.

So why did I choose the Redskins? Probably the question I know a lot of you guys are wondering right now with everything that’s out there. Well I can tell you right now, it’s not about the money. If I wanted the money, I’d still be out there trying to pit a couple teams against each other. I took this job for one simple reason, one simple reason, because [Owner] Dan Snyder came to me with a very interesting perspective. For weeks he’s explored the reasons why some teams win and some teams don’t. He told me the common factor in that transitional success of teams like the Patriots, the Seahawks and the Chiefs and some of the others ones was the decision to take it and make it coach-centered approach. Not an owner-centered approach, or a team president or a general manager but coach-centered approach. I told Mr. Snyder that I appreciated the fact that he believed the head coach matters. I told him I would be honored but under one condition, it had to be a player-centered culture, a player-centered culture, something I truly do believe in. My responsibility is to get the most out of the players. To work with them, teach them, mentor them. If I have to do it one by one, I most certainly will do it. I’ve done it in the past and I’ll do it again. I’ll do what I can to help these young men become not just the players we want, but the men in the community we need. These are the guys that can help change things. Not just on the football field, but in this world. I really do believe that. I was fortunate enough to have that in Carolina and I hope, and I’m going to work to have it here in Washington.

Things will begin and end with one simple principle, discipline. I come from a military family where discipline isn’t taught, it’s lived. It’s expected from day one. I have a philosophy that every player, every coach, everyone who works for this organization, they’ll know it day one. You’re not going to play for this team, you’re not going to work for this team, if you don’t have the discipline to give us everything you have. No exceptions, no excuses. It’s that simple, guys. We have to hold each other accountable, and that’s something we most certainly will do. We’ll expect the most from each other. Whether I was in Chicago or Carolina, we were at our very best when the players knew that the coaches had their backs. And this is the thing I’m going to ask from the players, do it the way we teach you, do it the way we ask. You do it that way, the success will be yours, okay? You do it that way, the success will be yours. If you don’t, the success is going to be yours but it’s not going to be right. Why? Because if you fail, it’s on you. Do it our way, do it the right way, and if we fail, it’s on me. Okay? It’ll be on me, the head coach. It’s that simple, and I truly believe that. If I ask of you and it doesn’t work, I’m to blame. I told Mr. Snyder, I wanted to assemble a coaching staff that was truly dedicated to the players, and teachers. And teachers, okay? I don’t have to have a great big name. What I have to have is great teachers. We

want to teach these guys how to play football to the best of their abilities, to the best of our abilities and also to be good quality young men off the field. I want players who are tough, hungry, who will do whatever it takes to play Redskin football in January and hopefully into February. I told him I wanted to work hand-in-hand with the head of player personnel to spot potential in others that even I didn't see and others didn't see. That's going to be important because it has to be a collaboration. No matter who it is, no matter who's working with us, it has to be a collaboration. This is not a one man show. I don't have all the answers. I'm going to rely on people around me. I'm going to rely on the coaches and the personnel that we put in place to help put this football team together. I told him I didn't want to go through a five-year rebuilding process because quite honestly, I don't have the patience and from what I read, neither does he. We understand that. I told him this team has some raw talent. It really truly does. It's got some quality veteran leadership that can help this team become contenders. At the end of the day, guys, this is what the team's going to be made of. It's going to be made of good, quality, young football players and solid veteran leadership to help us take this football team to the next level. So you know what he said? He said, 'Coach, I want this to be the last job you ever have in the NFL. I want you to go from coaching the Redskins, to collecting social security.' I turn 58 next week, so I'm getting close. But that sounded pretty good to me. You know as they say, 'Hail to the Redskins.' Let's roll, man. Let's go."

On how he will fill out the coaching staff:

"We're in the interview process right now. We've got several names that we've reached out to. We've gotten permission to bring some of these guys in, and we'll be going through that process now. We're in the beginning of it and it's going to take a little bit of time."

On if building out the front office has a similar timeline:

"With those guys, it's really about meeting them, getting to know them as we start going forward. Like I said, everything we do is going to be able a collaborative effort. There's no one pure authority on this other than the owner. The key is we're going to collaborate. We're going to talk, we're going to work together, we're going to come to decisions that are best for this organization. Not best for an individual, but best for the organization."

On what he learned from his time in Carolina that he will implement in Washington:

"More so than anything else is, it's about the players. If you've got players that are right, players that are where they need to be, players doing the things that they can do, you give yourself a chance to win. One thing I truly believe is we, as coaches, have got to give these guys the opportunity and put them in position to have success. If we don't do that, we're failing the players. It all falls back on us. Like I said earlier to the guys, you do it the way we ask and we have success, it's your success. If we fail, it's on me, but please don't do it your own way."

On why the culture approach is important to him:

"I think it's because you don't want people going back and forth. When we step into the room or step out of a room, everybody has to be on the same page. When [Defensive Coordinator] Jack [Del Rio] puts the defense together, we can't have one coach telling somebody something else as opposed to what Jack wants. That's just the way it's going to be. We want everybody focusing on what their job is. I've got a little bit of a saying these guys are going to get tired of saying, but it's true. 'We need 11 guys doing one thing at a time, not one guy trying to do all 11. Do your job, men, and we'll have success. I promise you that.'"

On how he feels the team's current personnel fits with a 4-3 defense:

"I think it fits very well, I really do. You look at the defensive line and we've got guys that we believe can play the one-and-three technique already. We also believe we have some guys that play the outside linebacker position that are going to transition to playing the defensive end spots for us – specifically the six, the nine and the five [techniques]. So, we feel real good about those guys. I think the linebacking core, I think it's a pretty solid group of guys. They run well, they play physical. What we want to do is playing downhill through their gap. We're going to play the run on our way to the quarterback."

On what he feels QB Dwayne Haskins Jr. can become:

“I think he can become a franchise style quarterback. It’s a process, though. I’m not going to say it’s going to happen overnight. Several years ago, we drafted as the No. 1 pick and we had a plan. What we’re trying to do right now is to develop that plan for his development as we go forward. I also think there’s a couple good veteran quarterbacks that [will] get some opportunities to play as well. We won’t know until we get ready to open up in September, so until then, everything is just a process. It’s a working process. We can’t get ahead of it, we’ve got to stay to the plan and make sure we’re preparing ourselves properly to win football games.”

On why he didn’t take time off after parting ways with Carolina:

“Well, first I got four weeks off, I’m ready to go back to work. I really am. I got tired of getting up and having to do dishes so. I’m serious too, you guys think I’m kidding. Truth of the matter is, people asked me when I first got let go, I told everybody I wanted to get back into football. They asked me, ‘What is it that you’re going to be looking for?’ I simply said, ‘Fit.’ The timeline is, right after Friday the week after I was let go, Mr. Snyder reached out to my agent, so the two of them talked for a couple of days then I got a phone call from Mr. Snyder on Monday the following week and we started talking. We talked the first day for about 40 minutes and the second day for about 20 then I went and I got a bunch of tape. I’ve seen about six games these guys played, including the one when I was at Carolina that they beat us in, and I had an opportunity to take a real good look at this team and I’ve got write ups on every player that played in those six games and that’s part of the reason why I chose this team because I did like what I saw. I watched the last four on television as well and got an opportunity to see these guys fight to the end. The Dallas game got a little bit out of hand near the end and that’s understandable, to a degree. For the most part, the way they play, the way they fought, some of these young guys didn’t know any better. They just knew they showed up and they played hard. That was impressive to me. Then the other thing was, in talking to Mr. Snyder, the thing that I got that we talked about his vision. His vision of getting back to the tradition of Washington Redskins football and I was really impressed about that. We talked about the history of it. We talked about the things that have happened in the past that made this such a great franchise that had fans that were rabid fans. I remember from when I played, we used to go to the stadium early and there’d be all those folks tailgating and letting us know how much they appreciated us when walking into the stadium and it was a tough place to play and that’s what we want to bring back. That’s what he wants to bring back and I was really impressed by his vision. Then he shared with his plan and he shared with me the ideas he had studied and understood. Like I said, it’s more of a coach-centered approach in terms of decision making. Again, as I’ve said, I’m not omnipotent. At the end of the day, I’ve got a group of men that I’m going to collaborate with. All of our personnel people are very vital to our success because of the things they’ve done in the last three drafts. That was one of the things also Mr. Snyder asked me to do is study those three drafts and look at the guys that are on the roster and I did that. I looked at the veteran guys that were there that were leading this team that were giving these guys some hope, some chances, being the mentors to these guys and showing them how things are supposed to be done and I really liked what I saw. I began to feel the fit and the more we talked about the plan and the process that he was talking about, the more excited. This didn’t happen overnight. This decision was not made on the 30th. This decision was made over a period of time of getting together with him, sitting down, spending probably 35 hours in the freezer – he has a room at his place that’s just frigid, I think he did it on purpose to make sure I stayed awake – but went for 35 hours. We seriously did. We went through every aspect of the organization. That’s what I was really impressed with. He was willing to sit there and go through it piece-by-piece and we truly did. I spent a lot of time getting to know the organization, getting to know the structure of what he was looking for. To me, it was hearing his vision, understanding his plan and learning the process of what he was trying to accomplish and then I talked about my plan of what I wanted to do, and it really seemed to fit his very well. The four weeks I was off, I was really only off for about five days and then a couple other days that I snuck off to the golf course. That was it. Other than that, I was trying just looking at these guys trying to prepare going forward.”

On what he wants to do differently during this coaching tenure:

“Win the Super Bowl and I mean it, too. The only reason you become a head coach in this league, in my opinion, is to win. That’s it, that’s the bottom line. If you do it for any other reason, you’re wrong. That’s what I want to do and I really do. I’m not just saying it because I’m at a press conference, I’m saying it because I truly believe it. I’ve been very fortunate football has been a big part of my life – this is going to be my 34th year in the league, so I’ve seen a lot, I’ve done a lot and the one thing I’ve had was I’ve had the success to be on a Super Bowl championship team. I would love to give these guys that opportunity, so they know what it feels like, what the experience is when you’re standing on the podium. That’s what we want to work towards. We want to work towards that going forward and I want our fans to know that’s what we’re going to work for. I understand they’re disgruntled, I understand they’re upset, and they deserve to be. We haven’t won, so we’ve got to start winning. But I tell you, if you give us the opportunity and get behind us, we’re going to give you our best effort. That’s what we’re going to do as a football team.”

On why Defensive Coordinator Jack Del Rio was so appealing:

“Because I know who [Defensive Coordinator] Jack [Del Rio] is. I know who he is as a player. We competed against each other collegiately and professionally, and I’ve got tremendous respect for who he’s been. He’s been a very successful coach in this league, he’s had opportunities in this league, and he’s succeeded in this league. The thing about Jack that I really, truly will appreciate having him on the staff is – one of the things I tell young coaches is the one thing you’ve got to have on your staff is a guy that’s been there. I have a saying, don’t draw me a map unless you’ve been there. Well, Jack’s been there. And Jack and I had this conversation earlier today and I told Jack, ‘If you see something wrong, you see something that we need to think about, please tell me because that’s the only way I’m going to know.’ I’ve said the same thing to the players that I’ve met. I’ve said to them a couple times that you need to tell me. If you see it, you’ve got to tell me because if you don’t, it’s as if you did it yourself.”

On what it will take for the team to become a consistent contender in the NFL:

“Well, first of all we’ve got to make sure we get the right kind of players. Then, we as coaches got to make sure we teach them and coach them up to the best of our abilities. Then, we’ve got to stay true to it. We’ve got to stay true to what I believe is a little bit of a philosophy and that is the best team has a great sense of family, the best family has great culture and within that culture there’s tremendous character, and that’s what we’ve got to build. We’ve got to build that. We’ve got to build character, we’ve got to build culture, we’ve got to build team, we’ve got to build family. If we can do that, we can win. I watched [Chiefs Head Coach] Andy [Reid’s] do that. I was on Andy’s original staff; my first five seasons were with him. I was on three straight NFC Championship games and that was tremendous. It was a heck of a feeling to be involved in those kinds of games. That’s what we want to get to, but the only way we can do it is if we truly do become a family.”

On how much involvement he’ll have in personnel decisions:

“The biggest thing that’s going to happen – and I’ll say it again – is we’re going to collaborate. We’re going to get together as a group, and we’ll discuss things. If we have to continue to discuss things and it goes a little bit longer, then we’ll ask [Owner] Mr. [Dan] Snyder to help. For the most part, he’s given us the opportunity to be a group of men that work together to collaborate to do one thing and that’s be on the same page, pick the right kind of players and then put them in a position to have success.”

On the next steps in QB Dwayne Haskins Jr.’s development:

“Well I think, first of all, he’s going to have to step up and become a leader. All the great ones have become leaders and they’ve become leaders whether they’re rookies or they’re 10-, 12-year vets. You’ve got to step up, you’ve got to be where you need to be, you’ve got to do things you’re supposed to do. That’s all going to start with your offseason, how you prepare yourself, how do you get yourself ready. I think that’s probably one of the biggest things that we’ve got to do and not just with him, but every one of our players have got to

understand this is an opportunity to lead. I'm going to do something where I try to create opportunities for every player to step up and be the leader at one time or the other. He doesn't have to be one of the greatest players to play running back. He's got to be a guy that's willing to step up in front of his teammates and tell them, 'Hey, let's go, man. Let's roll.'"

On why he feels he'll be able to see through the duration of his tenure:

"Well, nobody really knows, but I'll tell you this, I believe in me and I'll bet on me. We'll see what happens, that's all I can tell you. I will give you one thing and that is I'm going to work, I'm going to work very hard, I'm going to do the things that I believe and I'm going to stay true to who I am."

On whether there are things he'll do process-wise to impact team culture:

"There are a couple things and once it's time to get started, I think everybody in the building will feel it. For the most part, more than anything else, this is not about me. This is about us as an organization, us as a team. I think if we stay true to us, we have a chance."

On what personnel changes need to be made and what's needed:

"I think just the biggest thing is going to have to be the commitment. Once we get into the offseason program, we'll see. But the biggest thing we need is we need everybody. Everybody's got to be here, everybody's got to give ourselves an opportunity to grow and develop. It's not just as players with X's and O's, but as a team. Again, not just guys on the field, but guys off the field, as well."

On his main goal with the Redskins:

"Main goal is to build a consistent winner and to win a Super Bowl. I know somebody said you shouldn't say that. Well, I'm going to say it because I'm going to put it out there. The thing about it more so than anything else is you can't be afraid to put yourself out there. Whether you do or you don't, we'll see. You just never know, but you've got to be willing to try. You've got to be willing to put it out there and see what happens, and that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to go out there and see what happens. I'm going to work, I'm going to do things the way I believe in, I'm going to rely on my coaches, I'm going to rely on our organization, I'm going to rely on our players. And that's all I can do, just give it my best."

On whether he asked Owner Dan Snyder why things haven't worked during negotiations:

"We talked an awful lot about those things. We talked about the things that he's learned, and he's grown as a person and as an owner. It was a very frank conversation. He was very honest, very up front and very candid. The thing that he's done is exactly what he has said so far. Again, based on the things that – I've gotten an opportunity to walk around this facility, opportunity to see the things that he's done, he's made the commitment financially in bringing the things that these players need to try and create an edge. Again, now I really do appreciate the opportunity. He's given me the opportunity to do things the way I believe is right for the organization and, again, a lot of it had to do with the conversations we've had. I'm telling you, we've met almost 30-35 hours and it was very in-depth. It was over a period of time, it really was. I really appreciated that fact and I think when I told everybody when I first got fired, did my press conference, on my way out I said, 'I'm going to look for the right fit.' I really believe this is the right fit. I'm excited about it. We'll know in a few years, but hopefully we'll know right away because I do think there's a quality group of young men that if we can give them some direction, if we can go ahead and build this culture together, we can give ourselves a chance to win football games."