

August 19, 2020

Head Coach Ron Rivera

On how QB Dwayne Haskins is progressing:

“There are some good things. You watch him go through his progressions, his reads and he does some things that he needs to do, and then a couple times you see him not going through his progressions, not keeping the right tempo or pace to it. Just little detail things. Again, he’s still learning and growing. We’re pretty excited about that.”

On the next step for QB Alex Smith in practice:

“The biggest step with him is always going to be about the footwork. The quick feet. Making quick decisions, stuff like that. We’ve got to watch that. We’ve got to see how he’s moving. Again, he’s getting a simulated pocket with 7-on-7. The next move will be probably what we have, 9-on-9, which is a half-line pass rush versus a 7-on-7, so he gets to feel a sense of now guys coming at him. At least in that drill he’ll know exactly where it’s coming from so we can watch his movements as he escapes. With him, again everything is a process. Everything is a step forward. Everything is about his foot speed, his quickness and his decision making. He’s done a great job.”

On what he expects from DE Ryan Anderson:

“One thing that we’ve talked about our rotation, how many guys we’re going to use and how many guys we’re going to play each game. He fits right into the rotation. Whether he ends up being a rotational player or a starter, he’s a guy that has a very good, diverse set of skillsets. He can put his hand on a guy in the rush. He can get in two-point stance and play the linebacker position. He can rush off the two-point and he can drop into coverage off the two-point. So, he gives us some flexibility in terms of where to use him, where to move him and the things that he can do for us. He’s done a great job. He really has. He’s had a solid camp and we feel pretty comfortable with who he is for us going into the season.”

On the importance of training camp practice for rookies like DE Chase Young:

“It’s very important for a young player, especially now with the developmental stages of his career. He’s come in, he’s done some great things, he’s done everything we’ve asked and we had to kind of be careful with him today. He’s got a little bit of a hip flexor [pain]. We wanted to be smart. We’ll see how he is tomorrow. But, he’s done a really good job. He really has. The more reps he gets, the quicker he’s going to adapt and get used to the things we’re trying to do as a football team.”

On T Geron Christian Sr.:

“The biggest thing with Geron more so than anything else is that he’s an athletic football player. He moves very well. He’s a smart, young man who’s picked things up very nicely. He just hasn’t had a chance to play a lot of football, so we’re really interested in watching him, especially if he’s going to play and participate and do some of the things he’s done. He’s done some really good things. He’s caught our eye. He’s caught our attention. He’s had a couple opportunities to play with the ones recently. We’re getting a good feel for what he’s capable of. Again, we’ll rotate these guys in. We’ll rotate these guys in under the ones and the twos and the threes just to see what we have and see what the best combination of guys is on the field.”

On Young being on the sideline during practice:

“That was more caution than it was anything else. He’s got a little bit of a hip flexor there and we want to be smart. We don’t want to work him down because the next thing you know he’s missing four or five days. We’re just trying to be smart about that.”

On practicing outside after the rain:

“Well, what we did was yesterday later in the late afternoon, early evening, our grounds crew covered up the field. As [Director of Football Operations] Paul Kelly monitored the weather forecast, we determined if we held out and started a little bit later today, we’d have an opportunity to get a clear field and for the most part we did. We took the covering off the practice field right around 8 o’clock, which allowed us to start a little around 9:30 and the field was dry for the most part. So we were able to get a little work in. We prefer to be outside if we can, but we don’t want to do it at the risk of anybody potentially slipping and pulling something or twisting something. Again, I think thought grounds crew did an outstanding job having the field prepped and ready to go today.”

On RB Bryce Love:

“I really do appreciate how hard Bryce has worked in the offseason in terms of his rehab program. From where he’s come, it’s been remarkable to watch. He’s done a great job. Very smart, bright football player. Loves the game and works hard at it. He’s a guy that’s multi-dimensional. At Stanford he didn’t have to do a lot of routes and pass catching, but he’s very capable and we’re getting to see that. This is a guy that could be an every-down back for you. He’s an explosive, dynamic player. Good quickness. He’s exciting with the balls in his hands, so we’ll see how he continues to progress and get better. He has an opportunity to help and contribute on this football team, though.”

On if LB Reuben Foster has progressed after coming off the PUP list:

“He has. The one thing about Reuben’s situation, the one thing about Alex’s situation and Bryce’s is you can’t simulate the movement that you’re going to make on the football field in rehab. So that’s why each one of those guys has progress to where we have them active. Bryce was a little ahead of Reuben. Reuben was a little bit ahead of Alex. Each one of those guys is progressing at their own pace. It’s really about being exposed to the football movements that’s going to help those muscles and nerves and ligaments stronger and more secure. That’s why you have to gradually bring those guys along. I don’t know if you noticed this, but Reuben’s gotten a limited number of reps. We’ve tried to monitor those and keep an eye on it and it’s the same thing with Alex. With Bryce being ahead of these guys, I think Bryce is back in and getting full participation. So, we’re seeing growth from Bryce and hopefully we’ll start seeing even more so from Reuben and hopefully eventually from Alex.”

On preparing Smith to face a defense and take hits:

“As I said a little bit earlier, the biggest thing with him is reintroducing him to 11-on-11 football. Right now we have him out there doing 7-on-7. The next step, we’d probably have him do 9-on-7 and 9-on-9 drills where he knows where the pressure is coming from so he can anticipate moving from it. Once we put him on 11-on-11, it’s again, now your natural ability has to kick into play. Your experience, your feel and sense for what’s going on will have to come into play. That’s kind of where we’re hoping to progress to eventually and see if he’s still capable of doing it.”

On if he will play against defenses in camp:

“I believe so, but I’m not going to put a timeline on it. This has been a work in progress and we’re not trying to hurry anybody through, so that’s why there’s no timeline as far as that’s concerned. We want to make sure that at the end of the day, he can go in there and if he has to play he can protect himself.”

On seeing energy in morning practices:

“I think you know again, it’s really about trying to set the tone so we can set the tempo. That’s more so than anything else. If we sit there and just meander about, the players are going to meander about. The players are going to feed off the energy that you have. That’s important. That’s important for us to try to do the best we can to set the tone and tempo for those guys so they can go out there and get themselves moving and then they can take ownership. They can get themselves motivated. They can get themselves moving.”

On developing chemistry within position groups:

“Well, I think there is a certain point where we’ll get together as coaches and after certain periods we come together, talk about what we have. Each coach will kind of let us know, let me know kind of who they’re rotating around and moving and putting into place and asking is there anybody else I want to see, is there anybody else I want to see with these guys? That’s the important thing, that everybody is getting a look right now. Eventually we will. Eventually we’ll get to the point where we’ll say, ‘These are the top 15 guys on offense and defense and these are the guys that have to get in the rotation and these are the guys that have to get the opportunity.’ We haven’t gotten to that point yet. We will eventually. We will very soon. But, right now we’re trying to really gauge what we have as far as football players.”

On quarterbacks not getting their bodies in sync:

“For the most part, whether the ball is behind or the ball is too far up front or the ball is too high or too low, that is really a function of your body not being where it needs to be to throw that specific throw you want to make. Sometime the eye sees it before the rest of the body sees it and so the ball’s going to be late. Sometimes the body’s ahead of the eyes and also you bring the eyes, you throw it too soon and you get it way in front. I mean, there’s all these little nuances to the position and to be honest, I’m learning them. I can tell you I’m learning them. I don’t coach the quarterbacking position, but I’ve gotten a good feel for it having worked with rookie quarterbacks before. You look for those things where making sure those elements of his body are in sync. It always starts with the head. Are the eyes moving, are the shoulders moving, are the hips moving, are the feet moving? He comes back this way and you’re trying to see if he’s turning in pieces or if he’s turning in unison. Those are things we look for as coaches.”

On how he will gauge when Smith is ready for the next step:

“Based on things he will do in practice. Again, as we observe, watch the feet—again, we’ll see it. We’ll recognize it. We’ll notice it.”

On speaking with Smith before his return:

“The biggest thing that happened in the conversation is, Alex and I talked and I said, ‘Alex, you have to be able to protect yourself. You’ve got to be able to show us that you can protect yourself.’ That’s the thing. For me to sit there and say what his physical risks are, I’m not the doctor. Again, we listen to what the doctor told us. You don’t ever want to put a player at risk, and that’s really more so what I’m concerned with, is that I’m not putting him at risk based on my judgement. I just want to make sure that at the end of the day based on what I’ve seen, based on what I’ve heard, we can sit there and make the right decision whether to play him or not.”

On if he had advice for Smith:

“No. We’ve had that conversation a couple of times. We’ve had that conversation taken at different times. It’s just been reiterated and reinforced.”

On if anyone stood out on the defensive line in practice:

“We’ve had some young guys that have really stepped up and played well, and again they’re getting their opportunities. I’ve been very pleased with the effort we’re getting across the board more so than anything else, and that’s probably the most important thing is how they’ve practiced, how they’ve performed. A lot of guys

have done some good things. To say and draw conclusions based on the first couple days would be a little premature, so as we continue to evaluate as a coaching staff we'll get a much better feel within a week or two."

On if he reached out to former coaches for advice on the season:

"I'm constantly talking to different coaches for advice on how to handle things. This is a very unique set of circumstances across the board. I've played in '87 during a unique situation where [former Washington Head Coach Joe Gibbs] was a coach and ended up winning the Super Bowl, which was amazing when you think about that. And then in 2011 having been a head coach during the lockout, I've had a little bit of perspective as well. There's been a number of guys I've reached out to and talked to and guys that have given me some insight into things."

On relying on players to be honest with their injuries:

"That's the big thing, you do have to rely on that honesty because you really don't know. Nobody can tell you what another player is feeling. That's always been the hard thing. That's why you always have to trust them and believe them, and that's what we're doing now is trusting and believing them when these guys say, 'I'm doing fine,' and 'my leg feels good,' 'this doesn't bother me.' That's trust. And until we're proven differently, we want to trust them and take them for their word."