

# WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER – LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

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## C Chase Roullier

### **On Head Coach Ron Rivera's message after today's practice:**

"Coach Rivera was reiterating the importance of practicing hard every day, that you can't take any days off if you expect to make it to a Super Bowl. He talked about the expectation for this team to make it to the Super Bowl in his time here. That is our goal, to make it to the Super Bowl and win a Super Bowl. That is our ultimate goal. In order to do that, we have to play hard every single play, fix all of our mistakes and continue to push forward that way."

### **On his reaction to Rivera's diagnosis:**

"That came as a shock to me. It was something that he felt that it was the right thing to do to let us know before it got out to the media, and we appreciated that we were able to hear that information and kind of analyze that on our own before we had to hear it from the media. That allowed us to figure out what that would mean for the team. He was able to explain everything that would happen, that is it a situation that should be able to be handled and that we shouldn't have anything to worry about and that we're able to push on as a team. Obviously, we'll be praying for him and have him in our thoughts as he goes and gets treatment for that."

### **On the tone amongst the players after hearing from Rivera:**

"I would definitely say there was some shock there. None of us had any idea that that was happening, and I think all of us are just trying to stand together for him. As a team just being able to push forward and move on with him as our leader continuing forward. He's still going to be here. he's still going to be able to lead our team and we fully believe that."

### **On Rivera getting back to football and his frustration at the end of practice:**

"You never like being chewed out on the field, but that just shows the passion that Coach Rivera has on the field and we greatly appreciate that. We know that his expectation is to win here in Washington, and that's exactly what we want as players. We know that no matter what's happening with his health, that is what he wants and he's going to continue to push that every day."

### **On training camp this year compared to previous seasons:**

"Obviously with Covid, everything's a little different. The basics are the same. We're still going out there, we're still grinding as a team, we're still learning as a team. Both sides of the ball, we're learning a new offense and a new defense. There's obviously some growing pains with that, but there's a lot of similarities as well that's allowed us to take the new offense in stride as well and be able to continue to improve the things that we know and learn the new things that we didn't know about this offense. So, there's definitely been like I said some growing pains. But, I feel like we've made a lot of process in these couple weeks."

### **On the uncertainty on the offensive line:**

"There's always a little bit of a challenge when you're going to have guys rotating, but that's an expectation as an offensive lineman, that there's going to be guys rotating in and out. There's five of us out there on a field at any time, so there's more than likely going to be times where other guys have to come step in. That's just something that we prepare for as an offensive line. We're constantly rotating so that we get all sorts of different groups out there so we're ready to play with anyone that's out there on the field at any time. We feel like we've

got great options on the left there. We've got guys who have a lot of experience over there. When it comes down to it, it's just going to be who's playing best at that time that will be stepping out on the field on Sundays."

**On how he evaluates the offensive line in training camp:**

"I think, first and foremost, their understanding of the offense is the most important thing. The first thing, if you don't understand the offense you don't know where to go. On any given play, you can't do much out there. So, being sure that everyone understands the offense is the first and foremost thing. Fortunately, we have been able to be working on [that]. Even through our OTA period on Zoom, we were able to be doing those Zoom meetings and learning and installing plays, and that allowed us to get more comfortable with the offense. Obviously, it's not the same thing until you're out there with pads on and with a defense across from you. It was the first step in learning this new offense, and I think we're all doing a great job of learning the new plays. Beyond that, it becomes all about playing fast with the offense that you know. That's the step that I believe a lot of us are on, is being so comfortable with the offense that we're able to play fast and understand what the defense is giving us each play and be able to adjust to that and play at 100 miles-per-hour, give great hustle and play through the whistle."

**On if rotating players on the line makes it difficult:**

"It can be a difficult situation, but like I mentioned earlier it is something that we do practice. Even with [G] Wes Schweitzer not out there, we were able to get some reps before he got out. Being able to adjust to different players very quickly is something that we need to do as a player because there's going to be some rotations during a season. If you can't adjust to that, then the whole group cannot work as one. We need to be able to quickly adjust to one another. Obviously, that comes through reps that we will be able to get with one another in the coming weeks and get ready to go for the Eagles."

**On Rivera speaking to the team after his diagnosis:**

"That all took place after our walk-through on Thursday evening in the bubble. He called us all up when we were done and just let us know that he had some tough news. He just went ahead and said it as it was, let us know exactly his diagnosis, how the treatment's going to go for him and what that means as a football team. He was a pretty straight-shooter with it, so we were able to understand what's going on. There was no hiding it. He just gave it to us straight."

**On if going through Rivera's treatment together will be team-building:**

"Yeah, I think so. When a coach opens up his personal life to you, it allows you to get to know him better as a human being. Obviously, this is not a good circumstance by any means. But it shows you who he is as a coach and a person. He wants us to know him fully and understand him both as a person and a coach, and that allows us to get to know him better and to respect him even more and see him more and more as our leader and someone we want to go out there on that field with."

**On his relationship with QB Dwayne Haskins:**

"I think my relationship with Dwayne has definitely grown. He's in his second year now. He's becoming a great veteran out there. He's no longer in his rookie year, so he's grown up a lot both in his understanding of defenses, understanding of our offense but also as a leader as well. He's doing a good job commanding the huddle this year and making sure guys are where they need to be in formations and on plays. That just allows the whole functionality of the whole offense to be very smooth when he's able to be a great leader out there on the field. I think he's taken huge strides in that this year."

**On QB Alex Smith returning to practice:**

“It truly is remarkable. The first time we saw him out there on that 9-on-9 drill, I think everyone was pretty amazed. We had all hoped he’d be able to get back to where he is now and continue to push forward as well. It was such a tough situation for a long time for him, and he’s worked so hard to get where he is right now. We respect him so much for what he’s done and are just so, so happy for where he is now and excited to see him back out there on the field.”

**On if the importance of adaptability is more important this season:**

“Yeah, I think it’s hard to say how Covid will affect once we’re actually into games. Obviously, rules are changing with that every day. But I think it definitely could end up being a situation where we need to be ready to adapt to those types of situations this year. There’s obviously the great risk of guys getting put on the Covid list and missing games or practice or whatever it may be, and that might make it that much harder. We’ll just have to be able to be ready to go with whoever we have available. Just like I said, that’s something we practice right now with rotating guys in and out during our team and our individual. We’re ready to go with whoever we have out there.”

**On left guards and centers working together:**

“I think in order to have cohesion between two positions next to each other like that, we need to know where each other will be on each play. Every guard, every center, we set a little different. We get put in a different spot on different plays. As a center, I need to know where my guard’s going to be set up at when the defense is coming for a bull rush, or whether that’s a twist or stunt, wherever that might be I need to know where my guard’s going to be. Depending on the person, that could be a little bit different spot. Those are the types of adjustments you just need to get reps with one another for. That’s the importance of rotating these guys in all the team periods we have. That allows us to be prepared for that.”

**On entering his final year of his contract:**

“Going into my final year of my contract, I look at it the same as every other year. I’m going out there, I’m going to play to the best of my ability and prepare the most I possibly can just like I have every other year and just continue to do what I’ve been doing. That is prepping as much as I have before and then playing as hard as I possibly can in practice and in games.”

**On Rivera’s leadership:**

“Personally, I’ve noticed how much Coach Rivera has had to take on during all this. Coach Rivera always says that he has broad shoulders and he can take it. Whether it’s talking about all these non-football things going on, on a daily basis, or whether that’s things within the team, he’s our leader and he’s our head. He’s willing to take on all those responsibilities and allow us to focus on what’s important as players, and that’s preparing and playing the game of football.”

**On if the franchise needed a coach like Rivera:**

“I can’t speak necessarily to what the franchise needed. I know that what Coach Rivera is doing, from a player standpoint, it’s great for us. It allows us to focus on what we need to focus on in order to make sure this team is headed in the right direction.”