

WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER – LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

August 22, 2020

DT Jonathan Allen

On Head Coach Ron Rivera's speech to the team about his diagnosis:

“When he said that it definitely took us by surprise a little bit. Based on the mood he gave us, he's very confident they caught it early. It's not aggressive. That's really all he kind of said. For me personally, I've just got to pray for him. Just looking at him, I would've never known if he'd never told us. But that's definitely something you take seriously. Like I said, you've just got to pray for him and hope for the best. Like I said, he's our guy. So we're behind him strong.”

On how the players will move forward:

“Amongst ourselves, it's really the same vibe. You just want to keep him in your prayers, continue to work. But at the end of the day, we're going to do our job. That's why we're here, to do our job and do it at a high level. Obviously, you don't want to go out there and be a problem guy in general. But when something like this is going on, the biggest thing I can say is you've just got to keep him in your prayers. Regardless of what's going on with him, I'm going to try to do my job to the best of my ability, regardless of anyone else's circumstances or anything. So that won't change how I feel about doing my job because at the end of the day, I have to do a job and I have to do it well. That's always been my thought and always been my vibe.”

On Rivera's message to the team after today's practice:

“Pretty much his general message was we just need more. I 100 percent agree. I'm 100 percent bought into what he's saying. He just said we need more. And I agree, you're never there. We're always continuously grinding and we've got to work. It's not going to be easy what we want to get done here and what we've got to accomplish. But, hard work is hard work and we've got to do it. I'm 100 percent bought in to what we have to do here.”

On how Rivera has handled this past offseason as a head coach:

“I wouldn't know, I'm not a head coach, but looking at it he's handled everything amazingly. You just have to handle everything straight up, get out in front of it, and just do what you have to do as the head coach of the football team and I think he's done a great job. It's definitely a tough situation, but at the end of the day he's a pro and he knows how to handle this. I wouldn't expect anything less from Coach Rivera.”

On working with this coaching staff compared to previous years:

“I'm not really big on comparisons. Every coaching staff is different. Every situation is unique. But what we've done this year, I love it. We're physical, we work hard, we work smart and we work together. We're just building the blocks. I'm not really going to make statements or expectations about what we have to do, there's just a standard of work that we're going to have to put out day in and day out, and then we'll just see what happens.”

On his expectations for the defensive line this season:

“I feel like it's easy for us as a group to look at the expectations and get excited, but me personally, I could care less. It really doesn't matter what anybody outside of this organization thinks in my opinion. Expectations, I don't believe in those. I believe in having standards that we must live up to day in and day out and game in and

game out. If I live up to the certain standards that I set for myself and as a unit we set them collectively, we'll have success regardless of the outcome."

On how the defensive line can set the tone for the defense:

"I think it just starts out with working hard. From my point of view, that's what I'm going to do. Just work hard day in and day out, be the guy that I'd want to play beside, a good teammate, work hard, buy in 100 percent and just do what I can to help this organization win. It's really simple what we need to do. But it's the consistency that makes it difficult, and doing it day in and day out regardless of situations at home, situations in the media, situations surrounding this place, what you do inside this building needs to be consistent. I'm speaking for myself, and that's just my goal every day. Be consistent every day and be good at it."

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

"I feel like you definitely can – like I said, we don't know the extent of a lot of things. He just gave us a brief overview. Credit to him, he's focused on the team. He doesn't want this to be a pull to us, he doesn't want this to be the thing that pulls everybody together, it's about the team. I give him a lot of credit and respect. I couldn't imagine being in his position. Kind of like I said, you just pray for him and you just go out there and continue to work. You just continue to do the mundane every day and just grind and get better and that's how you really get closer as a team. It's a tough situation to be in. Like I said, you've just got to pray for him and just continue to do your job and just work."

On the team's reaction to Rivera's speech about his diagnosis:

"It was definitely just silent. Everyone was pretty intent on just listening. I keep saying it, you just pray for him. Like I said that's a very serious diagnosis, but his mood said a lot. He was very confident that he's going to be able to beat this. He said he caught it early, it's not super aggressive, all these things. I'm very hopeful. Like I said, as our leader he's set up there very strong. There's a lot of respect in there."

On seeing LB Reuben Foster practicing again:

"It's been great. He's definitely inspiring. He's been through a lot these last couple years, so to see him push through, persevere and be back out there on the field, I'm happy for him. I can't wait to see him play."

On if he has discussed being a leader with Rivera:

"We haven't sat down and specifically, 'What you need to do is this, this, what you need to do,' I just want to be the best teammate I can possibly be. If I adopted that leadership role again, great, so be it. If not, I'm here to do my job and I'm here to do it at an effective level. It really is about the team. I'm tired of losing. We're tired of losing. Everybody here is tired of losing. We want to win, and if it's not about winning, I really don't care about it. So I'm just going out there every day, trying to do what I can to help this organization win like I know we can. That's all I care about."

On if players speak up when practice energy begins to wane:

"Definitely. It really just kind of depends on everybody's leadership style. I just try to go out there and I just try to be a leader by example. Instead of just telling you what I'm going to do, I just try to show you, bring out my effort, my energy, everything. There are really not just a couple people that lead, it's leadership by committee. Anyone can be a leader at any point. I genuinely believe that."

On if players reacted to the waned energy before Rivera spoke on it:

"100 percent. There are definitely players that were trying to pick it up and trying to do what they can to bring up the energy. But I mean, it's camp. There's going to be days where you're sore, you're tired, you're dragging through the mud, it's natural. The thing you just have to learn to do is fight through that as a team. That's what we're doing right now. We haven't played football in eight months. There's going to be some growing pains for

us, there are going to be days where we're dragging. But, we just can't make that a habit. We can't make that consistent. When those days do come, we have to make sure as a unit and as a team we push through that and fight through it."

On if the culture Rivera is creating has taken root:

"It's definitely going to take time, but you can definitely see the start of some great things. Culture isn't built over night. It's going to take time. Like I said, there are going to be growing pains that everybody has to go through. Just having that unity as a team. It's going to be tough, but you have to fight through. You have to grind. There are going to be a lot of things to overcome this season with everything going on around us. So, yeah, it's definitely going to take time, but you can definitely see the roots starting to grow. Like I said, there's a lot of talk around the team and expectations around the team, as a team all we can do is focus on growing as a team. We're not worried about anything else besides that."

On if he will get to know Rivera more throughout his recovery:

"100 percent. As a head coach, I feel like it's tough to keep things secret. Him jumping out in front and telling us, as a team we appreciate that. Whenever someone can be vulnerable with you, that really shows a lot about their mental toughness because that's not an easy thing to do. For coach being able to come out and tell us that, that was a huge step in just building that trust with the guys who haven't played with him before. It definitely was."