

# WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER – LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

August 30, 2020

## Head Coach Ron Rivera

### **On what he saw in practice today:**

"I saw some energy out there, especially on the special teams is what we were looking for. For the most part, we were just trying to go through game simulations and situations for the offense and defense. The important thing for us was to watch the young guys on the special teams. So, we'll get a chance to break that tape down and see who really stood out. Again, just unfortunately not having preseason games, you don't have a gauge for those guys. We tried to create that, give them a heads up yesterday that we wanted to ratchet up the intensity on special teams. We wanted to work through all the special teams situations – everything from punt, punt return, kickoff, kickoff return, field goal, field goal block. We worked on taking a safety, taking an onside kick, we worked on a safety kick after a safety. We tried to create the situations that they would be involved in at any point in time during the season. Again, I think we got some good tape. I think we got some good energy from a few guys. Some of the guys that we were hoping to see on special teams, hopefully they stepped up."

### **On DT Jonathan Allen's injury in practice:**

"He got rolled up on, but it doesn't look serious. He wanted to go back out there. I don't know if he did or not, but I know he was trying to get back out there and we were trying to hold him back. I've got to go see [Head Athletic Trainer Ryan Vermillion] and see what the rest of it is. But like I said, he wanted to go back out there."

### **On QB Alex Smith not participating today:**

"It was planned. When we get into certain specific situations, we're going to continue to work with Alex."

### **On DE Chase Young's big play in practice:**

"Well, it just shows you how dynamic the young man can be. He can be a tempo setter. [It was] just a really good play. Again, he's a young guy that's doing good things and a young guy that brings energy. That's what we're looking for from our guys."

### **On G Wes Martin's performance today:**

"I'll have to really take a look at that on tape because it's kind of hard to see everybody. I did see a couple times when he looked good. One thing I do like about Wes is when Wes is on the move. He's a good pulling guard. He works well into the second level. But like I said, I'll have to watch the rest of tape to really study and see how he did do as a whole."

### **On his post-practice message to the team:**

"Well, first of all I wanted to tell them there's some good things on this tape that we're going to get to look at and there's some things we need to get corrected and we need to shore up for the most part. I told them I was pleased with their effort. I do think that we can get better. I think there's a lot of good things that we'll take from this tape and we'll grow from this tape. I talked to them about giving 100 percent all the time. Sometimes we come to a situation like this and we get into a little bit of a lull. Sometimes it's true for the game, and that's one thing we didn't want to see. We took a little break to simulate halftime and came back out; there was a little bit of a lull. There were three series that I thought we didn't perform very well in, and I just wanted to make a point in those things. You can't come out flat, you've got to come out and play."

**On if they will create situations tomorrow for what they need to work on:**

"Yes, very much so. There are things we'll take a look at and say, 'We either need to refine it, work on it, correct it or make it better.' Again, I'm anxious to look at this tape. I really am for a couple reasons. One is I want to take a deeper look at our special teams guys. But I also want to see some of the positives to really build on those things. It's a good thing because there were some really good decisions being made by the quarterbacks today. You really want to see those things and feature them and highlight them for those guys. It shows growth, it really does. We've got a way to go still. We're in the process of developing this football team. But, the process is we have to take a step forward every day. We can't go backwards."

**On the timeline for his final roster decisions:**

"What'll happen next week is we'll touch on it. Tomorrow, we'll practice at the stadium, we'll have Tuesday off then we'll go Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. This week for the most part really signifies the end of training camp in terms of working on certain fundamentals. Now it's: 'Let's start getting into our routine. Let's start to see the things we do and how we do them to get us ready for the regular season.' So, it'll be a mock week in terms of the way we'll practice. But, we'll still have a minimum of I think two competitive periods. Again, we haven't completely made our minds up. There's still a few guys we have to make our minds on, so we'll have to create situations on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday still as we go forward."

**On how many spots are still uncertain:**

"Probably seven. Maybe eight. We were talking about it last night as coaches that we were looking at a couple positions specifically. We know who our top guys are, but after that it's a mix of guys. You sit there and look at it: 'This guy might be our best fourth, fifth or sixth guy, but he's not one of our best special teams guys.' One thing I have [special teams coordinator] Nate [Kaczor] do for us is I have Nate rank every player by special teams, where they would rank as a core special teams player, how many core special teams is this guy on as far as we call 'the big four' kickoff return and punt return. Again, those are things we have to factor in. I can't hold Nate hostage and not give him guys that will help us as a football team, but also help us as a special teams, team. I can't do that to him. So, we've got some tough decisions. Just because we release a guy doesn't mean we didn't like him, it just means for the whole overall team concept – a special teams player, we kept a guy over him. So, again, those are the decisions we have to make. Like I said, there's probably seven or eight guys that we're still looking at and deciding on."

**On how he is evaluating special teams without preseason games:**

"If you're honest, you won't. You won't really know until the young man you decide to keep and the young man you decided to put out there is out there on the first Sunday, you're going to find out exactly whether or not he has what it takes. Right now, you've kind of got an incomplete picture. We'll try to make the best decision and believe it's the right decision until we get a chance to see whether it was or wasn't."

**On CB Kendall Fuller:**

"Basically, what we're trying to do is we're trying to massage some of these guys through the last few days. We've gotten a lot of reps with these veteran guys, especially the secondary guys. Not having Kendall be able to go full-speed, it's one of those things if you constantly put him out there while he's got a little nagging injury, the nagging injury won't go away. We've tried to do that with a few guys that have caught our eye – not that Kendall has caught our eye, we know who Kendall is. It never goes away. That was kind of what happened with Chase. He had that nagging abductor or groin or whatever it was. Until we really shut him down, it didn't really get a chance to calm down and now it has and now we're seeing him out there every day."

**On if he is pleased with the team's enthusiasm for each other:**

"Absolutely. We need to continue to do that. We need to grow that even more. I think that the one thing these guys have to understand is that on Sundays you don't play the Washington Football Team. You play your

opponent. So, whether it's offense, defense or special teams that makes the play, we've got to support each other, rally around each other and be there for each other."

**On where S Sean Davis fits into the secondary:**

"I see a guy that's competing. We're fortunate, we've got a little bit more depth than we initially anticipated. When we brought Sean in, we knew he was going to compete with [S] Troy [Apke]. Those guys are locked in the door right now. We'll see. Like I said earlier, we've got about another full week before we really make decisions on the direction we're going to head. We're still mixing guys in in different positions. Some alluded to today we stuck guys in like Wes Martin back in at left guard, which we did do. We were rolling [T Cornelius] Lucas and [T] Geron [Christian Sr.] at left tackle, and we still haven't seen [T] Saahdiq [Charles]. So, we've got a good group of guys and a whole bunch of guys we've still got to find out about. We're at a little bit of a disadvantage because we're not playing preseason games, we didn't have OTAs or minicamps. But, with the type of practice we had today and we've got, like I said, four really good ones to go – I think we should get an even better indicator as to where we are."

**On if tomorrow's stadium practice will be ramped up:**

"No. It will be toned down a little bit. It'll be more about refining and correcting and looking at the things we did today and taking some of that to the field tomorrow to work on and correct."

**On how the backups handled the competition level today:**

"It was good to see, it really was. A couple guys stepped up. I just want to wait to see when I get a chance to look at the tape who did exactly that. But, when you do that, it ramps things up for the second bunch. Those are the guys we've got to answer the questions about because for so long you get so used to practicing against the same guy, the same guy, the same guy. Now all of a sudden you're practicing against a higher-caliber player, now, do you measure up? I think we've got some pretty good answers about that. Like I said, I'm pretty excited about watching this practice tape."

**On CB Fabian Moreau:**

"I think Fabian's done a nice job. He really has. I've been pleased with the effort we've gotten from him. Unfortunately, he's been nicked a little bit, slowing down a little bit with the sore legs. Hopefully we'll get him back out there and cut him loose. Again, I just like what I've seen from these guys. There's a lot of young guys that just need a little more growth, a little more work and some development. We're not as far off as it appears. But, we still have a lot to learn, though."

**On if they will rework the numbers in position groups due to the unusual offseason:**

"Very much so. That's something we have to really be thoughtful about as we're mapping out our roster. We've got to look at those guys and say, 'Hey, you know what we have to be heavy on this position, or we can spare an extra spot right here.' That's something that, again, I was talking about the roster yesterday with some of the coaches and with [Vice President of Player Personnel] Kyle [Smith] yesterday afternoon. We're kind of thinking along those parameters right now."

**On RB Bryce Love and LB Reuben Foster's progression:**

"Well, again it's one of those things that we look at each guy and we judge those guys for each of the situations. Both those guys are working very hard and they've done a great job for us. I'm excited to see what happens in the next week because again, for both of those guys it's really about breaking through to the next level. Like we talked about with Alex, it's breaking to the next step."

**On if tape means more without preseason games:**

"I think each practice, each day's practice tape is important. But when you try to feature or highlight certain things, you go back and look at them. Like I told you guys, we did a third-down situation, situational football, where we featured [RB] J.D. McKissic. That was a really good tape to go back and evaluate. You look at what we did with J.D. and how we used J.D. and you break it down that way. It's the same thing with [RB] Adrian Peterson. When Adrian's in, we feature certain types of runs. We highlight certain things with him. So you pay attention to that segment for those reasons. You get down in the red zone and certain positions get featured. Well, you look at what you're doing and you say: 'Okay you know what, we're featuring this position. This guy at that position really stood out, or this guy doesn't fit that.' So that's why you do it that way, so you can kind of get a feel whether or not that guy, the player is the kind of guy that's going to step up and make things happen."

**On if it is a problem Charles has not practiced:**

"Yeah, it is, having not seen him in the last two weeks, that's tough. You want to project him as a guy that can come out and help you, and unfortunately because of the strain he has, he hasn't been able to be on the field for us. From what we saw earlier, we were very pleased and it was very promising. So, we'll see how it all maps out. Now, he's a sharp kid, smart young man, he's been working on his retention and learning. So we'll see how he does when we finally get him back out on the field."