

September 10, 2020

## **Quarterbacks Coach Ken Zampese**

### **On where QB Dwayne Haskins Jr. took the biggest jump this summer:**

“Well, it was really tough because of the Zooms all spring and then all of a sudden you try to get a baseline: ‘OK, what is he?’ And then just over time, maybe about two weeks in, things settled in a little bit. The play calls, the speed of the reads, the accuracy as he gets comfortable—those kinds of things showed up.”

### **On what changed with Haskins Jr.:**

“Well as time goes you get more comfortable about how to say combinations of words and what they mean and what that picture appears in your head as you say the play. As that increases, your mind can then move onto something else like what are the pre-snap tips. But until you understand what the play means, the formations, where everybody’s at, how am I supposed to play this play, it’s tough to get those things.”

### **On what he learned about Haskins Jr.:**

“You get a pretty good chance through Zoom to get a chance with the personality stuff. What I didn’t get a chance to see was just the work in person, which was fun to watch. He loves the drill work. He loves competing. 7-on-7, 11-on-11, it doesn’t matter. He just loves to be out there playing, which is fun. It’s a great starting point for us and we can progress from there. He’s a hungry player, which makes it a lot easier. It’s tough when you have to drag them with you. I really enjoy that part of him.”

### **On liking quarterbacks that look like boxers:**

“Yeah, [Haskins Jr.]’s ready to get in the ring. I just referenced just being in your most reactionary position because either you’re going to throw the ball as quick as you can, or you’re going to move as quick as you can. Either way, something’s going to happen fast so we need to be bent-kneed and ready to go.”

### **On how Haskins Jr.’s added size will help:**

“We’re banking on him not being able to get caught from behind a couple times, being able to come through some of those holes and out the other side of it and still being big enough to take a some of the punishment that comes with it.”

### **On what area Haskins Jr. can improve on:**

“I’m really excited to see the emotional ups and downs of the game and how we can stay up mentally and resilient mentally. You don’t have that—there’s not a score in practice per say. But when the score gets involved, different pressures apply themselves and how resilient we’ll be to push through and come out the other side and all those kinds of things, I can’t wait to watch that. We just haven’t had the preseason games to find those things out.”

### **On if he anticipates Haskins Jr. will be resilient:**

“Well, I have all the confidence in the world that he’s going to be fine when those things happen. We’ll play the game and we’ll find out. It’ll be a test for a lot of different things for all of our guys. I know we have a very solid group in our room, very resilient and very supportive. He’ll have a great supporting cast when he gets to the sideline, I know that.”

**On the difference between first year to second year quarterbacks:**

“Usually, the guys who are successful early know who they are. They’re grounded in a self-belief. They’re not trying to find out who they are, what their opinions are, what their belief system is, any of those things. The guys who are grounded, have a good supporting cast, have a pretty good O-line and a good group around them to throw to usually have success early. But, the mental side of knowing who you are really handles the ups and downs and the emotional swings of the position. Everybody’s coming for you, that’s for sure. You haven’t done this yet, you can’t do that, you haven’t done that yet. Everybody’s coming for you. So, the resiliency and knowing who you are really makes it. Self-esteem, those kinds of things are a big deal. And then first year to second year, it’s easier to tell. In the same offense, it’s easier to make bigger jumps because you’re not worried about the verbiage. But just being able to handle a professional game day I think is a big deal. What is my week-to-week? What do I do after practice? What film do I watch to get ready for the next day? How do I take care of my body? How do I eat right? How do I sleep right? Those things are things you think about in year one. Those are things you don’t think about year two—or should not have to think about year two—so you’re not wasting mental energy and mental space on things that aren’t game-related.

**On if self-esteem is innate:**

“I think you come in with a set of it, and then the support system that you put around a guy and developing a relationship where he knows he’s got somebody that’s with him all the time. And then the group, as we learn and grow together and compete together, there’s a group that he enjoys to be around and learn from and get pushed by that’s got his back all the time really makes it easy to weather the ups and downs. A person alone in his thought is a lonely guy on game day and during the game week. The relationships are what boosts us up on the days where we have a chance to be down. We have a choice in all that, but we also have help if we develop the relationships right. We’re really trying to foster an atmosphere of support and encouragement and fierce competitiveness in our room.”

**On how hands-on he will be on game days:**

“There will be a lot of conversation on the sideline until Dwayne gets there, and then it’ll be the conversation that only matters to him. There’s always a lot of thoughts and things that we’re putting together. There are always guys on the sideline that have played a lot of games and their opinions are very much respected. But, a quarterback’s head has only so much space on game day. You tell him as little as possible to get him to be able to process fast and play fast, but get all the points across. It’s a little easier said than done, but knowing the person and having a relationship—I can just eye ball him and he knows what we’re thinking or put my hands above my head and he knows to make sure the next ball is thrown above his head. There are little ways to communicate that don’t take as much mental effort, and we try to do as much of that as possible. We don’t sit there in long conversations and have to debate topics. We’ve already been through it once. I think the shorter the conversation is the better.”

**On how to not overwhelm a quarterback:**

“Well, I always defer to the head coach and the coordinator whenever they have something to say. I kind of evaluate: ‘OK, when is the best time to approach a different topic or reinforce the topic right then and there?’ That’s getting to know the person and how much is in there and the look on his face when he does get overloaded. Everyone gets overloaded. But, what’s the look? How do you know? It’s like knowing when your dog needs to go out by the look on his face or how he’s walking around the living room. You need to know things about people’s body language, and that only comes in time. So, we’ve been spending a lot of time getting to know each other.”

**On if he doubted the NFL season would happen:**

“That’s so far down the list of concerns, it doesn’t even bubble up. We’re trying to get a guy who’s essentially a half-year player to be a starter, a winning starter for us on the Washington Football Team. All that other stuff will handle themselves. It’ll be the same for everybody in the league. If it does, it does. If it doesn’t, it doesn’t. I’m sure glad it’s here because I wanted it to be just like this.”

**On who will be in the booth on game days:**

“That’s probably a better question for [offensive coordinator Scott] Turner or [Head Coach Ron] Rivera when you get them the next time.”

**On what he will stress to Haskins Jr. the night before the home opener:**

“We’re going to go over some of the things that we think will happen in the game in some critical situations, our third-down and our red zone. We’ll talk about some of the things that came up through the week regarding that play and what we expect. Again, not say too much and let the physical talent and the reactionary ability of the player take over. And then just: ‘Hey, let’s get some sleep and then have some fun the next day and execute. Do what you’re here to do.’”