

WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

September 21, 2020

Head Coach Ron Rivera

On G Brandon Scherff's injury:

"We've got some good news on him. It's positive. He's going to miss a couple of weeks or something like that, but it's all positive. We'll go from there. I'll give you a full report on Wednesday, but just so you know it's positive."

On challenging the coaching staff:

"We want to make sure that the things we're doing right now are enough for our guys to have success. Are we asking too much of them too early, too soon? In all honesty, no preseason games, no OTAs or minicamp— are we getting too far ahead of ourselves sometimes? Somebody asked me the question the other day, how long is it going to take me to get the offense installed? Well, we probably won't get everything in until next year. It's kind of the same thing on defense. Are we getting too complicated? Are we asking too much of our guys already? That's what we have to be careful of. We don't want to get ahead of ourselves thinking, 'Oh we've got this; we can put this in now.' We've got to look at us too. It's not just all about the players, it's about the coaches too. I wanted to make sure everybody knew that. I'm not looking to blame anybody or throw anybody under the bus. I just want to make sure we as coaches are giving our players the chance to have success, too."

On being patient with a young team:

"It'll be hard because you want to progress as a coaching staff. You want to say: 'Oh we can do this. We have the ability to do this.' We need to do this to help win instead of saying, 'Let's stick to what we've done, what we went through training camp. Let's not get so far ahead of ourselves.' Now we can start saying: 'Hey, these things we talked about doing later on. Let's do it now.' You want to have success and you want to go out there and put them in a position to win, but you don't want to get ahead of yourself. That's really what my concern was."

On if there are any players they are putting too much on:

"Well, we're putting a lot on the quarterback I will say that. But, he did some good things yesterday. He made some good decisions. The last couple of drives he had, he really put it together. But we've got to get him going sooner. We've got to put him in a better position to have success earlier too as well. We all have to do our job. There are some guys that you do expect a lot out of. [S] Troy Apke is another young man that we put out there and we put a lot on his shoulders. He's like [QB] Dwayne [Haskins Jr.]. He didn't play a lot his first year. He really only had one good year in college. These are guys that are developing and learning, and we do have a lot on their shoulders right now."

On Haskins Jr. putting touch on the ball:

"We had a couple of issues where we had really good matchups. We had running backs on linebackers, we had tight ends on safeties and we missed those throws. That's what you're looking for when you get those types of opportunities to be able to lay that ball on the top of the shoulder to create those big plays. We missed a couple of those. Now, he made some really good ones and some really good decisions. He made a couple nice ones. He hit [WR] Steven Sims over the shoulder on a nice route up on the sideline. Those are the things that you're looking for. You're looking for more of those, though."

On the running backs being involved in the pass game:

“Well, part of it is also quarterback’s decision-making as far as whether the ball is getting in the receiver or running back’s hands or not. We had a specific protection planned that involved the running backs this past week. They spent a little bit of time in protection before they went into their routes. They were really just check downs for the most part circumstantially. I do agree because we saw how dynamic those guys are when we hand the ball off to them. They ran the ball well. It does tell you if we can get the ball to them in space, they can be pretty good.”

On preaching patience to the team:

“It’s hard because you want to have success. We wanted to win that football game. We went there to win. It was disappointing because we had opportunities. We get the ball in the red zone and we turn it over. We got them backed up, punt and we turned it over. When you see those things happen, that’s the disappointment in it. We had a chance. We had a second-and-12 on defense and then they make it into a third-and-4. If we can keep them in those third-and-long situations, that’s the consistency that we are lacking right now. We’re not sustaining the success.”

On getting Haskins Jr. to start games strong:

“That’s a fair question because I just got done talking to [offensive coordinator] Scott Turner about that. It’s almost as if he’s so hype that he goes through his progressions really quickly or he’s trying to get the ball out of his hands sooner than he needs to. You want him to be a little bit more patient because he’s making good reads. He’s making good decisions. But, he’s either going through it too quickly and not delivering a good ball early on. Then you get a little bit of a hurry-up situation with a little bit of angst going and you see him connecting. You see it all being kind of put together. That’s the guy that we want to see when we start the game. I don’t know. It’s a good question and something Scott and I were talking about. We’ll continue to talk today. We had an opportunity to watch the tape. We haven’t had an opportunity to watch the tape with the players yet. That’s coming up pretty soon.”

On getting the run game going earlier:

“Unfortunately what happened, too, we had success when we went to play action and unfortunately those two play action plays resulted in negative plays for us on the offensive side. We’ve got to put that part of the game together because when we are running successfully, our play-action game should be much better.”

On the difference turnovers made against the Cardinals:

“They are. You can sit there and you can shape it how you want. We don’t turn the ball over and we have an opportunity. There are three instances in the first half that were really, truly disappointing. One was the turnover in the red zone, one was the turnover in the punt and one was getting backed out of field goal range on a sack that we allowed. Those three things really, you sit there and say: ‘At worst you got nine points going into the half. You’re down 20-9. At best, you score one touchdown and it’s 13.’ You can do that, but you really are what you are. 30-15 tells you you’re the loser because of those things. That’s what we have to get across to these guys, just how important and significant it is. There’s a stat that says you only get into the red zone on average a little over less than three times a game. So, if you’re only getting there three times a game, you’ve got to put touchdowns on the board at least two of those three times. We had opportunities early and we didn’t do it. That’s disappointing because it shapes the game. It shapes the way you look at things when you come out in the second half. We’ve got to make sure we take advantage of the opportunity to score when we’re in the red zone.”

On how he is feeling health-wise:

“I’m holding up well. I am. I was able to—I didn’t travel with the team on Friday. I traveled Saturday. Then I flew back separately. I flew back private to get back early. I do have treatment today. I’m actually headed there

as soon as I'm done here, I'm headed to my treatments. But I am doing well. Yesterday wasn't as hot. I was able to hydrate on the sidelines. I drank a lot of water, drank a lot of Gatorade so I didn't get an IV at halftime. After the game I did the same thing. I drank a lot of water and Gatorade. It's helping me. I made out pretty good. I will see my doctor today, so who knows he might have something else for me."

On if he is getting into a routine:

"Yeah, I am. I've kind of learned and understood how it goes. I take a break early in the morning at some point and then I take a break after practice at some point, just about 30 minutes of just kind of rest and close my eyes. And then I come out of it and make sure I'm hydrating and following up with Gatorade and stuff like that."

On flying private:

"The private part of it is really more so the doctors felt if I didn't have to spend two days in Arizona, it would be better off for me. Plus, I had gotten a treatment that morning, too. So I was a little bit out of it. Then flying private on the way home, I was able to lay back. They had set up a place for me to lay down. I actually slept the whole way back, so I was fortunate for that."

On Haskins Jr. throwing high:

"He speeds up. He gets so fired up. He sees it so quickly, he speeds up and he doesn't go through his normal plant-and-drive into it. He's so quick. He's got his weight back a little bit and he just lets it go as opposed to: 'Hey I'm there, I'm tall and I can just dry-step.' He sees it, it's there, I've got it and then bam he's a little bit high. Again, maintain your composure. Go through your motion and deliver a good ball. You see that as he gets comfortable and more comfortable in the second half. Early on, it cost him on a couple throws. Again, he made good decisions. It's just a matter of delivering the ball where it needs to be."

On going for a field goal to preserve players' health:

"I've done it in the past. I tell people this all the time. I make the decisions that I think are best on the team based on what I'm getting—the information, what I'm hearing, what I'm seeing, how the game's progressing, what's happening on the sideline. We had just lost one of our best players (G Brandon Scherff). I'm concerned about that. Now we go into a situation like that, that's the decision I made. It reminds me of what Ernest Hemingway said: 'There are those that will go into the ring and fight the bulls, and those that will write about it.' Because I'm in the middle of it, I'll make those decisions."

On the injuries around the league Sunday:

"That's a great point right there because one of the questions I'm going to ask—I'm trying to find out—in the preseason, where's the spike in injuries? Is it preseason game two or preseason game three? Think about this—we've gone all through training camp and we didn't play any preseason games. So we're asking these players to go from 0 to 60, to play at such a high, intense level so quickly. We were fortunate last week that there weren't a lot of injuries. This week there was. So, is there a concern that's what's going to happen because we haven't had these guys playing at such a high level? Again, for me personally, yesterday my thought process, getting where we were, I wasn't going to put anybody's health on my football team out there. I wanted to make sure it was—hey, it was tough losing Brandon. Like I said, there was some positive news on it. We're very fortunate. He's very fortunate and we're very happy for him."

On the defense getting to the quarterback:

"Well, I'm very happy about that. But yesterday was a little bit of a disappointment because we stepped backward. I talked to [defensive coordinator] Jack [Del Rio] and Jack and I were a little bit disappointed because for whatever reason, we played tentative. We didn't play with the same aggressive nature we had in the first game. I know a lot of it had to do with the quarterback. [Cardinals QB] Kyler Murray is a special talent. He has the ability to create. That sometimes gets guys tentative. Then you look at who he matched up with on the

outside with [Cardinals WR DeAndre Hopkins] Hop and [Cardinals WR Larry Fitzgerald] Fitz. You're talking about two guys that—you know for sure Fitz has got a chance to be a Hall of Famer. You know Hop has too. You're talking about two quality players. Sometimes that gets to you a little bit. We have a way to go to get better, to get better as a football team. Am I fired up? Yeah, I am. But I'm a little bit disappointed in the way we played. Again, we've got to look at how we call the game as coaches as well."