

# WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

October 19, 2020

## Head Coach Ron Rivera

### **On the team's progress:**

"We are making progress. I don't know if we have all the pieces. I do think we have some guys that are more than capable of winning. It's a matter of having enough of those guys. It's also, in my opinion, a matter of having the mentality and understanding what it takes to win, what you have to do to win, how you have to play to win. Those things are things that we're trying to instill in our players so they understand. I think that we are still teaching that, and hopefully our guys are still learning that."

### **On the injuries to the wide receivers:**

"I'll get more information from [Head Athletic Trainer Ryan Vermillion] RV at my 11:30 meeting as to where we are with those guys, where we are with [T] Saahdiq [Charles]. We'll find out more. Obviously, these guys are seeing the doctors now. So, we'll get answers then."

### **On the receivers:**

"Well, you're looking for guys on the practice squad. You're also looking for guys potentially on your emergency list and you go from there and see what happens."

### **On K Dustin Hopkins missing kicks:**

"First of all, I'm not considering making a change. My overall thought process was because we were on the road and it was inside of a minute left to go, I opted to go for two. My philosophy is that we were down there, we were on the two-yard line. I thought we had a good play call there, and then we go from there. But, in that situation and those circumstances, I think you go for two because, again, there was about half a minute left to go in the game. If we had succeeded on it, it would've been a great decision on my part. But we didn't, so some people think it's not a good decision. I just think you go for it because you're there."

### **On where his aggressive style in coaching decisions came from:**

"Well, that came about when I visited with John Madden in 2013. One of the things we talked about was trusting yourself, trusting your gut. We talked about it, and just really it's something that you think about when you get into certain situations. One thing it does is it tells your team that you believe in them, that you believe they're capable of those things. Two is, to me, you try to teach the mentality of learning how to win because you're playing to win. I think getting that mentality across to the players is important."

### **On players that lead by example with a winning mentality:**

"Absolutely, I think guys like [DT] Jonathan Allen have that kind of mentality. They've been a big part of it having a lot of success in college. [DE] Chase Young is a guy, as young as he is, he wants to win in a very bad way. [G] Brandon Scherff, you watch the way he plays and the way he finishes plays. [T] Morgan Moses—I can go down the list. But, there are a lot of guys that have that mentality, and there are some guys that are learning. Some of that is a reflection of where they played their college ball, having it engrained in them. When you're there and you're a part of that culture for three years and you get a good understanding of what it takes, it's a tremendous thing. It's something that gets developed over a period of time. You can see it and feel it in guys."

**On keeping the team motivated:**

“Well, mostly because of the situation in our division. The division isn’t very good right now, so there are opportunities. It’s just a matter of us settling in and learning how to win. That’s the thing I’ve constantly got to talk to them about is that you’ve got to come in, you’ve got to practice hard, you’ve got to work hard, you’ve got to develop. The thing I like is that we have a lot of young guys that are playing right now. This is their opportunity to learn and grow together. We haven’t developed a team yet where you start incorporating young players. We have a group right now that has to grow and develop together so that when it’s time to start winning, you start winning with that group of guys then you start bringing in young guys and incorporate them into your culture. That’s what we’re working on right now is to develop that culture with this group of people.”

**On second-guessing coaching decisions:**

“Absolutely, because when you start looking back and start second-guessing yourself, now you get into a situation where: ‘Should I or shouldn’t I?’ Sometimes you freeze yourself. But to me, if the players know that’s what we’re going to do and how we’re going to play, now it starts taking hold of who they are. We’re going to play to win. We’re going to put ourselves in position to win, so we can play to win. I think that’s what we’re trying to get across to those guys.”

**On the consistency of his message:**

“I think my message has been consistent. I’m not worried about the timeout thing earlier in the year, guys. I explained that to you guys once before, and I’m not going to have to explain it again. You guys know how I felt about what went on early. But where we are right now, again, everything we talk about is going forward. That’s the way I look at it.”

**On incorporating players dealing with injury:**

“It’s very difficult just because you see the promise. Saahdiq played two plays and you see both those plays and you sit there and say: ‘The guy is something else.’ He blocked their best pass rusher on the very first play. He went down the line, and on the kick out block was in great position to create a crease and then he hurts his leg. You just sit there and say: ‘Wow, this kid has potential but every time something like this sets him back.’ It’s the same thing with [WR] Antonio [Gandy-Golden]. Antonio makes a move and the hamstring bites on him and the next thing you know he’s down and we’ll lose him for a few weeks. It’s tough because you want to get these kids incorporated, get them in with the veterans that are there so we can get them going moving forward.”

**On keeping players motivated through injury:**

“You’re right, you don’t want them to go into a dark place. You want them to sit there and go: ‘Hey, this is a setback. This is a challenge. I’ve just got to take it for what it is and just keep working hard and get myself back into it.’ We that are around them have got to be there to support them. ‘Hey man, keep working. We know what you can do. We know who you are. Just keep going, keep going and you’ll be alright.’ We’ve got to pass that message onto them.”

**On equated players’ reps with his mentality:**

“Just your messaging. As a coach, you have to have a message in terms of that as in: ‘Hey guys, this is our mentality. This is what we do. This is what I believe in. I believe this is going to help us. We’ve got to stick to this. This has got to become a part of our mantra.’ And it is. I believe it’s all about the messaging you give them in terms of what you’re trying to do and what you’re trying to accomplish.”

**On when the mentality clicks:**

“When they start repeating it and saying it to you guys. I think that’s important, I really do. When they start repeating some of the things that you say, then you know that they’re on point. You know that they’re hearing what you’re saying. You know that they hear that and they understand it.”

**On defining a successful season:**

“Win as many games as we can, that’s the first thing. Then the second thing is that these guys can step away and say: ‘Wow, this is the culture that we’re going to have. This is the way that we’re going to do things. This is the way that we need to do things. This is our way.’ That, to me, is important.”

**On competing for the division:**

“Well, we’ve had our moments. That’s probably the biggest thing I can say because you go back and look at some of the things that we did. We moved the ball at certain times against some people, and you feel good about that. Defensively, we had a good game yesterday. We had some guys step up. You just hope that that’s what’s happened. I challenge these guys just because of the circumstances in our division. It’s not like anybody’s running away with it right now. We’re going to keep seeing what happens each week.”

**On RB Antonio Gibson:**

“I think he’s still developing and growing. Again, we’re talking about a little bit of a position switch for him. He was a wide receiver for the most part at Memphis. He did play some running back stuff. So, he’s still learning and growing. You see his potential. You see the abilities that he has. It’s a matter of getting opportunity with the situations in the game. I think Antonio’s going to be a very good player for us, a very good player.”

**On how being on the road without fans affected his decision to go for the two-point conversion:**

“That’s pretty much the approach that I used is that we were on the road. Sure, there weren’t any fans. To be honest with you, I didn’t even think about that. The only thing I was thinking about was that this is an opportunity for us to win. You’re down at the two-yard line, you feel good about the play you call, you feel good about the guys that are on the field. We just scored. We had momentum. We had energy. So, I figured that now was the chance to do something and see if we can do it. Unfortunately, it didn’t work.”

**On if he would’ve gone for the tie at FedExField:**

“Yeah. I’m just looking at what the statistics tell us.”