

WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

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QB Alex Smith

On what he saw on tape from the Bengals game:

“I did bust through the film pretty quick the night of the game, just really fast trying to get through it on such a short week. I think it’s important just to help you moving forward. I just tried to work through it, try to make sure I was seeing things correctly. As far as the deep ball is concerned, certainly I think that was a product of the protection up front and the guys running it down field. We’ve got great guys that go up and compete and make contested catches. It certainly makes you feel good giving those guys opportunity balls. Those guys continue to make plays downfield, which is great. Obviously, as a quarterback, that’s what you watch. Again, going back to the film, I buzzed it fast and quickly got onto Dallas.”

On where he feels more comfortable after a couple weeks:

“I think just that innate trust, no self-doubt, going out there playing loose and free is the biggest thing. I really feel like I have the last few weeks. I feel like I’m going out and playing quarterback and executing the offense. Certainly, there’s a chunk of the game that’s choreographed and there’s a big chunk that’s not. I think that’s the part I feel better and better with the more reps I get that I do feel confident in all those situations.”

On the divisional race:

“I feel like every year or so or a couple years, there’s always been a division that this happens to and it’s just the way it shakes out. Honestly, I feel like a lot of times come playoffs, obviously with the home game as well, it’s still a tough matchup. I think history shows that as well that you can host a game and play a Wild Card team with a better record. But whoever’s playing better football at that time of year, it doesn’t really matter as far as record goes. I think I don’t pay much attention. It’s nice knowing that we’re in it, but I think for us it’s more important to work week-by-week. Division games are huge. This is a big division game on the road. Special circumstances, playing Dallas on Thanksgiving. There’s a lot on the line. I don’t think we need to look past that at all.”

On the ESPN E:60 documentary about his recovery:

“When I decided to do it, I was still in the hospital. At that point, infection was under control but I was moving forward with limb salvage at that point and had a series of operations ahead of me. That’s when this first became a potential idea. It’s definitely not my style for anybody that knows me. I think the uniqueness of the circumstances, the uniqueness of the injury and the road—as scary as it was at that time—was really what made it hard to turn down for two reasons. One, I realized how much I was benefitting from advances. Not only surgically, but the rehab and the bracing as well. All those areas, there have been so many advances that were really giving me this opportunity. I felt like I was the beneficiary of those and really wanted to document this for anyone coming after as well. Even personally for selfish reasons, just to have this looking back. Sometimes you get through tough times and it’s easy to look back more fondly than they were. I think something just to have personally for years down the line to look back and have as well.”

On playing in front of fans in Dallas Thursday:

“Crowd noise, this will be new dealing with crowd noise this year as a group because we haven’t had to deal with it. That will be an added challenge for us on the road. So, yeah, definitely new territory for us together as a unit. I’ve played a long time. That’s the normal most years. So, you deal with it as best you can and go out there and execute your plays.”

On thinking about his future:

“I think anytime—really, my mind doesn’t wander there. But anytime if it does, my wife or whatever if we’re just chatting, I think it’s so important to just snap back into the opportunity right now. There will be time after the season for reflection and things like that. For me, I’m making the most of every opportunity each week. It’s such a special thing to be a starting quarterback in the NFL. An opportunity like this doesn’t get any cooler than this week to play on Thanksgiving. It has special meaning for me, especially considering two years ago and on the Eve of this game was when everything happened. It’s crazy to come a full circle. I’m excited to make the most of it. But again, there will be time to think about all that other stuff down the line.”

On WR Terry McLaurin:

“It’s going to be tough for me to come up with all the great adjectives I’d like to come up with to describe Terry. He’s a special, special player. A special teammate, a special leader. Not just his play-making ability and competitiveness, but I think those are things that just really show up on film, is his competitive spirit, his ability to make plays. I think his work ethic, his attitude, his approach to the game for a young player—it’s almost like he’s wise for his years for sure, so to speak. Really, really special player and a special teammate. We’re lucky to have him definitely.”

On building a rapport with the receivers through COVID-19 protocols:

“Yeah, it’s been hard. It’s definitely harder. You try to make the most of the time you have, the limited time together. It’s really tough. No offseason, camp was limited, we weren’t hanging out in the same room, we didn’t get to eat together, you don’t get the downtime together. Really those are so many of the times that make football so special, that make team sports so special is that time to hang out and get to know one another and to really grow together. I think that’s really been the biggest bummer of this year as amazing as it is to continue to play football during this pandemic. Losing out on a lot of that time with each other has been hard because that really is a lot of the special time. That really is what makes this game so great. So, yeah, you do the best you can on the field when you do get your moments. It is tough via Zoom a lot. Like I said, we don’t get to eat together. There’s not a lot of hangout time, obviously. It’s tough in that regard.”

On his favorite Thanksgiving meal:

“I’m not doing two plates on the first serving. I think definitely a big plate. It always feels good to go back. Once you’ve tried everything, going back for the best of for the second plate. I don’t know if I have a single dish. Turkey’s great, but I feel like I’m more of a ham guy for these types of holidays. But, all the sides. It’s always fun to have it all. All the staples, I guess. Sorry for the lame answer but no one thing.”

On if there is a mystique playing on Thanksgiving in Dallas:

“I don’t know if there’s a mystique. This is my first time doing it, so maybe I’m misinformed. I don’t know if there’s a mystique. Yeah, there’s a tradition. Forever growing up, it’s Detroit and Dallas that played on Thanksgiving. Certainly, they’re probably more accustomed to it and prepared for it. But the last several years, everyone has to play a Thursday night game so it’s not that strange anymore. Ours just happens to fall on this—if you happen to play in the Thanksgiving game—ours just happens to be Thursday. Everybody deals with it every year, so I think it’s a little more of an even playing feel probably as of late.”

On what makes him comfortable to throw a deep ball:

“There’s a lot that goes into that. The defense that gets presented, a lot of times that dictates where the ball goes. A lot of times, depending on the play, it’s not like we just call a shot and you just put it up. They can play certain coverages that may not dictate the ball going there. I think it’s a little bit of realizing where those one-on-one matchups are and taking it. I credit our guys that I feel really good about. We’ve got a good group of guys that are going to go and compete and are really good with the ball in the air. You feel really good about all those guys down the field and on matchups and going and making plays. So, yeah, I think that’s the great thing in the offense and what you want because they can’t double everybody. Depending on the call that we have on with whatever they’re playing, you’ve got to be able to take those shots at certain times and it’s obviously important to hit them when you do. Again, really a credit to those guys down the field. We’ve got young guys that can really roll and are aggressive in the air, which makes you feel good as a quarterback.”