

WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

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Head Coach Ron Rivera

On if the Steelers culture is a model for what he is trying to build in Washington:

“Absolutely. They’ve been able to sustain it. If you go back and look at it, there was a stretch there that was rough for them. But they stayed consistent. They stayed with what they had. They stayed with their model, they stayed with their philosophy, they stayed with their culture. Now look at where they are. Again, they most certainly are one of the teams that you look at. You look at New England, what they’ve built there. Sure, they’re struggling right now, but they try to stay consistent to the way they do things. That’s the most important thing.”

On carrying momentum into Pittsburgh:

“Again, it’s really just about going out and playing. You can do all kinds of things, trust me. I tried it in Carolina. I tried all kinds of things. Sometimes it’s really just about going out and doing your job. That’s really the thing we’ve been talking about right now is going out and doing your job, preparing yourself and doing the best you can. We’ll see what happens. It’s hard to say what motivates guys as we’re trying to find out who we have. We’re doing some different things this week. We’ll see how that all pans out for us.”

On the importance of momentum and getting players healthier:

“I think the biggest thing really is coming out and being consistent in your performance. One of the things that you look at when you look at teams that have had success is it’s really about being consistent. You watch their play from the first quarter to the fourth quarter, and they make things happen. They’re not waiting for anything. That’s some of the things we have to do is go out and make things happen and make some plays.”

On the little things WR Terry McLaurin does:

“I think it’s really about the way he approaches everything, his daily preparation. Daily preparation in meetings, daily preparation in getting ready for practice, his daily preparations as each period goes by. You watch him getting prepared for the next period and the next things he has to do. Those are the intangibles that you want all your young players to carry with them as they go forward and develop into their careers.”

On how McLaurin prepares:

“Just really by the way he approaches meetings, by the way he takes notes, by the way he asks questions. Then you go out there and you watch him at practice, and you watch the way he thinks through his routes. You can see him going through in his mind in terms of, he’ll sit there and all of a sudden he’ll do something like this and you know he’s thinking about his release or he’s thinking about widening that defender. You can tell he’s thinking about the plays as he goes through it in his mind getting ready for those plays to happen.”

On helping offensive coordinator Scott Turner:

“I think as we look at getting prepared for the week, just popping into his office: ‘Hey, did you see this? Did you have a thought about that?’ Sometimes he’ll pop into my office and he’ll say: ‘Hey, I was thinking about this, this and this. What do you think?’ Just having those little conversations pregame in terms of preparing to get ready for the game. During the game, I’ll talk about the things that I’m seeing or the things that are happening like: ‘Hey, they’re doing this. They’ve prepared for that. Have you thought about this?’ The one thing I don’t want to do is I don’t want to tell the play-caller what to call. I want to talk about what I’m seeing,

and hopefully that will trigger something that will be a positive for him. I don't want to handcuff a play-caller because, again, sometimes a guy gets into a flow and he goes with it and good things happen. I do want to talk with him, and just throw ideas at him and hopefully something happens for him. I had a first-time play-caller in Sean McDermott. I shouldn't say first-time because he had done it for a little bit, but first time I was working with him, a young guy in Sean McDermott. Sean and I would talk and he would feed off of it. He'd do a great job. Same thing with Steve Wilks. Guys like that, you want to talk with them and throw as many ideas as you can. You don't want to sit there and tell guys what to do."

On the defense limiting touchdowns in the red zone:

"I just think that it's a sense of pride. It's one of those things that [defensive coordinator] Jack [Del Rio] and his guys do emphasize is that, when you do get down into the red zone, you've got to make plays. You've got to force field goals. That's probably one of the things the guys really worked on and take a lot of pride in. I think it's just something that has also played to our favor because it limits what the playbook can be. With studying and preparing, you can anticipate what teams are going to do down there."

On the most impressive thing about the Steelers defense this season:

"I think forcing the turnovers. They've been impressive with that. You've got to protect the football, and that's probably the biggest thing you have to be concerned with because they average about two takeaways or more a game. They've scored the most points off of takeaways because of the short field. You've got to be aware of that."

On how wide receivers coach Jim Hostler coaches route running:

"I know you guys have noticed during those individual periods, I've spent time over there with the wide receivers and quarterbacks just kind of watching. Some of the things that I do notice is I do notice the way he talks to those guys about their steps coming off the ball, about their body position, about their lean, all those kinds of things. The little nuances that I know Coach Hostler has picked up over the years coaching wide receivers and being a coordinator I think is probably the biggest thing. He draws from his great experience. To think about some of the great ones he's had, you know his methods are tried and true."

On if McLaurin stays after practice:

"Early on he is. Early on, and by that I mean earlier on in the year. By now as we're kind of getting into it, it's about getting in, getting on your feet, getting some treatment, getting in the ice bath, getting in the whirlpool, those kinds of things. Now is that time of year."

On the matchup in the red zone against the Steelers:

"Well, I'm not interested in seeing it because hopefully we can keep them out of it. If we do, hopefully we can keep them out of it. I do think it's going to be a heck of a matchup. I really do. It'll be interesting to see how it all unfolds. We got a chance to watch them last night live, and it was interesting to see some of the things they try to do. Baltimore did some good things, too. I think it's going to be a good situation if we do get there."

On Turner's personality compared to his father Norv Turner's:

"There are some similarities, there really are. I think Norv is a little more demonstrative and vocal in terms of communicating with players. Scotty takes the approach where he'll come over to the player and talk with him more on a one-on-one basis, that type of thing. There are some differences in terms of similarities. One of the things I see Scotty do that Norv did is Scotty, after that play is called, is already thinking about the next call. That was one of the things that always impressed me about Coach Norv Turner. Norv always seemed to be, man, once that call is made, he started thinking about the next one. You could hear it as he's preparing for that next situation."

On speaking with Turner after the reverse play-call in Detroit:

“Again, one guy. If the guy had played it defensively like everybody is anticipating, then everybody’s patting him on the back going: ‘Hey, that was a hell of a call.’ So, again, it works both ways. You’re going to have positives. You’re going to have negatives. Sometimes it just doesn’t come out the way you designed it. If you look at the tape, we get passed one guy and we’re walking into the endzone. That’s the thing that we have to understand about plays. Sometimes one guy can muck up the whole thing. He really can. He can be that stick in the mud. But, that’s what makes this game so great.”

On if he told Turner to keep firing after the reverse:

“Yeah. That’s my approach is that I can’t get into Scott’s head, so I’m not going to. I can’t do that because I’ve seen it happen before where, being a position coach, I’ve heard guys say stuff and the next thing you know a guy pulls back. He’s not out there like he needs to be. That’s the thing you have to be careful about when you talk to play-callers or coordinators.”

On determining core principles:

“I think part of it is you get to a certain time of the year and you have to look at certain things, also. That’s where we are right now. It’s interesting because one of the things that we’re challenging the guys a little bit more is the mental aspect of the game, whereas in the past even though it was late as it was, it was still about the physicality of the game. At times, I don’t know if you necessarily need that much as much as you need the mental aspect. We’ve challenged them in that way about getting the mental aspect down. The last couple of weeks we’ve done it, and it’s actually worked out pretty good. We’ve continued that portion of it. We’re still trying to get some of that physical traits of the game down. But, we are putting an emphasis on making sure the mental emphasis is down, understanding your assignment, understanding what you need to do and standing where you need to be.”

On getting the mental side down:

“Well, I think some of it is really about the installation periods, giving a little bit more time for that, allowing a little more time to correct things as opposed to hurrying through things and getting to the next step.”

On if he would prefer a shorter week compared to rest:

“It could work either way, it really can. You could have a slew of injuries and it really changes your team. Or you do have that momentum, and having a shorter period means you might not be able to install as much. There’s going to be carryover for the game, which could be a positive. On the inverse, having as much time as we had, the guys are rested. You’ve had time to be able to go through certain aspects of your offense, defense, special teams, so your preparation is a little bit different. It’s six of one, half a dozen of the other. It just depends on your outlook on that.”

On Steelers WRs Chase Claypool and JuJu Smith-Schuster:

“You look at them both and JuJu is a big, physical receiver. He’s got good size. He’s a guy that will battle of the ball. Claypool’s got the speed, the quickness. He’s got some vertical stretch on you. I don’t see him much different than what we saw him coming out, other than he’s a little more polished. That’s probably the biggest thing you see about him is that he’s a more polished player. JuJu seems to be the guy that, at some point in certain critical situations, seems to be the go-to guy and the guy that, during the game at any point he might throw a deep to is Claypool.”

On if this season is uncharted territory compared to the 2011 lockout:

“Oh, yeah. Very much so. This really is different. It was one thing to talk about once we got into training camp or at the beginning of training camp, but after that everything has changed. It really is. Everything is off the table at this point. This is so different. This is so much more, it really is. When we all take a step back and look

at this, we're all going to say: 'Are you 'frickin kidding me? This is what we did in 2020? Holy cow.' At least I am. I can tell you that much. To be honest, I really am obviously looking forward to getting through this year and finishing up some point, hopefully, in February and being able to just say: 'You know what, it's time. Let's just go forward folks.'"