

December 16, 2020

## **Offensive Coordinator Scott Turner**

### **On the offense transitioning if QB Alex Smith cannot play Sunday:**

“Well, we’ll see. We’re evaluating Alex right now, so we’ll see. I think Alex has done a nice job. I know you’re talking about scoring numbers—it helps when the defense scores touchdowns. We’re never going to be upset with that. We’ve done a nice job. We didn’t play as well as we wanted to on offense this past game. There were a number of errors, a couple things. They’re a good defense and gave them credit for that. We had a couple plays that we didn’t quite make. But I feel like we’ve gotten better. We’ll see with Alex as far as his health goes. [QB] Dwayne [Haskins Jr.] will prepare accordingly. Dwayne has done a nice job kind of behind the scenes. I’m sure there are a couple plays he’d like back in the pass game. We’ll get him ready. We expect him to play well if he has to play.”

### **On if the game plan changes if Smith cannot play:**

“You always kind of take things here or there just to try to play to guys strengths. [Haskins Jr.] and Alex are different players. We’re going to run our offense, but within that there are going to be specific changes or some things we might lean toward one way or the other based on who’s out there.”

### **On if he changes the game plan if Smith is limited:**

“Those are all things that you evaluate. We’re going to make sure that Alex is healthy if he plays. If he’s out there, he’s going to be ready to go to play the best of his ability. We’ll function the way that we have been and doing the things that Alex does well.”

### **On how WR Cam Sims has grown this season:**

“Cam plays with a lot of confidence. I think that stems from his preparation. He really works hard and understands what he’s supposed to do on every play and how it fits within the offense. He’s helping other guys get lined up out there. He’s dialed in on what he’s supposed to do. Because he’s so mentally prepared, it enables him to play fast. I think Cam’s at this place in his career where he’s kind of been a backup-type guy and didn’t get as many opportunities. I think he made it up in his mind that when he does get opportunities, he’s going to make the most of it. That started on special teams, and I think the more he did well with the opportunities the more he got. He’s really taken advantage of that. I’m proud of him and the way that he works on a day-to-day basis.”

### **On if Smith’s calf injury bothered him during the game:**

“I don’t know. I think there were a couple plays he was a little of on. But that happens. Guys miss throws, no matter who you are as a quarterback. I didn’t know that. Then, it was brought to my attention kind of later in the second quarter. He kind of tried to keep getting loosened up and then it just got to the point where he couldn’t. I didn’t think that was an issue. I just kind of thought, hey, maybe he missed a throw here or there, which happens. Like I said, it happens to the best quarterbacks in the world. So, no, I didn’t think that was an issue until somebody told me about it.”

### **On if he has seen growth from Haskins Jr.:**

“I think the biggest thing with him is just he’s really kind of shadowed and modeled the preparation behind Alex. I heard Dwayne say that, that Alex is somebody that he looks up to. I think he really took that to heart when he looked at the type of career Alex has had. He said: ‘Hey, this is the way to do it.’ That’s where he’s made the most strides, and it’s something that people don’t see getting ready for a game. Put yourself in a situation where, if you do get the opportunity to play, then you’re ready to make the most of it. I think it’ll pay off if needed.”

**On what he has seen from Haskins Jr. behind the scenes:**

“So, it’s tough because of all the COVID regulations and stuff like that. The quarterbacks, they’ve been able to still come in at times and just come in early. Coming in and being on his own or getting with the other quarterbacks and watching film—just the questions he asks, the preparation, the extra work at practice, doing some things with other guys maybe after practice. Just the little things like that. They really add up and create the preparation that’s necessary to be successful.”

**On reassuring Haskins Jr.:**

“We have constant communication. I told him during the game: ‘Hey, I believe in you. I told you these opportunities are going to present themselves at some time. Here it is. Let’s go finish this game and win it.’ We did what we had to do to get out of that game and won. This week, just getting the reps in practice. We’re going to be careful with Alex and see how he progresses throughout the week. But every single week whether you get the reps or not, if you’re the backup quarterback you have to prepare like you’re going to play because you could get out there for a play. That part doesn’t change. Now, he’s getting more and more reps so he’s got to use that and use every rep he can to get ready and be comfortable going out there and playing.”

**On how long it takes for development to happen:**

“I don’t know. I think it’s different for each individual. I think developing the right habits is the first step, and then it’s just making sure you’re always moving in the right direction, you’re always building on your habits. You’re building on the work ethic. You’re building on the way you practice, the way you approach practice. You’re consistently getting better, and then it pays off. You don’t know exactly when it’s going to be. But you can’t lose sight of the process. You trust the process, then the results are going to come.”

**On how RB J.D. McKissic has evolved in the offense:**

“J.D. is a guy who can do it all. He’s a very intelligent player. We don’t worry about him moving around. He can really handle anything. He’s been a guy that’s worn multiple hats for us as far as playing the slot, playing the backfield, both catching the ball in the backfield and running the ball. He can run a route. He helps the other guys. He’s helped [RB] Antonio [Gibson] as well as the other backs. People always talk about Antonio being a college wide receiver, well so was J.D. He’s a little bit further on in his journey, he’s played running back for a couple years now. He’s got natural run skills. He plays with good vision. He puts the ball where it needs to go, and it means a lot to him. He’s a very, very fierce competitor. You know you’re going to get everything he’s got every day both mentally and physically. He’s the type of guy you want on your team.”

**On where he told Haskins Jr. to improve specifically:**

“That was kind of a private conversation that myself and Dwayne had. [Head] Coach [Ron Rivera] and Dwayne had one separately themselves. I apologize if I leave that between me and him. But yeah, there were specific things that we talked about that he needed to improve on. Some of the things, the improvement has just been what we talked about. His growth has been in his preparation. Yeah, there are other things as well, but that’s the thing. Then again, just that constant work every single day and the process of building toward something and not just thinking it’s going to happen. This league is incredibly competitive. It’s very hard. It’s hard to be successful. You’ve got to get a process. You’ve got to get something that you believe in and you’ve got to stick to it. That only gives you a chance. If you do that, then you’ve got a chance to be successful and then you’ve

still got to go play. Those are the things that he's really working toward. He's got, like I said, a great mentor and great models to show him on a daily basis in Alex. He's really taking that to heart. He's moving in the right direction."

**On the run game against the 49ers:**

"We actually ran the ball pretty well. There were some times that potentially we would've liked to run a little more. I think if we had a couple more of those third downs that we converted, we would've gotten to be more pass. We were pretty even as far as our run and pass went. The thing was we had a couple deals in the pass game where we missed some plays, and we didn't miss third downs and then we didn't get the attempts up like we wanted to. That's OK, that's a really good defense and they're really good against the run, so you do have to make some plays in the pass game. We didn't make those plays. Then, we put ourselves in a situation we were in longer third downs. The shorter downs we converted, but again, we've got to be better in that situation. We ended up running—it ended up being under 100 yards because of the kneel downs, but we broke 100 with the two backs. I think we would've had a little more success had we had success in more areas that would have led to more success. But really, that was the place I thought we did well in the game, even if it didn't show up on the stat sheet because of some other areas."