

WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

June 2, 2021

Head Coach Ron Rivera

On the improvements so far in OTA's:

"I've been very pleased. When we got into week five of the OTA's was the first opportunity for us to get on the field and week six was the opportunity for us to be a little competitive. I really loved their attentiveness, and their recall was very good. Coming into this week, Tuesday was a little sluggish coming off the four day break, but they finished strong yesterday and today they started fast and finished fast. I was very pleased with them. I had to try to tone them down a little bit. They were getting a little excited but it's good to see them being competitive. We just have to be smart because we really don't want to get anybody hurt out here."

On fan behavior in the NBA:

"It was a heck of a tackle first of all, dropped his hips, bent knees, kept his head up, and drove through the tackle. He defended that baseline very well. We've considered reaching out but we're not there yet. It is a little bit of craziness from what I've seen going on and it's tough because the NBA players are so close. The fans are so close you can reach out and truly touch them and that's tough on those guys. Those guys are very competitive basketball players trying to keep themselves focused on their game and to have some of the fans react the way they do is disappointing because the truth of the matter is, to me, the ticket gives you an opportunity to come in. You can cheer or you can boo, but let's not get belligerent and nasty and do something that can be construed as dangerous towards a player because those guys are really doing the best they can."

On the advice he would give the Wizards on the brink of elimination:

"I loved their competitive spirit, the way they came out and fought. They play very physical. The referees let them play physically and that would be my approach to the team. I would tell them to continue to play physically and see what happens. That was cool, I really loved their energy. I think the coach really got them going. He led them in the right direction. The thing that I love about their situation is that they don't have to. This is all about what they want to do. If they want to win, they can go out and give their best and see what happens. Philly has been in that position where they have to, they must, they got to. There is a lot more pressure on Philly than there is on Washington as far as I'm concerned. Nobody expects Washington to be where they are. I believe [Russell] Westbrook willed them into the playoffs and he's played hard. [Bradley] Beal has played hard. That whole team has played hard and they should be commended for the way they came out in Game 4 and played as physically as they did. They got themselves a win at home."

On the status of inactives at OTA's:

"With [OL] Saahdiq [Charles], we are still monitoring him. He's coming off that season ending surgery he had, but we are still monitoring him. He practices a day or two in a row then we will give him a day off. There is not issue there. [WR] Curtis [Samuel] is dealing with a little twinge he has on his groin so we are just trying to be smart with him and keep an eye on him as well. Shouldn't be an issue. [QB] Taylor [Heinicke] caught an elbow just above the eye during an installation period. We were walking through the back emphasizing the pocket and putting the elbow high and Taylor leaned in with his head and he nicked him just above it. Unfortunately, he had a gash and had to get stitches so he looks like a boxer right now. Until we can put a helmet on him safely we won't have him out there. He's out there wearing a ball cap, he's involved in everything and it's just one of

those tone down walkthrough periods emphasizing the pocket and Taylor leaned in and caught the elbow so that was a little unfortunate.”

On guys showing effort and learning details:

“We are seeing that, I've been really pleased with what we got the last two and a half weeks. I think the thing that's happening is that we are getting things done that we need to have done. Looking over our installation plans that we have, we have gone through those watching the guys and the nice thing is, some of the protocols have been lifted. We have had more interaction with the players and you really see their attentiveness and that's been a huge plus and a positive as far as I'm concerned. I'm very happy with it. You watch guys like [OL] Brandon Scherff who is out there and when he's getting his reps he's giving his all. And that's just him, he's one of the guys that we are trying to tempo down a little because he's working so hard. Watching [QB] Ryan Fitzpatrick, here's a guy who comes in and is learning another new offense. He's already got it, he's a veteran guy who is a very bright football player and you see him helping the young wide receivers. Today, [WR] Dyami [Brown] was running a route and he had gone up to Dyami and explained to him ‘Think about this, do you see this? Tempo it down right here and I'll throw it when you're open.’ That's great, it's exciting when you see that happening with the veteran players and the young players.”

On Director of Wellness and Clinical Services Dr. Barbara Roberts:

“I think it's important to shed light on mental health. Naomi Osaka has made a stand, and I give her a tremendous amount of respect for that. I really do appreciate the Snyder's seeing the importance of making sure that we are proactive with our players' mental health. Hiring Dr. Roberts has boomed as far as I'm concerned because that's a big part of it. There are a lot of things that these young athletes are dealing with both on and off the field, and we want to make sure that we find as much positivity in them going forward. There are a lot of people that are demanding of these young people. They have a lot of responsibility, and they need to have somebody that can help them cope with it so be it, but I do appreciate the Snyder's for helping us become proactive on this and allowing us to do this. This to me is very important, very vital to our organization as we go forward. I think this is another thing that's going to help us take another step in the right direction as the football team is concerned.”

On the status of DT Jonathan Allen:

“It's a voluntary situation. These are all voluntary, I appreciate the guys coming. He's been in contact with his position coach so at least we know and that's important and I really appreciate the guys being here.”

On RB Antonio Gibson and TE Logan Thomas:

“First of all he's a football player and I think the adjustment for him is really just learning the basics of his position. Understanding what his aiming points are when he gets the ball in his hand for certain runs, what he's looking for in certain runs, when to make back cuts or press the hole, when to anticipate the hole opening up. Those are all things he will learn with the more reps he gets and that's probably the biggest thing. The expectation for him is to take another big step. He's taken a tremendous step last year, was a scoring machine for us in terms of getting close to the red zone. He was able to put the ball in the endzone for us. I do anticipate him taking another big step. I don't know if you were out there to see the one handed catch he made out here in the red zone but it was pretty impressive [Logan]. Not just his physical skills as far as his position is concerned, but his mental part of it and just having the sense that he's really starting to take what we do offensively and his knowledge of the game and using it to help himself understand how to do things better. That's the other part of that I can anticipate on him improving as far as Logan is concerned.”

On the offensive line this year:

“One thing that we looked at as far as the offensive was concerned was how we can get better going forward as far as the future is concerned. One of the things we talked about too was working to improve the depth. We felt

that we have done that. We got some good, young players that are going to be guys that will eventually transition to bigger roles for us. But right now, we are really pleased with the position flex that we have from our young players. I think wanting to remake it and create a competitive atmosphere is a big part of what we did.”

On giving OL Sam Cosmi an opportunity to compete:

“What it shows is that we have a tremendous amount of confidence in a number of our players and guys that we like, not just Cosmi. What we need to understand is that we want to say we drafted Cosmi, we do want him on the field, but we will put him on the field when we get him there when he earns that opportunity. [Cornelius] Lucas is a guy that we are taking a nice, hard look at. That’s going to be a very competitive position going into training camp. We are going to play the best guy, the guy that gives us the best chance to win so everyone knows. [Saahdiq] Charles is having a really good camp and he’s another guy that’s going to be very competitive for us. Again, going forward there is nothing set in stone. A lot of these positions will be very competitive. Every position has an opportunity to have a different player start for the most part. There are a couple that are pretty solid, I’m not going to lie to you about that.”

On LB Jamin Davis growth over the last few weeks:

“I think you guys know we started him out at the Mike position. We wanted to see him handle the middle linebacker responsibilities. He's taken into that, he's calling the huddles right now, he's setting the front for us, he's helping the checks. He's learning that part. Every practice seems to be an improvement for him as far as that part of it. His physical attributes, talents are now honing him and getting him to understand how to read his keys, how to react to his keys, how to react to what our opponents are trying to do. In practice, he's reading our offensive line and looking into blocking schemes trying to get to his run gaps. In coverage, he's trying to understand and get a good feel for where his drops are in zone coverage, how he matches his coverages and in man coverage it's about his technique and understanding where his leverage slides. He's done a nice job; you do see his improvement every day and it's exciting to watch him grow. That's one thing that I am very pleased with.”

On what he has seen out of the younger guys with Chase Young’s absence:

“I think they have done a great job. The young guys that are competing right now are very competitive guys. It's good to see them get these opportunities. Montez [Sweat] being back yesterday and today watching him out on the field has been really good. He's done a great job with his offseason workouts on his own and came right back and picked up right where he left off. Coming off the ball hard and working hard was really good to see. The other young guys have done a really good job. It's just about taking advantage of when you get a chance to get a lot of work. That's what our guys are doing, and they should be commended for giving us their all.”

On WR Curtis Samuel:

“First thing you have to do is know what personnel group the offense is in and where he's lined up. If he's an outside player, playing the X or Z, you can account for him here. But when he is in the slot, it's a whole other thing depending on if you like their matchup. Is the nickel capable of covering more if he's in the slot or is that a linebacker over him. Now he motions across the formations. Now we have to be ready for a jet sweep or be ready for some sort of pulling, trap, or helping inside because Curtis has the ability to run inside as well. There are a lot of variables that come into trying to scout a multi-positional player like Curtis Samuel.”

On where Samuel is most comfortable:

“I don't think there is any danger moving him around too much. The thing that I really do appreciate is that when you watch a guy like that and you get an opportunity to break down his stats and you see that on the field his production is off the charts, when the ball is in his hands the production is tremendous. The thing we got to

do is make sure we have him on the field and make sure that he gets the opportunity to touch the ball. The analytics show that this is a guy that has to be a big part of your offense.”

On QB Steven Montez:

“The thing that we have to look at is this whole Covid situation. We are not out of Covid and that is the thing that everyone needs to understand. That's why we are hoping for guys to get vaccinated because Steven does have his vaccinations and did have Covid a year ago, so you couple that with the vaccination, the science says he is super protected. He's a guy that can help in more positions than one if something were to happen. If you get a contact tracing on some players in a specific position, and Steven knows what to do and he's not active initially he could be active. That's the thought process on Steven and he's not the only guy we are looking at as far as position is concerned. We got a few other guys that we have said might not be active initially, but he may have a chance if something crazy happens. You have to prepare for those circumstances because again we are not out of Covid and that's why I believe we are stressing that we can get to 85 percent and get that herd immunity we can let our guards down a little. We are not letting them down right now, we are preparing for a situation where we go into the season and may have to. We are looking at a lot of these things and possibilities and it may play into the fact why we keep guys and why we can't keep other guys. I hate to say it but it's a real concern.”

On punt return options:

“It's a good group, we have a lot of options, I think. We made some decisions in the offseason to bring certain types of players in. I think the biggest thing we have to look at is who is the guy that can be dynamic and be part of what we are doing going forward? DeAndre Carter is a guy that we went out last year, he's got some very good return skills. He's a guy that we like. Obviously, Steven Sims is a guy that is dynamic, a guy that we have seen before in the past. Dax Milne is a kid that did it in college and has shown the aptitude. During rookie camp we had him catch some punts and did a nice job, so we are looking and trying to exhaust every one of our opportunities to see who the best guy is. Danny Johnson did it for us last year and was a very safe option at times. He still was dynamic as a kick returner. We feel like we have good options and I think we can be good at it going forward.”