

# WASHINGTON

## FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

July 27, 2021

### Head Coach Ron Rivera

#### **On DT Jonathan Allen and TE Logan Thomas signing contract extensions:**

“Well, I just think the biggest thing was there were contracts that we were working on at the end of OTs and minicamp and things we wanted to get taken care of. I'm just glad it's out of the way. You know, these are guys that we believe fit us going into the future. They give us some stability. I think it shows the other players that we most certainly are working to try and keep our own and that's how you build a team if you're able to sign those guys, keep those guys around. We were able to find Logan last year, and he developed into a type of player we believe he has ability to be and we just feel very fortunate we can keep him around you know. As you know, Jonathan was a first-round draft pick, a guy that's had a tremendous impact on our football team not just as a player, but as a leader. So it was good to get him done.”

#### **On the team's vaccination rates:**

“Well, we're hopefully trending in the right direction. We've had a few more guys get theirs. I believe we're over 50%, so we're trending in the right direction. We're not where we want to be. Obviously, you know, we have a lot of guys who have a lot of questions, unfortunately. They haven't gotten the answers that they should have by now, and we can need to do a good job of trying to make sure we can inform them and help them make an educated decision.”

#### **On dealing with the issues with COVID and the new protocols:**

“Yeah, I think it's frustrating, you know, especially in the fact that last year we were the number one team against COVID, you know, our players took the challenge of staying inside the bubble, doing things the right way. And for the most part, we only had two situations. Both of them were guys that were not on the active 53. So it turned out to be a positive for us as far as being COVID free. And now for whatever reason, we have some reluctance to do that, to get the vaccine and these young men have to make the decisions for themselves, but I think hopefully, they can understand just how impactful not getting the vaccine is. You'd like to believe with all the news that's been out there in terms of the fact that people that are being hospitalized and are dying from COVID right now are those that aren't, vaccinated.”

#### **On why he thinks players are hesitant to get the vaccine:**

“I think it's a circumstance. I think we have a group of young guys that want more information. The frustrating part is, you know, we're trying to provide it as quickly and as much as possible. But yet they still have to make their own decisions.”

#### **On his approach to the new protocols:**

“We're just going to follow the rules, the example that's set by the NFLPA and the NFL, and we'll go from there.”

#### **On working with Co-CEO and Co-Owner Tanya Snyder:**

“Well, we really only had one opportunity to sit down with, with Mrs. Snyder. That was last Wednesday, she was in the office working on some of the stuff they've mapped out. But it was good to see her in there. We had a nice conversation about the stuff that that's being worked on right now for the team. She, and I know this, she's very bright, very intelligent, sharp woman. She knows exactly what's going on and, it's cool, it really is. It just

kind of neat seeing her in there working.”

**On the facility here in Richmond and his initial impressions:**

“Well, it’s the second time I’ve been there, first time it came, I toured it, um, about 17 months ago, a couple of February’s ago. I said, you know, it’s a nice setup. It like, it has everything that could accommodate what we need.”

**On the difference in his approach to this year compared to last year:**

“Well, I think that’s, it, it’s just, we’ll be a little bit closer to normal, but that’s about it. We’ll see how it goes. I have some ideas and some thoughts as far as what the messaging is going to be for these guys going forward. And we’ll see how it goes to me. A lot is going to be how things go the first couple of weeks, you know, you get a sense and feel for where this team’s headed, at least I feel I will. And from that, I’ll react to it and we’ll go from there.”

**On adding a 17<sup>th</sup> game to the season:**

“Doesn’t alter anything. what we’ll do is, we’re going to take advantage of the opportunity to practice. I’m pretty excited about that. We get one less game obviously, but we can still accomplish what we need to in those three. So I’m looking forward to the extra week where we just really focus on us and we’ll have to take advantage of that extra week I think will be really good.”

**On his expectations for the conditioning test:**

“Yeah, that’ll be coming out afterwards. That way I can, uh, I don’t have to answer the question about how everybody’s doing good on the test.”

**On his approach to giving out first team reps:**

“The intent is to find the best combination of players to put them on the field. We’ll make sure everybody gets reps. We’ll make sure that we get a chance to really truly evaluate. Based on what happened last year, I made the decision to do what I did and I’m not sure if that was the best decision. I wanted to try and get Dwayne as many reps as possible and give him every opportunity to develop within the scheme. I know it was a new scheme and he really didn’t have the type of time you would like, but I just thought that would be something that was right for us and it didn’t work. So this year, you know, it’s going to be pretty much normal in terms of competition.”

**On practicing in front of the fans:**

“I think it’s cool. I really do. It’s an opportunity to really reach out and touch the fans. We’ll practice, and we’ll practice hard. We’ll try to give them a little sampling of what we can be. It’s not going to be padded until next week by the rules, but they’ll be good enough to see some of the things that we’ve done in the spring. Some of the players we brought in. I’ve kind of figured that the best thing we can do with these four days is really kind of look at retention, see how many guys retain the things that we put in and installed. They’ll be a good chance for us to gauge that and really kind of see what type of shape of conditioning they’re in. So I look forward to that, but, you know, as far as being here and being able to be close to the fans, I think that’s a cool thing. It really is. We lost touch with them a little bit last year. I think to a degree in all honesty, it was a little good that we didn’t have the fans out early, cause we didn’t play very well after the Eagles game. It might have been discouraging to be booed, but I think as we started to gain momentum, started to play better, it would have been great to have the fans to create that momentum. I would love to see what it had been like to play Tampa at home with a packed stadium in the playoff that, that, that would have been something that would have been special for our guys. So I’m looking forward to having them back here at camp. And then once we start playing the preseason games and get into the regular season, I think it’s going to be fun.”

**On how he will try and promote the vaccine:**

“I think the big thing really is, is to have individual conversations, which is my intent is to sit down and talk with each guy individually and try and get a feel and again, I'm not going to tell anybody what to do. I'm going to try and understand them and give them some reasons why I think it would be a good thing and we'll see how it goes, but I hope we can get to these guys, get the to understand really it's not just for them, but it's for the people around them. And that's the thing that I think hopefully will get their attention is that it's not just about them, but the folks around them.”

**On the disadvantages of being under 50% with team vaccination rates:**

“It becomes a real disadvantage in terms of preparation. If you've got a guy that's going to miss out on two weeks of work, I think when you get into the regular season and you wake up Saturday morning and they'd come in and tell you that you've got five guys that can't play on Sunday and it's your starting group, that's going to shake your team up. We saw what happened, unfortunately, to Denver last year, they had to start a wide receiver at quarterback. You don't want to be in that situation. We don't want to be in that situation. So it could be a huge, huge disadvantage. The hard part too, is the thing they got to think about too is based on the rules, you're risking, not just your paycheck, but other people's paychecks too. So, you know, I think that's, something that we all have to think about.”

**On if he envisions tension arising between vaccinated and unvaccinated players:**

“That could, I mean who knows what could happen, but we'd have to see. Again, it is everybody's choice, everybody's decision, but you just hope that they all fall in line and understand what's at stake and know we're not there yet. We're not calling you up. Don't hit the sled anymore before you get hurt. I think the biggest thing more so than anything else is it's go time, that that's going to be the big thing. There's, a lot to talk about with these guys. We had a meeting earlier today, but it was all administrative we'll meet again later on today and we'll talk a little bit more in depth as to the things that, you know, what our goals are, what our intent is, what we're trying to get out of out of camp.”

**On if he can specify who is and isn't vaccinated on the roster:**

“Now we're not going to put anything out there as far as who's not vaccinated. I think the important thing is we know who isn't vaccinated and we'll leave it at that.”

**On the benefits of having high vaccination numbers:**

“I think that's the thing that you hopefully can get to these guys and get them to understand just how important it is. You know, when you have that many guys that are doing the things that can help and benefit, I think that has to be considered it truly does. This is one of those, you know, very careful things and we'll see.”

**On if he is frustrated with the players who are not vaccinated:**

“Yeah I am, I'm truly frustrated. I'm beyond frustrated, you know, and part of it is the reason I walked in with a mask on is I'm immune deficient. So with this new variant, who knows? So when I'm in a group and the group's not vaccinated, or there's mixture, I've put the mask on for health reasons cause nobody really knows. I have to do that and I just wish and I hope that our guys can understand that.”

**On the importance of developing the bottom of the roster players:**

“No, and it's very important that the guys, the backups develop like they did last year and continue to get better and better. The nice thing is, because of the situation we're in the league has pretty much instilled a lot of the protocols that we had last year. And then a lot of the rules, as far as your practice squad, the ability to elevate players, the ability to put players on IR short term. So those are things are going to help us. But again, you still don't want to get into a situation where you wipe out a position because you really truly put yourself in a bad spot. I hope we understand that and hopefully we can realize that as we go forward.”

**On how he is feeling:**

“I feel really good, I’m very comfortable. Comfortable with where we are as a football team, in terms of our players, our growth and development. We have some questions early on that I hope to get answered quickly. The thing that still looms over our head unfortunately, is the whole COVID situation. That’s the one thing that similar to last year. It’s not as pressing initially, but it can be, and we have to figure that out we have to understand that we do as a football team, as individuals, we have to understand what’s truly at stake in terms of opportunities going forward and we’ll see how it all unfolds. To some degree, this tells us a little bit about us.”