

# WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

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## Offensive Coordinator Scott Turner

### **On his feelings about the tight end room without TEs Logan Thomas and Ricky Seals-Jones:**

"I feel good about those guys. I was really encouraged with the way that [TE] John [Bates] came in, had a couple of big plays. That third down conversion, obviously on our second to last touchdown drive in the game was huge. They'd cut it to three points and a big third down 18-yard gain. I thought he blocked well. It wasn't too big for him. He's played and then [TE] Sammis [Reyes] I think got in there four plays and he did some all-right things. And then we'll get him geared up to step into that role if we have to. But, those guys they've done a great job all year preparing, and that's why if they're on your team, they're going to play at some point and you got to prepare those guys. Our coaches, and specifically [tight ends] Coach [Pete] Hoener – Pete does a really nice job with those guys, so we'll be ready to go."

### **On what he liked from QB Taylor Heinicke's game against Tampa Bay:**

"I think it wasn't all pretty, but for the most part it was really good. I think that the third downs was the biggest thing that was the best. I mean to convert, first off to have 19 third downs is a lot, but to convert 11-of-19, and then even on some of the ones that we didn't convert, we had a third-and-13 that he made a great decision to get the ball to [RB] J.D. [McKissic]. J.D. made a play, and then they allowed us to go for it on fourth down, and he made a great play on fourth down as well. The other one, we ran the ball and then ran it again to get the fourth down. So, I just think his decision-making on third down, a couple of the sacks there were sometimes that he could have got the ball out, but just overall, just playing fast, understanding and learning from each experience as they come is the thing that he's just getting better at and just dealing with the week in and week out grind."

### **On Heinicke saying that at times stuff looks different in practice but it all changes when the game starts:**

"Sometimes that's just kinda how it is. It's not like necessarily a negative, it's just like, we were looking for a play against a certain look and in practice is the first time he sees it. And then if we're doing a good job, then we ended up getting that same look in practice. It's like almost like an 'Ah Ha' moment as it happens. Also, you're trying to get a look from the defensive show team, and maybe it doesn't -- those guys do a really good job and our younger coaches do a really nice job of getting those guys in the right position, but it doesn't always match up perfectly. So maybe it's like, why is this route concept in? And it's like, well they play it a little differently, we couldn't quite replicate it. And then you get the look in the game and things tend to clear themselves up. But, a lot of those things, and you only have a limited amount of reps in practice as well, so you can't show them every single look. You definitely can't show them every single look full speed. So, a lot of the things we like to do in film study or in walkthrough, you may get a secondary look and just be ready to be prepared for that."

### **On if being a "gamer" is the byproduct of familiarity:**

"I mean, not everybody's like that either. I understand your question a little bit better now. I think for him in practice, and a lot of players think this way, like I'm trying to run this play exactly how it's run and he's a conscientious guy, so he wants to do exactly what is right. And in the game, it's like, I'm just trying to go make a play, and you let your training take over. And then it's just a little bit more natural for Taylor or for guys like that, whereas there's other guys that go the other way, now they try to be way too perfect in the game and that's when things can go bad."

### **On what it meant having G Brandon Scherff back and on how he thinks the offensive line has performed as a whole this season:**

"I think the line has done a great job. We've had guys kind of in and out of the lineup, the left side's been pretty steady and in there the whole time, and they've done a nice job. Brandon's the leader, not only of the offensive line, but just of our

offense. He's one of the leaders of our offense. So, just to have his presence in there it brings some confidence to the rest of those guys. There's a certain physicality, obviously that he plays with and consistency where you know he's going to get his job done. I think he's a guy that guys like playing next to for the offensive linemen. Having [C] Chase [Roullier] out and now [C] Tyler [Larsen] in there, having Brandon next to him is a big add."

**On TE John Bates' skills in the passing game:**

"I mean, I'm not giving away any secrets here. Like John, he can't run as well as [TE] Logan [Thomas] or [TE] Ricky [Seals-Jones], but he catches the ball every bit as good as those guys. He's a big target. He has excellent quickness. So, there's certain things that he's able to do. I mean, the seam route, that's a big target. The safety went to hit him and missed. You know what I mean? Cause I think a little bit of that, you go to hit a big guy like that and it's not the most fun thing to do. That's something that he brings. He's got a little more size than those guys and he does a nice job of blocking. He's even getting better and better, but he's a young player that's progressing. He's gonna have to step up for us just like he did the second half. Now he's just got to do it over the course of a whole game."

**On if the original plan was to not play TE Sammis Reyes as much this season due to the learning curve:**

"No, it's not necessarily that. It's not like we didn't want him to play. It was just that we had guys ahead of him on the depth chart. And maybe it is because of that, you know what I mean? But it wasn't like necessarily this is the plan. We wanted to play him based on where he sat with the rest of our team. But he's been a guy that you could see the improvement every day. I think that this time having not being forced into live action will be good for him. He's gonna get an opportunity, whether it's this week or the way things have been going at some point in the season. But I do think that being able to learn and not just be like, 'Hey, you just started playing football. You played your first game ever of any level in the preseason. Now it's live.' I think this little bit of time and being able to practice and acquire reps has been a good thing for him."

**On TE John Bates**

"Playing fast. He was playing with speed. I think his strength and what he's going to be is the quickness part of it. The details as far as the depths of the route, releases, you know what I mean, at what point to put your foot in the ground and separate away, all those things. Protecting the football once you do catch it. Obviously, they called him down, but the ball came out. We can't have those types of things happen. The biggest thing is just honing in on the details and doing exactly what he's coached to do and being at the right spot when he needs to be."

**On what this game means to Ron Rivera:**

"Yeah, just being there with them for four years and, you know, it was split up as well. Coach really put a lot into that team and then also into the community. He enjoyed living there. Him and Stephanie, they really had a lot of ties there and they still got a lot of friends that are there. Coach has done a really good job this week of just expressing the importance of this game for our team. You know what I mean? And not really for him. He hasn't made it about himself. Obviously, it's the elephant in the room. This is an important game to coach. He was there for a long time and I think that it's a game you're excited to go play and go play for him."

**On T Charles Leno:**

"Yeah, it's been great to have a guy that lines up at left tackle and does his job and does above that. I mean, again, he's been really doing a nice job of moving guys into the run game. He stays in front of his guy blocks and in the past pro again, it's another veteran. So just that leadership for when we have a guy like Brandon out, you know, a guy like Charles can step up. I think the line, and they've dealt with a little adversity with some moving pieces here, but, you know, they've done a nice job all year both in the past and the run game."

**On T Sam Cosmi and if an injury like that sets a rookie back:**

"I think he looks like he's picking stuff back up there's a little bit. I don't think it was so much as a rookie. It's just, coming back from the injury and just the limited mobility, you know? As far as like mentally and everything like that, he's been staying in it the whole time. I think he'll be fine when he gets back out there."

**On RB Antonio Gibson lining up as a receiver:**

Yeah. I mean, we're going to mix the up. Obviously, we got two backs that can do a lot of that. I mean, Antonio, the thing that I was really the happiest with him about in the game was how hard he ran. You know, it didn't show up in the yards per carry, per se, but when you look at that defense and how successful they are at stopping the run and then how he ran the ball and then specifically how he ran the ball at the end, you know what I mean? And finished how we finished that game, running the football on that last drive, that was the thing. And that's what he does. We've talked earlier in the year about his body and not wearing down.

You can't, as much as I'd love to do everything with them, like you can't have it both ways and we're going to pick and choose our spots to do some different kinds of stuff with him. Fortunately for us, we have a guy who's just excellent in that role in J.D. [McKissic], who's been a highly, highly productive receiver. Antonio does have a little bit more just because of the size, and then doing some of the stuff that he did. Antonio had two big catches. One was on a second down one was on a third down. He could do some of the stuff on third down, but some early down stuff is good for him as well.”

**On that final drive:**

“It didn't feel like that long at the time. Obviously, I was aware of the clock because that's a big part of managing it and we wanted to take as much time. When we got the ball at 10:40, :55 left, I wasn't thinking like we were in four-minute offense. Obviously, we evolve to that as the drive went on. We were using the whole clock and we were specifically talking about getting it down as low as you can. Once you got in that four minute, they start using their timeouts. I was pretty locked in, I wasn't thinking about much other than trying to keep getting first downs. And then fortunately we were able to finish it with in the end zone with whatever it was, 27 seconds left. It was a great deal. It was a great testament to our guys. Just the way that they finished that thing off.”