

WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

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Head Coach Ron Rivera

On the injuries:

“Well, let's see. Taylor [Heinicke] is a little sore today, obviously. We'll continue to monitor him. Terry [McLaurin] is in the protocol, and we'll continue to monitor him. Tyler [Larsen] is getting an MRI today, and we'll know more about his injury as we go forward. [Charles] Leno came out of it a little gimpy, but he should be fine.”

On if he worries that the injuries will become insurmountable:

“I wouldn't say it's insurmountable, but it most certainly will test your depth more so than anything else. That's where you get concerned because we've lost our top two centers right now. So that is a little concerning as far as the offensive line is concerned. The guys that have stepped up and played have done a pretty good job. That first half, I thought offensively we came out a little flat, a little tired. It's been a heck of a four weeks prior to that for those guys playing the way they had. I think at the end of the day, that first half just kind of caught up to us a little bit.”

On why the injuries haven't taken a bigger toll on the team:

“Well, I think because of the depth we have is pretty good. I think the coaches have done a nice job with our guys. I think gotta give credit to those guys. I think they've been working with them really well. For the most part, we've been relatively fresh until this week. This past week was tough. It really was. Taking an account the four games prior and coming off of a Monday night and going across the country and then coming back, that was tough on our guys. They started a little slow, but I love the way they finished. I love the energy in which they played the fourth quarter, giving themselves a chance to win.”

On balancing having a positive mindset with correcting mistakes:

“There were some little detail things that when you really look at them, really just kind of connect the dots, you see it. It's something most certainly that is correctable. Still disappointing because on the other end, if we had made those plays, they could've been good plays for us. They really could have. It was on both sides. Actually, all three phases. We had a couple kick returns that man, if we seal a guy and then block another guy, DeAndre's [Carter] out the door. It comes down to just those little detail things. We had some new guys in some spots, but we try to coach them up and we gotta give them opportunities. We're that close in spite of the fact that we've had to plug in a few different guys.”

On WR Curtis Samuel:

“No. I think it came down to play calling and personnel call more so than anything else. He's the guy that we gotta get the ball in his hand and get him rolling. We'll work on that.”

On the training staff:

“Well, we've had a full training staff and they've been doing a pretty good job. You just can't account for the injuries that we've had. We've had several guys in the concussion protocol. You can't account for that. We're not gonna skip guys out of the protocol before it's time to get them out. There are some things that are beyond our

control, no matter how many people you have in your training staff. We've had season-ending injuries that you can't account for, and that's not the staff's fault. So as far as that's concerned, I shouldn't feel like I have to defend them because I think they've done a great job getting guys back on the field. They're just some things that we can't account for. Concussions are one of them and season-ending injuries are the other one. As far as that's concerned, too, we really can't account for what happens with the protocols as far as COVID is concerned."

On how some of the young players are performing and stepping up with the injuries:

"Well, I wouldn't say as much drop off as much as experience. You can see the guys that are playing have limited experience and sometimes those mistakes pop up. Those are things that you can only learn through experience and guys have to understand that when you get that opportunity, you gotta take advantage, you gotta be ready to take advantage it. Do I think we have some talented young players? Yeah, I do. And I think they need to get experience. They need to understand what it takes."

On QB Taylor Heinicke:

"He was pretty sore though afterwards. I mean, he threw that deep ball to Terry that was almost caught by Terry, which was almost another tremendous play that he made. And then he threw the other one to Cam Sims for the touchdown. It was sore, but I don't think it affected his ability to throw the ball down field."

On the offensive line play yesterday:

"Well, I've gotta give them credit first and foremost. You don't ever want to take anything away from your opponent. But at the same time, there are some things that we could have done better. Most certainly I do believe that. As I said earlier, I thought in that first half, we were a little tired. We kind of got it going in the second half. As things started to progress, you saw us start to win the blocks. You saw us start to move the ball. There are some things that we most certainly will shore up and work on. Hopefully in the meantime, we'll get a few more guys back on the football field and we'll see what happens."

On if having S Landon Collins back on the field impacts the use of LB Jamin Davis:

"It does. It impacts how we use a few other guys in the defense as well. Kam Curl being one of them. Jamin being another one of them. Our different sub packages that we use as well that either include him or exclude him. It does having him out there, I think helps us as a football team."

On if the team is feeling the effects of plying teams coming off a bye week:

"I thought they do a little bit but like I said, that first portion of the game and you watch it, we look a little sluggish in my opinion. And again, you know, I'm just being upfront about it, but I think as the game goes on, you could feel our guys finding some energy and then coming out in the second half and really, I thought they gave themselves a chance to win."

On if there is a chance that [Ryan Vermillion] comes back this season:

"We're hopeful, but you know, again, this is something that's a court matter and we have to just wait till whatever goes on and it eventually gets taken care of hopefully sooner than later."

On if there is a timetable for his return:

"No, we have no idea. We're removed from that."

On the receiving core since the bye week:

"I'm pretty confident. You know, we had some guys make some plays yesterday and again, 11 different guys

were targeted. So that, to me is always a good thing. It's just as you go through it, you'd love to have [WR] Terry [McLaurin] because of who he is for us in terms of our offense. But we do feel we have enough play makers to get out there and make some plays."

On how he would like to get WR Curtis Samuel more involved:

"Just using him the way that we know how to use him. The guy is a dynamic player and believe me when he gets rolling, gets the ball in his hands, he can be very explosive for us."

On the status of the Defensive Ends:

"It's tough because we have to follow through with the rules and there is testing daily and all these types of things that we have to go through and hopefully, we'll catch some good news by the end of this week and see what happens as we start getting ready for Philly."

On if he's noticed growth from WR Cam Sims that would warrant more snaps and targets:

"I think a little bit of both, you know, he's done some good things. You see him constantly working in practice, doing the things that you need him to do to show you what he can do. And then as he makes more plays, he's a guy that does deserve to be out there a little bit more."

On QB Taylor Heinicke's decision making:

"I thought he took his shots when he had chances. I do think though that once he presses a little bit it does tend to look bad. A couple times yesterday he threw into coverage that we got fortunate the ball got dropped by the defenders to be honest. It's one of those things that you got to be smart in your opportunities, and you can't try to force it, which he did do. But when he had some opportunities to make plays, he did. And that's what we're looking for as well. So, it's kind of that, like you said, how's he balance it well. It's pretty tricky, but it's one of those things, if there's a couple plays earlier, as opposed to a couple negatives then it's a little different. I thought we had the tunnel screen set up pretty well. We caught them in a zero blitz and unfortunately, that guy went up and made a play. If he misses that ball, if you know, but if he doesn't tip it then who knows what happens at that point. But there's nothing you could do about that."

On getting an early lead being an importance for this offense:

"Well, everybody wants to have a lead, but you know you can still control it by running the ball effectively at times. And so, it's just one of those things that we struggle a little bit early and, and once we settled in and I think our guys did the things that we're capable of and played better. I do think we gave ourselves a chance."

On if he still would have gone for it on fourth down if they weren't down by 11:

"Well, I believe I'd have gone for it. I do. It's just unfortunate, you know, it's one of those things that, okay at worst, you know, you expect not to get it. You don't expect what happened to happen."

On if he was surprised that Dallas was so aggressive on defense on the fourth-and-2 play:

"No, we just gotta get the ball out and go from there."

On if there is anything he can do from a coaching standpoint to fix the issues with his team being tired to start the game:

"Well, I think the nice thing about it is we played at home this week. We didn't have to travel across the country. So, I think our guys for the most part, got some rest last night. They'll get rest tonight and tomorrow and hopefully we'll get them a little bit fresher this week."

On what the team can do to fix RB Antonio Gibson's fumbling issues:

"I had a longtime NFL coach Jim Skipper who's one of my favorite coaches to have work with me always used to say that the hardest thing guys have to learn to understand is that when they go to fall, when they're being tackled, that's when they have to truly understand when to protect the ball. Because most times when guys are going to the ground, they're really bracing for the impact of hitting the ground, as opposed to protecting the ball. And it kind of looks a little bit like that because a lot of his problems do seem to come when he is headed down and so we'll just continue to work it. I think [running backs coach] Randy [Jordan] does a great job in trying to teach it and get him to understand and we'll continue to work on protecting the football."

On if he thinks this loss had more to do with what Dallas was able to accomplish or on mistakes that Washington made:

"I think you could really say it again as I said last night, this was about two halves. We came out a little flat, a little tired. So, as we went through it, they did make some plays obviously and we didn't. As we got into the game and you saw the second half come out and you saw the energy with the spark we got, then you saw them play, I think more to their abilities and more of what they're capable of. It really, to me was about two halves. Unfortunately we didn't play the first half the way I'd hoped we would've."

On what he thought about Dallas Cowboys Head Coach Mike McCarthy's comments and on the Cowboys bringing their own benches to FedExField:

"I think again, like I first said about it more so than anything else is I really do think that's all interesting and that's all the gamesmanship that goes with it. So as far as I'm concerned, it's part of the mind games that people like to play. And again, you can't let them get inside your head. It's really gotta be about what happens on the field during the game on Sunday afternoons."

On if that means Washington won't be bringing their benches to Dallas:

"I didn't say that. [Laughs]."