

WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

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Head Coach Ron Rivera

On the COVID outbreak in the NFL:

“Well, for the most part I've been told that there is an outbreak, obviously. They're not quite sure which variant yet; but for the most part, we are in the enhanced protocols. I believe you guys know that.”

On if there is a chance any of the players who tested positive will play Sunday:

“There is. But I mean, we'll see. You don't know and you don't know how this situation is gonna go.”

On if he knows how the outbreak started:

“No, not really. To be honest with you, it could be a number of things. Could have been the fact that we were all the way in traveling from Nevada back here. Everybody was in close proximity on the airplane, could have popped up at any point and then just spread. The way it's spreading, you almost wonder if it's the new variant.”

On what he makes of placing 17 players on the reserve/COVID list:

“Well, just that apparently it's going through our team.”

On if there have been any discussions on moving Sunday's game:

“No, not that I know of. We've been working. I guess the powers that be may be the ones discussing it, but we've been told nothing.”

On if he has any personal concerns:

“Not necessarily. I've got my booster. I've tried to do that. I'm masking up whenever I'm in a crowd or whenever I'm around people. I'm trying to be diligent and we'll just continue to try and follow the guidelines.”

On the two players listed on the conventional injury report with an illness:

“I don't know. We don't know. They'll continue to test, they'll stay in the protocols. As we find things out, we'll go from there. I do know it said illness, so that's kind of where we are with those two.”

On WR Curtis Samuel:

“Yeah. This is a different injury.”

On if he feared an outbreak could occur:

“Nobody expected this variant. I'm almost leaning towards the fact that because it's spreading so quickly around the League right now, you almost feel a matter of time. I don't think anybody expected it to be like this. This is a little bit more beyond what we had anticipated. I think that the thought might be that guys that hadn't gotten vaccinated might have come down with it at some point or another, not that it would be a crossover because for the most part, most of our guys are guys that were vaccinated.”

On preparing the team under these circumstances:

Well, you take every able body you have. They're all getting opportunities to practice. They're getting

opportunities in meetings and walkthroughs to make sure they're being brought up to speed on what we're doing and how we're doing it."

On if there will be any changes to Sunday's game:

"We haven't JP. We haven't heard anything yet about anything like that. We'll have to wait and see what goes on. There are other teams that are in the same type of situation as we are. We see Cleveland in a tough spot because they play on Saturday. We'll see if they're gonna do something for them as well. That's a tough spot because they actually lose a day of preparation."

On if he knows if any of the players tested positive for Omicron:

"That's just speculation. That's pure speculation. But based on everything you've heard, you almost wonder."

On going through a practice with so many players out:

"Well, you practice. We have guys that are on our practice squad. We have guys that we've brought in and we started working with them. We were fortunate. We brought a guy back that had been in the system last year with us. We feel pretty good about it. We have another young man we brought in, guy that we're familiar with. So we feel pretty good about that as well. We'll just continue to work and practice and get ourselves ready. We'll show up on Sunday and see what happens."

On if he would like to see any changes to the current NFL COVID protocols:

"I saw an interesting article. One of the things today talking about that guys are testing positive and their asymptomatic. You'd almost wonder, well, does that group, should that player that test asymptomatic be able to play? I think that's a discussion for the doctors, for the experts to be able to tell us one way or the other. Other than that, we just gotta be careful."

On if there are any asymptomatic cases he can share:

"I couldn't tell you that. Again, I'm not the doctor as far as that's concerned and we'll just have to go with it."

On QB Taylor Heinicke:

"Yeah. It looks like him. He practiced well today. I know there was some concern about his elbow. More so than anything else, it's been sore. He's treated it in the last three days and then came out today and really didn't seem to have any issues."

On if Samuel was injured in the game Sunday:

"All I know is on Monday came in and he was sore."

On who their point person is for all of the COVID-19 protocols:

"Everything runs through Dr. Casolaro."

On if there is concern that coaches or staff have also tested positive:

"For the most part, if it is coaches and staff that's a different issue that we have to treat the same way because we are in the enhanced protocols."

On maybe one day being able to only focus on football and not issues that are out of his control:

"I think it would be a relief that's for sure, but it's unfortunate. These are the times that we are all living through and I know it must be difficult for you folks as well. I mean, not really having the opportunity to meet people in person and work with people in person, that's gotta be difficult as well. So yeah, it would be nice to get past this

eventually and hopefully medicine and science can take care of this for us as we hopefully go forward."

On if he thinks player safety could become a concern on Sunday:

"I don't think so yet. I mean, I think the guys that we've brought in, the guys that we've tried to check on are guys that were in shape. We try to check and see where guys were, what they were doing, how many workouts they had gone to, stuff like that. That tells us and gives us an idea as to a guys conditioning and shape. Then out here in practice we're trying to monitor that pretty close and it is something that I guess that could come into play. But as of right now, no."

On what they were able to accomplish at practice today:

"Yeah, I mean this was pretty much typical of what we had to do after getting back from Vegas. After the Raiders game, we backed off on the guys a lot. Today we did the same thing, knowing that our numbers were down. This is more about teaching and going through the basic fine tuning of what we want to do, so that the players get a good sense for it. Then tomorrow we'll be ramped back up to the tempo that we typically practice with on Thursday and Friday."

On QB Kyle Shurmur:

"Kyle's got a good arm. He's got a little quick twitch. He makes good decisions. He's very smart, very bright. He's got a football mind, so he's picked everything up well. He's got decent command as he steps in. I mean, you haven't seen a lot of him, but you watched him in the huddles today. I thought he did a nice job getting the play calls out and getting everybody lined up and ready to go. So, he's a young man that hopefully doesn't have to get an opportunity. We'll be okay with that and we'll go from there."

On if Shurmur is ahead of QB Jordan Ta'amu on the depth chart:

"Yes. Shurmur has been here longer."

On what they have to do to get the new players up to speed:

"Yeah. I mean, other than the meeting time, the walkthrough is probably one of the more important things as well. So, we've increased our walkthrough times just to really be able to hone in on what we're trying to do. I know some of the coaches when they get an opportunity to get them outside because transmission is very low outside, but we're still masking up. We'll be able to get them outside and do a few extra things to try and get everybody up to speed."

On if there is anything they are looking to emulate from last years protocols:

"Well, I think really the way we practiced as we went down the stretch, trying to get the guys legs back, get their bodies back. But, we spent a good amount of time focusing on the walkthrough aspect of it, where you can really truly coach and teach at a better pace to be able to make your point and just demonstrate. I think we're in that situation now with some new guys to what we do. We're taking a little extra time to kind of coach them through it."

On if they were taking steps prior to this outbreak to prepare for something like this potentially happening:

"One of the things that we really did pay attention to and tried to make sure we had the quality depth was on the offensive and defensive line. Unfortunately it looked like our defensive line took a pretty good hit right now. We'll see how everything unfolds going into the week, but we really tried to be conscious of it because we know that if you can protect your linebackers, if you can be stout up front, and you protect your quarterback, you give yourself a chance to play football games and win. That's what one of the things that we did on purpose was we

really went after offensive line and defensive line depth. Not imagining that something like this would come about, but something not quite to this magnitude. This is what's happened."