

WASHINGTON

FOOTBALL TEAM, EST. 1932

INOVA SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER - LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA

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Head Coach Ron Rivera

On how QB Taylor Heinicke looked today:

“He looked good. He really did. He came out throwing the ball well, movement was good. He seemed on top of everything, so it was good to see him back out there.”

On how important it was to have Heinicke back this week and be able to practice:

“Well, I think it's always good to have guys out on the field practicing and getting a chance to work out. If there's little detail things that need to be worked out, you can. It was good to see him, the guys obviously gravitated towards him when he was back in the huddle. So it was good to see.”

On how the skill position players are developing this season:

“I think they're developing well. The fortunate thing for us is we've got a couple other guys that have stepped up and have been really solid. Terry's [McLaurin] had a very good year. He's a guy that you wanna get the ball to and get in his hands and probably we need to do that a little bit more. The other guys, you've seen DeAndre [Carter] come along, done a nice job. We've seen Hump [WR Adam Humphries], who's really been just a solid, steady, good example for our young guys, especially guys like Dax [Milne]. You'd like to see Dyami [Brown] make a few more plays, get a few more opportunities. Coming off the injury, he's really kind of worked himself slowly back in and we gotta try and get him out there a little bit more, really to just see him play because of that speed and that length he has. He's a guy that we gotta take a little bit more advantage of. I like the group. It's a good, young, solid group. I like the tight ends. I think what we've found in what Ricky Seals-Jones can do is a little something extra, little bit of a bonus there for us. I think John Bates is really developing and growing. You see him play a very steady role for us, which you really liked to watch. He's a young guy that's gonna learn even more as he continues to grow in this offense and on this football team. I like what Sammis [Reyes] has done. He really hadn't a lot of opportunities, but when he goes out, he does exactly what you ask. He's been a lot of fun to watch on special teams because he's a physical guy. For the most part, I think they're coming along well. I just think obviously it's about more opportunities and those things will come as they continue to work.”

On if the others players are at a point where they can take some of the pressure of McLaurin:

“Well, I think the last few weeks, you see exactly what it means to not have a Logan [Thomas] around all the time and not to have a Ricky Seals-Jones in terms of the vertical tight end threat. You kind of see what it means when you don't have that scat back type guy, that change of pace guy in J.D. [McKissic]. The value of those positions are important because it really does help a guy like Terry out a little bit more. I think you'd like to hopefully at some point when Curtis [Samuel] really gets rolling and you get a chance to see just what his effect really is on the offense, you'll see how much more it opens things up for Terry. Those are all things that obviously we're working towards; and unfortunately, we've had some setbacks.”

On his reaction to Philadelphia Eagles Head Coach Nick Sirianni testing positive for COVID:

“That's unfortunate, but I just kind of figure it's gonna happen. It's it's gonna happen to others as well. Hopefully he gets over it quickly. I know that he's vaccinated, also has the booster. It just shows you that it doesn't matter what your circumstances are. This Omicron is highly contagious virus and you just gotta be careful and follow

the protocols.”

On if he is concerned for himself since he had an interaction with Sirianni:

“There's always concern, but nothing I can do about it. I continue to wash my hands, wear my mask. I've gotten both my shots, I've got the booster. We'll just continue to keep going forward, but just continue to try and be careful, too.”

On factoring your opponents when shaping a team:

“No, you do consider that. You mentioned it before, but in Carolina, we drafted guy for specific reasons why. We had a corner that we drafted because in our division, we had some outstanding receivers and you've gotta be able to handle those guys. And so we went out and drafted one, and he did a great job for us. So yeah, you're always looking at those. James Bradberry was a guy that we drafted for that specific reason. Look what he's turned into, one of the really good ones. I know the Giants have him and he's a heck of a football player. That's what you gotta do is you gotta look at what you're opponents are gonna bring to the table, and you gotta look at the best way to counter those things. Obviously it's through the Draft. One of things that John Madden always told me, he said: ‘the reason we drafted certain guys was we had to stop certain opponents.’ And so it's always something that I've always kind of remembered when we go into the Draft is how can we get after our opponents.”

On his confidence of other linebackers if LB Cole Holcomb is not available Sunday:

“Well, I'm very confident in our guys and I like who we have and we'll obviously have to play other guys, but we're going to be fine with that. We've got some veteran guys that have played before that are ready to roll. And we got a couple of young guys that are getting some extra work. So, we'll go with those guys.”

On if somebody else would have to call the defensive plays:

“Yeah. Somebody would most certainly. Again, we like the guys that have been practicing, they had a good day today. In fact, with the number of coaches that were down, I had to assume some of the quality control duties, and I was actually running the scout team for the defense. So, I got an opportunity to get up close and personal and listen to those guys and watched them work. Like I said, I was really pleased with seeing that.”

On if LB Jamin Davis would step into that role:

“He'd be one of the guys that's got an opportunity to fill that role. And again, a lot of things that we do is the way [Defensive Coordinator] Jack [Del Rio] handles it on defense. It is about personnel and matching it up and putting the guys out there and trying to put them in the best position. So Jamin will certainly be one of those guys. [LB] David Mayo's another guy that will, [LB De'Jon] Scoota Harris will get an opportunity to play a little bit as well as [LB] Jordan Kunaszyk. I mean, we got four guys that we feel pretty good about right now that are healthy and ready to roll. Obviously with how we're using the sub packages too, we've got some other guys that that'll play other roles as well.”

On how QB Taylor Heinicke will handle playing a team twice:

“That's exactly it. I mean, we're going to see how he handles it. To a degree, he'll have an idea of what to anticipate, what to expect. I think that the experience for us as a whole team going up against them this year, I mean, this certainly is a revamped team compared to last year. Obviously, one of the big presences is [Cowboys QB] Dak [Prescott] having him back on the football field, obviously bodes well for them. [LB] Micah Parsons is another guy that we saw for the first time too. So, I think that bodes well for us as a football team, just knowing what to expect and kind of understanding a little bit more of what they're capable of.”

On how important it is for a QB to learn and address things the second time:

“That's pretty much it is how does he handle it and how does he address it? And it's not just an indictment on him, but it's on us as well. I mean, how are we going to handle it, how we going to adjust to them? That's what's important as well. We got to make sure we're giving them opportunities and putting them in position to have the success. I mean it's not just about what they have to do, but it's about what we have to do as a coaching staff and as a football team.”

On how he evaluates big plays from the previous game against Dallas:

“Well you look at it and you really see what was the mechanism that didn't work? What was the malfunction there? And so those are things that you'll talk about obviously when you get a chance to show it to the players and say, hey, look on this particular play, we needed to do this a little bit better. On this particular play, this is how we could have protected better. This is the route we could have run better quarterback; this is the depth we could have had you at. So, there's all those little things that you look at and all those little details and say, from the very beginning, hey, it was a good snap, good drop by the quarterback. Hey, we could have been a little bit better position here. We could have been a little bit better position there. We could have been deeper in the drop. So, we'll address those things, and we'll go forward with it because you know, as you said, those are plays that had a chance, but unfortunately we didn't get it done.”

On if he knows the terms of the injuries sustained from the game:

“To a degree. We have a pretty good understanding, a pretty good feel and all of those aren't necessarily dire situations for us. So, we'll just have to see and take it on a daily basis in some cases. In other cases, it's probably going to be a little bit longer, so we'll have to see how all that unfolds.”

On if he felt like the hit on DE Daniel Wise was avoidable:

"I think it was avoidable as well. I mean, what you're really doing on the backside is you're just trying to slow that man down as much as you're trying to block him because you just don't want him to catch it from behind. That's the hard part on that is because a lot of times that's a 285 pound defensive end coming off the edge, and that's a 250 pound tight end, so you can avoid those things. I think most certainly, it's something that maybe the League we need to look at because it happens a lot and it's unfortunate. You like to do things to prevent those types of injuries, especially to keep players in this league."

On if those types of hits are something he could potentially bring up on the Competition Committee:

"Absolutely. I think that player safety is a must. I was fortunate to have played this game and that's how I've always felt about it is if there's a way to make it better, a way to make it safer, we can do so. It's funny because sometimes I think we go almost to the extreme when we don't need to. And in other cases I don't think we do enough. But again, it's really about being able to truly say, 'Hey, this is really for the betterment of the game and for the protection of the players.' That's important to me. That's an important statement."

On if it is possible to get CB Kendall Fuller back in time for the Dallas game:

"Yes it is. We'll have to see how he does. He's got a couple more days and then we'll go from there."

On how he broke down the coaching duties in preparation for Dallas with a coaching staff that has coaches missing due to COVID-19 protocols:

"Well, that's the hard part is that for most of us, we all started at the quality control position. So doing those little finite things, those were things that we could handle. For the most part, the actual taking the play, breaking it down, we were still able to have the quality control guys do it. They just did it from home. They were able to

get that done. But as far as watching both sides of the ball, especially on the defensive side, have to game plan and write the practice scripts up. We actually did the practice scripts by hand – [Defensive coordinator] Jack [Del Rio] and his crew because both of our quality control guys are down. We were laughing about it when we were walking out to practice because they had handed me the script and it was written and I said, 'This is like the good old days back in 1999 [laughs]. When I first started you had to write it in and you had to write it very neatly and very legible. I made the mistake one time of typing it out for myself and Jim Johnson, the old [Philadelphia] defensive coordinator liked it that way. Next thing you know I'm typing everything, so that's kind of the way it goes."