

May 6, 2022

Head Coach Ron Rivera

On his early impressions of the rookies so far:

"Well, there was a lot of good things. I mean we were real positive, got an opportunity to watch the guys really go through their early paces. There's a couple things that really stood out that was really impressive. You know, we got an opportunity to just watch the whole group. [WR] Jahan [Dotson] looks as solid as advertised. We were real pleased to see what we saw from him. I thought he moved around really well. [DT Phidarian Mathis] Phil looked solid, big stout guy on the inside. That was really good. We saw [RB] [Brian] Robinson run the ball, a big physical body. When you see him out here it's impressive. It really is. He moves well for a big guy. He's got good lateral quickness, good footwork. That was really good to see. [S] Percy [Butler] looked fast, big, long and can move. That was really good. I'm trying to remember all of our picks. [QB] Sam [Howell] threw the ball very well. He's got good footwork and a strong arm. That was very evident. [TE Cole Turner], when you see him out here moving, he he's a big body, moves well and presents a good target. Like we talked about, he's a guy that's gonna help us. Then [G] Chris [Paul] looked good. He's a big physical guy, good size body. [CB] Christian [Holmes] looked good. For a big guy you look at him, you're gonna think this guy's a safety, but he moves well for a corner. He's got some things to learn obviously, but he's a big body, so we are pleased for the most part. And then some of the UDFAs that we signed, we thought moved around well. It's an exciting group. It's still early and it is the underwear Olympics, so we just try to temper all that."

On the progress he has seen this spring from veterans such as WR Curtis Samuel, QB Carson Wentz and DE Chase Young:

"Well, first of all being able to get our hands on the guys for the first time this past week was really exciting out on the field. Getting the guys moving, we have the defense come out first, gets their work in, and then the offense comes in afterwards. They work. It's been really good to watch Carson throw the ball to the tight end, to the wide receivers and the backs. I mean, it's a good group of guys we feel, and it's been a lot of fun watching them. There is some excitement to Carson out there, big strong arm. We really haven't done anything where we've been able to really rip the ball down field. But, it's been really good to watch. And the offensive line has really come together. We're very happy with what we did bringing [G] Trai Turner in and adding him to the mix. You know, one of the things that we wanted to have was we wanted to have 10 guys coming in that have experience. That's what we've had in the past and that's what we're trying to emulate because again, the depth is what was very successful for us last season. We want to continue that as far as that stuff's concerned. Defensively, it's good to see the D-line around. [DT] Jonathan [Allen] came in great shape. [DT] Daron [Payne] looks terrific and has really been moving around very, very well. You know, as far as the rehabs are going for [DE] Chase [Young], he was here last week and we got an opportunity to really see him. I know he went out to the draft and he's still there [on the West Coast] He should be back next week, so we're looking forward to seeing him out there. But, he's been coming along well and that's been good. Linebackers are running around. I do believe right now, I'm seeing some growth from that group. It's a young group of linebackers, but there is some growth. And then the secondary, having all those guys out here right now has been really good for them as a whole."

On if he plans to solve the MIKE linebacker position internally:

"Well internally right now, we're looking at giving [LB] Cole [Holcomb] the opportunity to continue there. We thought he did some really good things, especially down the stretch. [LB] David Mayo stepped up and played very well and showed us what he can do for us, plus he's a four phase guy. [LB] Jamin [Davis] has shown some things already that we're really happy with. We got a number of guys that we're looking at."

On how his personnel meetings went on Sunday and if anything came out of those meetings:

"Well, I think if we're looking at one position, it is gonna be linebacker. We have a good number of guys here. We're very pleased with the number of guys we have here, but we don't have another veteran-type guy once we get past [LB] Khaleke [Hudson], so right now we're just too deep. We'd like to get a few more guys to be a bit deeper there."

On what it has been like finally having all these guys here at the facility:

"It's been really good. It really has. Just getting a chance to get to know some of them already, we did our work, but a lot of that work we did was centered around them as football players. But, getting to know them as young men has been kind of nice. We talked to a couple of them already at lunch and a little bit before, coming out a few minutes ago and they fit, they really do. I mean, I'm pretty excited. We got a good group of guys that we felt we signed after the draft as far as our UDFAs. Then we got some tryout guys that are intriguing and you guys will get an opportunity to see 'em out here today. So, you guys will be able to draw your own conclusions, but I think again, based on what we've seen, we're pretty excited. I mean, Cole Turner is gonna, wow a lot of guys just because of his athleticism and his size and his ability to run, and he's also shown us even though we're not in pads watching his technique as far as blocking, I think he's gonna surprise some people with that."

On if there is something he looks for out of his first four draft picks to see if there are early signs that they can contribute right away:

"A lot of this really is about the mental aspect. This morning was more about watching them athletically, getting a chance to try and break them down. I was trying to pop around from one drill to the other, so I could see the different groups, and as I said, a couple guys really did stand out to us. Percy's speed really shows. I mean, you watch him move around and you go, 'Wow, that dude can flat out run.' Watching Cole go down the seam today on one of the passenger drills we had was pretty impressive. And as I said, watching Brian Robinson catch the bottom to the flat and then turn those shoulders square, he's a pretty imposing figure, which was really good. And then Jahan, he's so smooth. He is a really good route runner and just watching his natural catching ability, that was kind of cool. It was good to see. It really was. And as I said, you guys will be able to draw your own conclusion based on what you guys see."

On what type of learning curve Howell will have:

"I think he'll be okay. I really do. I think he and [QB] Cole Kelley, the other quarterback we brought in are two guys that we did pay a lot of attention to. Both guys are really football smart, football savvy guys. And I don't think either one of 'em is gonna have a huge learning curve. But I think they're young guys that aren't gonna have any timeframe where they have to hurry to get anything done. We feel just good about who they are."

On his thoughts about DE Deionte Knight and on Canadian players overall:

"Well, one of the things about him is his athleticism and it's something we wanted to see just how it translates to our game. He was a little bit of a long shot, but bringing a guy in, it doesn't cost anything to take a look at him and just kind of see where he is and if there is a possibility for him to fit. But, the biggest

thing that they really talked about was his athleticism and his athletic ability."

On his thoughts on G Chris Paul:

"He seems to be pretty easy going for the most part. And so there seems to not be many issues about fit. He's a stout, physical guy and just from watching him do the drills this morning with [Offensive Line] Coach [John Matsko], I think he's a guy that's got an opportunity to help us."

On what G Trai Turner and WR Alex Erickson can add to the team:

"Just some veteran presence. The biggest thing about Trai is it kind of solidifies the fact that we have 10 guys that we really believe are guys that can give us that veteran experience. Again, one of the things that we try to do is we want to make sure if we're gonna be strong, we gotta make sure we stay strong and that's having good depth on the offensive line."

On what his message was to the rookies:

"Well, we got a couple of different groups of guys. One of the groups of guys are pretty much the tryout guys and the preferred free agents that we signed immediately after the draft is about taking advantage of the opportunity. One of the messages I left with Jahan for the most part was, 'Hey, you're the guy that's gonna be the tone setter for this rookie class. So, you've gotta understand that you have to take the mantle.' The other guys, 'Hey, you're here to be part of what we're doing. You're here to develop and grow over a period of time, but for the most part, you're here to be part of what we do, so let's go out and show us what you're capable of and show us why we wanted to draft you.'"

On if a players bloodlines factor into evaluating them as players:

"Well, I think the biggest thing about blood lines or anything else is that they know football, they've been around it most of their lives, I guess. And that's probably the biggest thing about it. Some people say, 'Oh, it's all about genetics too.' Well, yeah, that's true in a lot of cases, but it's like this too, to me, when we evaluate players and when we talk about their backgrounds, I get excited when I hear, 'Oh, the guy comes from a military family, his parents were coaches, or his parents were teachers.' To me, that kind of signifies that there is some sort of structure, there's some sort of discipline to it. You do try to find out what impact their background has. And to me, those are positives."

On how much progress he has seen from LB Jamin Davis:

"Well, based on what I've seen as far as the way he's practiced during the OTA periods, he's looking good, he's moving fast. We're doing a lot of walkthrough stuff right now, a lot of formation recognition and adjustment and listening to him communicate and talk out there has been good. Again, right now all we're really looking for is that we're going in the right direction and that's probably been one of the biggest pluses right now."

On him saying after the draft that there was more work to be done with the roster:

"Well, I think we've got time. I mean again, last year we found our left tackle in Charles Leno in June, we found our returner in June, so we've got time. I mean last time I looked, kickoff is the second weekend in September."

On what stood out to him about seventh round picks S Kamren Curl and WR Dax Milne in past years:

"First of all, it was athleticism more so than anything else. That's when you look at Chris, Paul, you look at Christian and you see guys that are athletic to begin with. For a big guy, Chris Paul moves very well, very exciting. When you look at Christian, you sit there and think to yourself, 'Man, he's built like a safety. I mean, you guys see him out here moving around, but he's a guy that can run. He's got a quick twitch, he's a

physical guy. I also think that in both cases, those guys were smart football players. They really were. They understood the game, and they knew how to do things. I think looking at these guys, they both know the game just based on what you've seen, and they are athletic. So, that gives you some hope that these guys have a chance and they'll be there to help us."

On how much having WR Dyami Brown who was a teammate of Howell's at UNC can help acclimate Howell to the offense:

"I think that means a lot. It really does because you have somebody you can relate to, somebody that understands you, somebody that can help you, and somebody that because they're comfortable will open up more to you. And I think that'll play well for that relationship between Sam and Dyami. I think that'll help. It'll help Sam in terms of his growth and progression."

On how much potential he thinks this offense can have with a healthy WR Curtis Samuel on the field along with WR Jahan Dotson:

"Well, what I think can happen is, they'll have to spread their defense out even more. That's what you want when you have playmakers. And everybody's gotta understand there's only one ball and it's only gonna get to so many people in the game, but everybody has to do their job. When you got guys with that kind of ability, and I think if they understand just how important it is, I think it'd be a real good thing. And again, not just at the wide receiver position, but I think with where we are with the tight ends, and getting [TE] Logan [Thomas] back on the field, and then the backs, there are so many different things you can do with our combination of backs that we can play."